Course Objectives

The aim of this course is to deepen the knowledge and refine the skills needed for robust exegesis in pastoral ministry, and to do this by means of an investigation of the Gospel of Luke. Toward this end, the course is structured around the following learning objectives:

2. Students will gain a stronger grasp of NT Greek and improve their ability to make use of such reference works as the Grammars of Wallace and Blass-Debrunner-Funk for purposes of syntax analysis of a passage of Scripture.
3. Students will gain familiarity with some aspects of narrative criticism as applied to the Gospels (including the analysis of the literary shape of a parable).
4. Students will become better equipped to identify and analyze the significance of an allusion to the Old Testament in a Gospel text.
5. Students will increase their understanding of the cultural and historical backgrounds of the ministry of Jesus as well as improve their ability to conduct a basic investigation into an aspect of the cultural backgrounds identified as important for a passage under study.

Course Requirements

- PLEASE NOTE: This course runs from Sept. 8 – Dec. 19. Even though class meetings are confined to three weekends, substantial work is required outside of these meetings on a weekly basis.
The following texts are required:


The following are recommended:

i. For Greek analysis, the following resources will aid your study of Luke’s text greatly: Martin C. Culy and Mikeal C. Parsons, et al., *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Baylor, 2010), as well as the commentaries on Luke by John Nolland (Word Biblical Commentary series) and Joseph Fitzmyer (Anchor Bible Commentary series).


10% of the final grade: Outline due Friday, Sept. 25

A detailed outline of the English text of Luke is due in the first class meeting. The substantial weight given to this assignment relative to the final grade reflects its importance in the exegetical process (cf. comments of Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*, §1.1). You will do well to invest considerable time in this assignment!

An outline forms the beachhead in any focused study of a Biblical book. As the first step in the exegetical process, the aim is to gain a provisional sense for the flow of thought across the work as a whole and so to establish the thematic context that will guide the analysis of individual passages. For this reason, an outline is not a summary of every
paragraph or chapter. (Work that merely paraphrases the successive sections of the book as demarcated in an English Bible will not receive a favorable grade.) If you are uncertain how best to proceed in forming your outline, you may use the following steps:

i. Read through the entire work twice in a short period of time (two days at most). As you do, reflect carefully on the following matters (Fee, New Testament Exegesis, §1.1.2-3):

   a. Discover everything you can about the purpose. Does the author explicitly say anything about it? What is implied?
   
   b. Note special emphases or concerns that emerge. What words or ideas are frequently repeated? What unusual vocabulary recurs? What, if anything, might these tell you about the occasion or purpose?

ii. After having acquainted yourself with the work as a whole, seek to identify the major breaks in the narrative. These become the main points in your outline. Look for major shifts in the focus of the narrative, such as leaps in time, changes in geography or itinerary, sustained changes in tone, audience, focus of teaching, etc. There are commonly only a handful of these major sections in a narrative (if you identify 13, you have found too many!).

iii. Next, re-read the first major section and identify secondary level divisions within the narrative. Do the same thing with each major section.

iv. Next, identify third order divisions within each of the secondary divisions across the book.

v. As appropriate and helpful, you may add additional divisions to your outline. Do not take your outline below the level of the individual pericope: the pericope (or self-contained story in the Gospel) should be the smallest unit in your outline. The aim is not to create endless divisions, but to represent the flow of thought in a way that will provide a genuinely helpful guide as you engage with individual passages in the future.

**25% of the final grade: Team research project due Friday, Oct. 23**

As part of a push within your denominational leadership to promote more robust Biblical teaching in its churches, it has been decided that all pastors will be asked to teach
through the Gospel of Luke in the coming year. In an effort to aid busy pastors as they prepare to tackle the longest book in the NT, and with a view toward encouraging greater depth and uniformity of teaching across the denomination, research committees have been formed to conduct focused investigations on many aspects of Luke’s Gospel and to produce detailed written statements of their findings. The results of their work will be circulated among all pastors in the denomination to be used as aids in their study and teaching of the Gospel of Luke over the course of twelve months. Among the topics to be examined in depth are the following: **messianism, prayer, repentance, wealth and poverty**.

Each team will select one of these topics to research in depth and report upon. Reports should be no more than ten pages in length and should be very dense (containing a wealth of information in a short space: these are not essays, but research reports). Reports should target educated pastors who will work through Luke’s Gospel. Reports should also be written using Google Docs in order to allow for collaborative work in the composition and editing of a document (Youtube has many helpful videos [including here] introducing the collaborative use of Google Docs). Finally, however you decide to divide up responsibilities, I suggest that each person circulate their notes to the other members of their team so that each person can contribute to the shape of the final write-up. *The views and conclusions expressed must represent those of the team as a whole.*

All research should follow the same basic trajectory, working from a broad survey of the topic in the Old Testament, to a more detailed survey of the topic in second Temple Judaism, and finally to an introduction to the topic in Luke. Do not exegete specific passages in Luke (this is the task of the pastors who work through the Gospel). Your task is to furnish background and introductory information that will provide a rich aid to pastors as they work their way through Luke. Effective research for this project will require spending time in primary (ancient) sources as well as secondary (contemporary) literature. For example, if you study prayer in Luke, you will want to consult the works of Patrick Miller and of Mark Boda on prayer in the Old Testament and Judaism, respectively. These contemporary studies would provide nice points of entry into the relevant ancient sources.

Finally, provide some specific, succinct suggestions (how’s that for alliteration!) concerning application in the contemporary church. These suggestions should be no more than a few sentences each, since individual pastors will develop them in more detail as they
see fit. Here again, you would provide the best service to preachers in your denomination by consulting a selection of contemporary literature relevant to your topic. To take prayer as an example, once more, you might consult a work such as *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, by Timothy Keller, a pastor widely respected for his insight into contemporary culture.

Although groups will be formed and begin working prior to our first class meetings, substantial time will be made on Sat. afternoon, Sept. 26, for group work on this project.

**40% of the final grade: Exegesis paper due Saturday, Dec. 5**

I suggest that students research and write the paper during the final two week period of the course. By that stage of the course, sufficient time will have been devoted to the Greek text of Luke as well as the Old Testament and Jewish backgrounds to allow students to produce a strong paper within a two week timeframe.

Although groups will be formed and begin working prior to our first class meetings, substantial time will be made for research on this paper during the afternoon class meetings, Oct. 24 and Nov. 21.

- **Passage selection.** You may select any passage to study. However, please get approval from the professor for the passage before beginning your research.

- **Paper length and quality.** There is no upper limit on paper-length. Please observe the following two caveats, however. First, it is doubtful that a paper under 12 pages will succeed in producing a thorough treatment of a passage. Second, *lengthier papers are no more likely to obtain a high grade than 12-page papers*. The goal must be detailed, thoroughgoing analysis of a passage presented in concise and straightforward fashion. Grades are based on the quality of the work, measured in these terms, rather than on the length of the work.

- **A word on style.** The appropriate style of writing is formal/academic, not conversational. You will learn much in this regard by imitating the writing style in most top-tier journal articles. The quality of your writing will be greatly improved, even during the course, by making regular use of Strunk and White (recommended above).

- **Paper format.** Papers should be divided into the following sections.
i. **Greek text.** *Detailed analysis of every facet of the grammar, syntax and semantics of passage.* **Grammar:** Do not parse (unless the parsing is in dispute). Rather, pull the passage apart. Discuss, explain, and analyze every facet of the grammar that is not obvious or may be interpreted in different ways. Make use of at least two of the major Greek grammars (Blass, Debrunner, Funk; Zerwick; Robertson; Wallace; Moulton and Turner) as well as multiple technical commentaries and relevant journal articles. **Words:** Look up several words that seem to have potential significance in the passage: does usage outside the NT contribute anything (LXX, Apocrypha, Josephus, Philo, Papyri/Inscriptions [Milton and Milligan])? Does usage elsewhere in the NT, the Gospels and Luke add anything to your understanding of the word in the passage? This is to be a densely written section. Be concise, not wordy! Verbosity will lose points.

ii. **Literary features.** This section will form a discussion of the literary features of the passage. Please begin by providing an outline of the passage, then proceed to notable literary devices such as metaphors, inclusios, chiasms, etc. Note any catch-words or echoes that link the passage to larger motifs in the Gospel. Has the author emphasized some feature of the account by his manipulation of narrative time vs real time, speech vs action, who is given speech vs who is denied it, etc.? Again, your discussion should interact with multiple technical commentaries and relevant journal articles.

iii. **Relevant backgrounds: Old Testament, Second Temple Jewish, Greco-Roman.** This section will be devoted to identifying and drawing out citations, allusions and echoes of the OT, and/or identifying and elucidating the relevant themes, customs or ideas from the Jewish or Greco-Roman background that illuminate the passage. After making your own initial study of the background you will do well to appropriate a few journal articles treating this specific facet of your passage in more depth than the commentaries are able to do.
iv. **Theological significance.** This section is NOT a summary of your findings in the above sections. It is rather the place to trace the author’s thought in the pericope (what is the point(s) the author is making by means of his inclusion of this particular story, at this particular point in his narrative, in the shape in which he has crafted it?) and to ask how this idea contributes to the flow of thought across this section of the Gospel and/or to the thought of the Gospel as a whole. Does the passage ultimately speak to our understanding of who God is (theology proper)? Who Jesus is (Christology)? What he came to do (Redemption)? How Jesus expects his followers to live (discipleship, mission)? Other issues? You may draw upon commentaries and articles for this section but the bulk of the work ought to be your own reflection growing out of all the work you have done on the passage.

**25% of the final grade: Exam on select Greek passages in Luke and the theology of Luke, Saturday, Nov. 20**

The exam is comprised of two sections. In the first section, the student will select two Greek passages out of the three provided to *translate and annotate* (I will explain this further in class). Translations with minimal or inadequate annotations will not receive a strong grade.

The second section contains essay questions that test the student’s assimilation of the broad theological themes and concepts treated in class as well as in the required readings. The questions will not ask the student to reproduce the views of any given scholar or school of thought. They will rather probe the depth of the student’s apprehension of Luke’s theological program. Answers should be replete with references to the text of Luke. Use of a Bible will be permitted for the exam.

**Course workload**

Details will be given at the start of the course concerning chapters in Luke covered by the professor during the course as well as Greek passages that students will translate. For planning purposes, students should expect to spend, on average, ten hours
each week doing course-related work (the seminary standard). During most weeks this will mean reading English-text books (required books, above) and/or translating Greek texts from Luke.

Extensions and late work

Work submitted late without prior approval from the professor will be penalized at a rate of 3 grade points/day late. (Thus, e.g., work submitted three days late will be penalized 9 points.) **Failure to plan ahead does not constitute a valid reason for seeking an extension!** Please do not ask for an extension, for example, the week before an assignment is due because you have to preach, lead a retreat, or participate in a wedding during that same time period. Valid reasons for extension are generally limited to illness, death, birth, or family emergencies.

Please understand that in the interest of fairness to others in the course, I will most usually deny requests for extensions on assignment due dates.