

Gospels/ NT-5200

Fall Term, 2026: Atlanta

I. Details

A. Time:

a. The class meets in-person over two weekends:

i. August 21 (12PM-6PM), Aug 22 (8AM-12 Noon)

ii. Sept 11 (12PM-6PM), Sept 12 (8AM-12 Noon)

The remaining lectures are watched via the online Gospels course:

You are responsible for Lessons 1 and 8-12

Note: each lesson has multiple videos

B. Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger

1. Email: mkruger@rts.edu

2. TA: Faith Key : fkey@rts.edu

II. Purpose

A. To gain familiarity with the contents of the four Gospels.

B. To gain acquaintance with the main theories of authorship, origin, and compositional relationship of the Gospels.

C. To understand and evaluate discerningly the main lines of historical criticism of the Gospels in the modern period.

D. To understand the main elements of the message of Jesus, revealed in word and deed, as reflected in the unified witness of the Gospels.

E. To recognize the distinctive emphases of each of the four Gospels, and the implications of their diversity for interpretation and proclamation.

F. To grow in personal responsiveness to the Gospel's message: faith, repentance, humility, obedience, joy, etc.

III. Course Requirements

A. Faithful class attendance

- Attendance is vital: to miss one day of class is to miss four lectures
- Expect class participation when applicable
- Feel free to ask questions during lecture

B. Read the four Gospels through twice in English. To signify that you have completed this reading you must submit your own outline of each Gospel on the term paper deadline (**December 7**). *Each* outline must be **2-3 pages** in length, **1.5 spacing**. Outlines must use at least 3 levels of standard outlining format (Roman numerals (I, II, etc.) with indentations (A.B.C., 1.2.3., etc.) following), indicate chapter and verse for each point and subpoint, and not be copied from any other source. *They must be*

reflective of your own efforts to summarize and order the contents of each Gospel. Submit your outlines on Canvas. Please submit 1 document in **PDF format** containing all four outlines.

C. Research Paper

- Serious paper approximately **15 typed pages (1.5 spaced)** in length (20 pages max) due on **December 7** on **canvas in PDF format**).
 - Standard *SBL* format, as outlined in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (SBL Press, 2014). (Book is available in the library, but you should own your own copy). The paper should have single-spaced footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., *JBL*, *JTS*, *JETS*, *NTS*, etc.
 - Research paper must contain citations of at least two journal articles.
 - Paper must have a properly formatted bibliography at the end.
 - Paper options:
 - 1) Exegesis of a Gospels text/pericope, highlighting its distinctive contribution to the Gospel's message, taking into account both its immediate and larger historical context.
 - 2) A biblical-theological study of any major or minor theme in the four gospels.
 - 3) A historical study of an aspect of the origins of one or all of the four gospels; e.g., the date of John, the authorship of Matthew, etc.
 - 4) A resolution of an apparent contradiction (or other problem) in the four Gospels.
- D. Complete the required reading in preparation for class sessions and examinations.
- E. Exams: Final Exam covering all class lectures and readings (Final exams are **December 1-7**).

IV. Grading

- A. Gospel readings and outlines—10%
- B. Research Paper—45%
- C. Exams—45%

V. Textbooks

- A. Michael J. Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016).
- B. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
- C. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, third edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
- D. Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, second edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).
- E. Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995).

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in

advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

VI. Brief Course Overview

Part One: Gospel Criticism

- I. Old Quest
- II. No Quest
- III. New Quest
- IV. Third Quest

Part Two: Gospel Origins

- I. Intro
- II. What is a Gospel?—The Question of Genre
- III. Stage of Oral Tradition: Form Criticism
- IV. Stage of Written Sources: Source Criticism
- V. Stage of Final Composition: Redaction Criticism
- VI. Stage of Scribal Transmission: Textual Criticism
- VII. Stage of Church History: Canonical Criticism

Part Three: Gospel Interpretation (longest section of course)

- I. Aids to Interpretation

- A. Perspective on the Text: Biblical Theology vs. Systematic Theology
 - B. Context of the Text: Understanding the Background
 - C. Meaning of the Text: Historical, Modern, and Typological
 - D. Historicity of the Text: What about Contradictions?
- II. Overview and Analysis of the Four Gospels
- A. Matthew
 - B. Mark
 - C. Luke
 - D. John

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT5200 Gospels
 Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
 Campus: Atlanta
 Date: Fall 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	- Theology of Gospels - Historical background of Gospels - Significant paper on the Gospels
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	- Focus on exegesis and understanding the text - Use of original languages - Application to modern circumstances
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	- Discuss aspects of Reformed theology in these books, such as eschatology, kingdom of God, and structure of the covenants
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	- Texts of Gospels applied to the lives of the students
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	- Content of Gospels applied to various aspects of life (e.g., church, work, society, etc.)
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit)	Moderate	- Survey of critical scholarship and its relevance/application for

	with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)		evangelicals; students are taught good aspects and bad aspects of critical thinking. - Other theological approaches are surveyed and critiqued in a respectful manner.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	- Preaching applications are made regularly from Gospels texts. - Content in the course leads students to worship, encourages them to consider their shepherding role, and includes some application to broader cultural issues, - Growth in spiritual maturity and an increased concern for non-Christians goals for the course

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.