Course Description
A study of the complementary portraits of Jesus in the four gospels to determine the events of his life, the content of his message, and his understanding of his own person and mission.

Course Relation to GCTS Mission
This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives:

Article 1: To encourage students to become knowledgeable of God's inerrant Word, competent in its interpretation, proclamation and application in the contemporary world. Because the teaching of God's Word is indispensable to the well-being and vitality of God's people, the seminary has a fundamental responsibility to encourage in its students a love for Scripture. The seminary is to teach exegetical skills by which they will be able to apply Scripture effectively.

Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines. Theological education, which is properly done within and for the Church, ought to function with rigor and academic integrity. The seminary, therefore, must provide an environment within which teaching and learning can best occur and encourage high levels of scholarly competence and research in its faculty.

Course Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
1. Recognize and differentiate between the different views about Jesus within modern Jesus Scholarship (Articles 2)
2. Articulate the arguments for the historicity of the Gospels’ depiction of the life of Jesus. (Articles 1 and 2)
3. Explain the character and nature of the gospel genre (Articles 1 and 2)
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the major subjects of Jesus’ life and teaching, especially the significance of Christological titles, kingdom of God, and Jesus’ messianic self-consciousness (Articles 1, 2)
5. Distinguish between the different portraits of who Jesus is as presented in the four Gospels (Articles 1, 2)
6. Extrapolate the significance of the life of Jesus both for the life of the church and for the life of the believer (Articles 1)

Lesson Topics
Lectures entail the following topics:

Lesson 1: Introduction
   • Week 1: Course Introduction

Lesson 2: Modern Views of Jesus
   • Week 2: Quest for the Historical Jesus

Lesson 3: The Gospel Themselves
   • Week 3: Gospel and Ancient Historiography
   • Week 4: Test #1

Lesson 4: Jesus, His Life, His Ministry
   • Week 5: Infancy and Childhood
   • Week 6: Baptism and Temptation
   • Week 7: Key Aspects of Jesus’ Ministry (Part 1)
   • Week 8: Key Aspects of Jesus’ Ministry (Part 2)
   • Week 9: Kingdom of God and Parables

Lesson 5: Jesus, His Death and Resurrection
   • Week 10: Last Days in Jerusalem
   • Week 11: The Passion
   • Week 12: Test #2

Lesson 6: Further Considerations: Presentations and Papers
Weeks 13-14: Christ's Messianic Identity; Presentations from Small Groups

Required Materials

- A Bible. Read Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

  * If using an English Bible, either the English Standard Version or the New Revised Standard Versions are recommended. Not recommended are the King James or New King James versions. Paraphrases are not allowed (such as The Message or The Living Bible). Either the ESV Study Bible (ISBN# 978-1433530838) or the NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture (ISBN# 978-0310926054) are worth having for the notes.


Other Readings may be provided by Dr. Jennings during the semester and will be found in "Resources"

**Recommended**


Course Requirements · Learning Activities

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The time spent in the course may vary considerably, depending on how well one is already prepared with a knowledge of the New Testament.

I. Gathering Information

Readings
You are expected to complete the relevant reading in preparation for each lecture, online forum, and conference. The "Course Schedule" details the reading that is due each week. The "Course Schedule" readings will come either from "Required Texts" or from "Assignments" in Sakai.

You will submit one "Reading / Lecture Reports" via Sakai. The "Reading / Lecture Report" cover a set material and is under "Assignments." .

Late Reading / Lecture reports will not be accepted.

Regarding Bible Readings: All readings are to be done this term. Previous readings do not apply. For example, if last term you read all of Mark, you would still need to read all of Mark on the assigned week.

Lectures
Each week you will listen to the appropriate "Lecture(s)" for that week. The "Lectures" assume the reading, and will frequently introduce something not discussed in the reading, as well as spotlight, or give prominence to, a topic addressed in the reading.

As stated earlier, each week's "Reading / Lecture" report is unique to that week. The report is available through Sakai. Students are to use these reports. Please do not send an "email" with your answers to the questions asked. You are to submit the relevant report.

Conferences
At one point during the course, you will participate in a "real-time" conference with Professor Jennings. This conference will last around one hour. Professor Jennings will respond to pre-submitted questions from students. Priority will be given to the following topics / questions: difficult statements, puzzling passages, interpretational challenges, discipleship challenges, preaching and teaching, and so on.

The purpose of these conferences is to explore "The Life of Jesus," especially as it pertains to ministry and faith. Professor Jennings will not answer questions he considers to be "exam" related questions.

Students who did not get to ask a question in the first conference will have priority in the second.

This conference will occur during week 12 (exam study week).

II. Testing Your Knowledge

There will be two exams. The exams must be taken in the presence of a proctor, and you will be allowed 60 minutes for the first exam and 3 hours for the second. The first exam will be comprised of a variety of question types (true-false, short-answer, long-answer). The second exam will be a long-answer question that will reflect how you might respond in a real-world situation. You will be given the question two weeks before the exam is due. While the student is encouraged to reflect on the exam questions during the two weeks prior to their writing of the actual exam -- making use, if they wish, of whatever notes and/or books they might wish to consult -- no books (other than an unmarked Bible and/or dictionary) may be used during the actual writing of the exam.
All exams in this course will be proctored. Your proctor must be someone who works for a church or volunteers for a church in an officially recognized capacity (pastor, elder, ministry leader, office administrator, etc.), a library or a school. Your proctor cannot be a member of your family or a current Gordon-Conwell student. Your proctor should be present throughout the time you are taking the exam.

The student will need to identify a suitable proctor and submit his/her name and email address to the Semlink office via the proctor registration form before every exam. The Semlink office will then email your proctor login information for your exam so he/she can help you login at the time when you take the exam. Please submit your proctor information to the Semlink office at least 2 business days before you plan to take the exam. Check with libraries in advance for special summer and holiday hours.

III. Demonstrating Further Understanding

Class participation is an important component in this course. Students will find that articulating what they are learning to others in the course is itself a learning exercise. They will also hear what others are finding interesting or struggling over, and they will be able to interact with each other about these matters.

"SLACK" Chat Rooms

Beginning with Week 2, each student will be assigned to a specific chatroom in an application called Slack. The Slack rooms will consist of no more than five students. You will be in the same chatroom for the entire class. These small groups will be the small groups for your Paper/Presentation group assignment.

Each week you are to participate regularly in your Slack chatroom. Participation includes responding to the weekly prompts that Professor Jennings posts as well as the comments of your fellow "chat-mates." The group is to interact on this question. These are meant to be "conversational" -- that is, they are not meant to be "long postings." Students should be responding early and often to these chats. IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT EACH GROUP ESTABLISH A SET TIME TO DO THEIR CHATS! This will often allow for a conversational feel.

Prompts will be given on the Monday of each week. All student postings are due by that Friday. Professor Jennings may, at times, offer his own comment.

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1. In each chatroom, a question or topic will be posted by Professor Jennings on the Monday of each week.
2. When you are responding to another student, it is helpful to identify the part of the student's response you are addressing, or offer a brief summary of the post if you are addressing the entire comment. You can identify the user using the @ symbol.
3. This is not an "all-or-nothing" assignment. Meaning, just because you post something does not mean you have met the expectations of the assignment. Your postings will be evaluated on the basis of their scholarship, courtesy, relevance to topic, and style. To heavily criticize another's view without finding its strengths, as well as to offer your own view as if its beyond contest is bad form, and hardly in keeping with one who has faith in Christ. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. (Phil 4:5).
4. Your comments are to be "on topic" and not diverge from the course.
5. Your groups Chat Room discussion will end at 11:55PM ET on the Friday of each week.
6. Part of the evaluation will include the overall effectiveness of the entire group's discussion.
   - Each student will receive two grades for each week's chat: an individual grade and a group grade.
7. As with all matters of this course, Professor Jennings reserves the right to stop the chatroom or redirect it as needed.
8. NOTE: Some chat topic will be two weeks in length, while others may be one week.

Group Presentation Project

Imagine you are asked to present, as a group, at a conference being hosted by local non-Christian college. The aim of the conference is to bring different perspectives on the historical Jesus. The theme of the conference is the following:

Jesus: History, Myth, Both? Your group has been asked to take an aspect of Jesus’ life and provide a 20-minute presentation on it. You have been given a great deal of leeway regarding the topic of your paper, but it must be directly (as opposed tangentially) related to the conference theme and audience. In other words, this presentation is to deal with the historicity question. Topics such as “Jesus and Sin” or “Jesus and Fulfillment of Prophecy” or “Why you need Jesus today” would not meet the theme. Your presentation should pick an aspect or event of Jesus’ ministry/life -- and then discuss the various positions that have been given regarding its historicity -- followed by a summation of your group’s conclusion.

- Your presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes. We suggest 8-12 slides, but remember to stay under 20 minutes.
- Your presentation is not “an opinion paper,” but should be consistent with the type of academic rigor one expects at a university-hosted conference.
- Accompanying your presentation should be a brief (less than 250 words) abstract of your presentation. Your abstract is "expected" to be published, and so must follow accepted, recognized formatting rules (Chicago Manual of Style is preferred).
- Also accompanying your presentation should be an annotated research bibliography (a bibliography that provides short summary statements of the source to aid a potential reader. A minimum of 10 sources is expected. Your sources should be "academic" -- that is "peer reviewed." Personal blogs, popular magazines, etc., are not considered "peer-reviewed."
- Your presentation and paper will receive a group grade. You will be asked to submit and evaluation on the process and each member's contribution. Should a member of the group be deemed (by Professor Jennings) to have failed to adequately contribute to the project, then that student's grade may be lowered -- including down to a "Failing" grade.
By 11:55pm ET Friday of Week 10, Submit your group’s presentation topic in Assignments. Select someone from your group to submit one document for the group.
By 11:55pm ET Friday of Week 11, Submit your group’s initial bibliography of resources for your presentation in Assignments. Select someone from your group to submit one document for the group.
By 11:55pm ET Friday of Week 12, Submit your group’s abstract for your group’s presentation in Assignments. Select someone from your group to submit one document for the group.
By 11:55pm ET Friday of Week 13, Submit your group’s initial set of slides/outline for your presentation in Assignments. Select someone from your group to submit one document for the group.
By 11:55pm ET Monday following Week 14, Create your group’s presentation in VoiceThread. Submit your group’s finalized bibliography of resources for your presentation in Assignments. Select someone from your group to submit one document for the group.

Throughout the course, you can take advantage of the different tools that are available to you. You can chat in your small group’s channel in Slack chat. Your school’s e-mail account is a Microsoft Office 365 account, where you can work on Word or PowerPoint collaboratively. You may use other products your group is comfortable with, but this is an option for you.

If you navigate to mail.gcts.edu and log into the system using your Gordon-Conwell e-mail (username@gordonconwell.edu) you can access other parts of your Office 365 account by clicking on the grid of small squares in the upper left corner.

Once you have put together your slides for the presentation, select a member of the group and upload the slides to the VoiceThread tool. Once the slides are in VoiceThread, you can use the systems commenting system to voice/video record your presentations over the slides.

More details for this assignment will be explained in the Lessons tool during Lesson 6.

**Grading Policy and Scale**

Your final grade for the course will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading and Video Lectures</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Slack&quot; Chat Rooms</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Group Presentation Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>64-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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</table>

"A" means "conspicuous excellence in both content and style; "B" means "exceeding the minimum in both content and style; "C" means "satisfactory work; "D" means "passing, but unsatisfactory," and "F" means "course has been failed."

Late work will not be accepted, but partial work will be.

"Conferences" will be graded on an "all or nothing" basis. All other Grading Rubrics can be found in the "Grading Rubrics" folder in "Resources" in Sakai.

Note: For each assignment (unless otherwise indicated), only a grade of A, B, C, D, or F will be given (e.g., no B-, C+, etc.). An "A" will be considered a 95; an "B" an 85, and so forth. All "Fs" will be considered a "55" unless it is a "0." The "+" and "-" evaluations are only given when they occur as a result of calculations at the end of term.
Proctored Exams
All exams in this course will be proctored. Your proctor must be someone who works for a church or volunteers for a church in an officially recognized capacity (pastor, elder, ministry leader, office administrator, etc.), a library or a school. Your proctor cannot be a member of your family or a current Gordon-Conwell student. Your proctor should be present throughout the time you are taking the exam.

The student will need to identify a suitable proctor and submit his/her name and email address to the Semlink office via the proctor registration form before every exam. The Semlink office will then email your proctor login information for your exam so he/she can help you login at the time when you take the exam. Please submit your proctor information to the Semlink office at least 2 business days before you plan to take the exam. Check with libraries in advance for special summer and holiday hours.

Instructor Feedback
The instructor will attempt to answer questions or messages within 24-48 hours, excluding Sundays. I will attempt to provide feedback on assignments and post grades in the gradebook within two weeks of submission.

Document Formatting and Submission
Papers are to follow the appropriate format for their discipline (APA for Psych; SBL for Biblical Studies; Chicago for all others):

"[Papers] should be submitted as attached files in PDF format. Assignments should be double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type or another font of similar size and appearance. Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies will not be accepted. Emailed-copies will not be accepted."

VeriCite
A tool called VeriCite has been added to Sakai to check for plagiarism. If you find that a part of your assignment has scored highly in VeriCite's review (these sections will be highlighted in red), that means your content is very similar to content in another source and is probably a quote or paraphrase that should be cited. Please use this as a tool to make sure you have cited everything you need in your assignment. Not everything this service highlights will be a violation, so use your best judgment.

Late Work
This course is designed in such a manner so as to encourage the student to spend time each and every week considering the apostle Paul and his letters. As such, it is also designed to prohibit "catching up," as well as "working ahead."

Late Work will not be accepted, but partially completed work always will be. In the event that illness (or similar matter) prevents you from doing any work at all during the entire week, i.e., you couldn't do any other work in any of your classes, work a job, attend meetings, serve in ministries, etc., you can request an extension from Professor Jennings. (Note: a request does not mean an automatic extension.)

Requests for extension because of travelling (for work, weddings, ministry, or any other reason [other than medical emergency]) will not be considered. Please do not ask.

Requests for extension because of a "heavy week" (at work, school, personal) will not be considered. Please do not ask.

Netiquette
Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

Additional Seminary Policies
For additional seminary policies that may pertain to this course, please refer to the Syllabus Addendum.