

## BNEW 211 \* The Life of Christ \* Fall 2009

### Instructor

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### Office Hours:

Monday: 1:00-5:00  
Tuesday: 10:30-12:00; 2:30-3:30  
Wednesday: 1:00-3:00  
Thursday: 10:30-12:00

**Please Read and Be Familiar with this Syllabus. In order to earn points for this class, each student is required to print off, sign, and turn in the statement at the end of this Syllabus.**

### An Invitation from Dr. Diles

I am at Harding to uplift Christ, teach Scripture, and serve you. As God gives me strength and wisdom, I want to do all three as consistently and faithfully as I am able. I invite you to contact me whenever you need me, whether it has to do with academic or personal concerns. My office hours are listed above and are posted on my office door. Appointments are not necessary but are encouraged in order to avoid your being inconvenienced.

### Notice to Students with Disabilities

**Students with Disabilities:** It is the policy for Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Therefore, any student with a *documented disability* condition (e.g. physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations, must contact the instructor and the Disabilities Office at the at the *beginning* of each semester. (If the diagnosis of the disability occurs during the academic year, the student must self-identify with the Disabilities Director *as soon as possible* in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the semester.) The Disabilities Office is located in Room 102 of the Lee Academic Center, telephone, (501) 279-4019.

**Assessment:** Harding University, since its charter in 1924, has been strongly committed to providing the best resources and environment for the teaching-learning process. The board, administration, faculty, and staff are wholeheartedly committed to full compliance with all criteria of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The university values continuous, rigorous assessment at every level for its potential to improve student learning and achievement and for its centrality in fulfilling the stated mission of Harding. Thus, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed that includes both the

Academic units and the Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units. Specifically, all academic units will be assessed in reference to the following Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose: **The University provides programs that enable students to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their academic disciplines for successful careers, advanced studies, and servant leadership.**

## Course Description and Outline

This course is a study of the Life of Christ as revealed in the canonical Gospels, with emphasis on the witness of the Synoptic Gospels. The first half of the semester will be concentrated on the Gospel of Mark and parallels from the other Gospels, and the second half will concentrate on additional episodes from the life of Jesus as found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

- I. Introductory material and Strobel Exam
- II. Mark (First in class exam)
- III. Matthew (Second in class exam)
- IV. Luke (Final comprehensive exam)

## Desired Outcomes

1. To *encounter* Jesus, including his person, teachings, values, vision of life, and way of being in relationship with God and other persons, so that the student will desire to follow Him.
2. To *engage* the Gospels, primarily the Synoptic Gospels, as the primary and historically reliable mediations of Jesus to us.
3. To *express* our observations, questions, wonderings, and convictions about living that emerge from encountering Jesus. This will provide a way to explore contemporary applications of the teachings of Jesus and to develop critical thinking skills.
4. To *experience* reading biblical narrative theologically and contextually and to develop skills for this spiritual discipline.
5. To *expand* our familiarity with:
  - The principle teachings of Jesus and their contemporary applications.
  - The purpose of each of the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus.
  - The historical and cultural setting of the life of Jesus.

## Learning Resources

1. *The Bible* (Old and New Testaments). Required. Most often in class, I will use the ESV or NASB, but will also refer to other English versions. You may use any committee translation you prefer. Bring your Bible to class each day. I cannot imagine your receiving benefit from our class time without an opened Bible before you. I reserve the right to subtract a point from your grade each time you do not have your Bible in class.

2. Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*. Required (students will be tested over the content of this book). As a former legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, Strobel launched a personal journey that carried him from atheism to ardent faith in Jesus. A contemporary apologetic that attempts to address the hard questions seekers raise about Jesus, the book is an enjoyable read.
3. N.T. (Tom) Wright, *The Original Jesus*. Required (read and review). This book attempts to place Jesus in his first century Palestinian Jewish context.
4. Adequate materials for taking notes.

## Course Requirements

- Regular and punctual attendance

Responsible participation in a Bible class is an integral part of the Harding experience. Though you are encouraged to be present for each of our class meetings this semester, you are allowed the equivalent of one week of unexcused absences (for a daily class, that is five; for a MWF, that is three, for a TTh class, that is two, for a night course, one). Use them responsibly. The instructor of this course intends to record attendance each day. Three (3) tardies count as one unexcused absence. If you are late to class it is your responsibility to see that you are not charged with an absence. Tardies must be registered on the day you are late to class. Punctual means in class and in your seat on time. The instructor reserves the right to lock the doors when the bell rings and count anyone not in their seat as absent.

EACH additional unexcused absence beyond the number allowed will be penalized as follows (assuming a 100 point scale for course grading):

For daily classes: 2 percent off the final grade

For MWF classes: 3 percent off the final grade

For TR classes: 4.5 percent off the final grade

For weekly classes: 9 percent off the final grade

When students accumulate unexcused absences totaling at least 20% (6 absences) of the total class meetings (the equivalent of three weeks) for the semester, they will be given a grade of "WF" for non-attendance (a WF - Withdrawn Failing) and referred to the office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs where they will receive further discipline for violation of academic policy. See the catalog for further clarification.

If a student accumulates two "WF"s in Bible courses due to excessive absences, this will result in a "Bible attendance suspension" for at least one semester.

For an absence to be excused, the instructor of this course must receive written confirmation from the appropriate source within one week of the student's return to class. (Excuses are issued by the school nurse, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a coach, or a sponsor and reported in Pipeline. Absences are not excused until posted in Pipeline.) In addition to the above, the instructor of this course reserves the right to discern whether or not a student is taking advantage of the University's excuse policy.

Excused absences are given for the following: Sickness, death in the immediate family, and officially sanctioned school activities. In ALL cases the absence must be cleared with me BEFORE class, either in person, by telephone, or by e-mail, and in the case of sickness or officially sanctioned school activity, you must bring me a hard-copy excuse from Pipeline, doctor, nurse, or if living off campus, relative with whom you live (for sickness). It is YOUR responsibility to print off the excuse and bring it to me. **I will NOT search pipe-line for class excuses, and the nurse's office does not e-mail them to me.**

\*NOTE: Students who have more than six absences, whether excused or unexcused, are not eligible for extra credit.

**I keep the official attendance record which you may look at at any time. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record.**

- Appropriate conduct
  - Your conduct should be in keeping with Christian standards, the policies of Harding University (including dress code), and the maturity expected of university students.
  - Display a respectful attitude toward other students in the class and toward me, even when you do not feel like doing so. It will be safe to think and safe to disagree. Arrogant, rude, and disrespectful behavior, however, will not be tolerated.
  - If you bring food or drink to the classroom, you are responsible for cleaning any spills, crumbs, etc. If this privilege is abused, the policy may be changed at the discretion of the instructor. NO food or drinks (other than water) will be allowed in the classroom on exam days.
  - Please, have all cell phones and audible pagers turned off during class. **If your cell phone goes off in class, or if you are caught using it without permission for any reason the phone will be confiscated and you will be marked with an unexcused absence for that day.** Lap-tops may NOT be used in this class without written permission from me. NO cell phones, pagers, lap-tops, i-pods, or other electronic devices will be allowed in class on exam days.
  - The teacher not the bell dismisses class. Please do not start packing your books until class is dismissed.
- Preparation for and participation in class
  - You are expected to take an active role in the learning process, which includes completing assigned readings and other assignments before class, attending class, paying attention, taking notes, asking and answering questions, participating in discussions, and being prepared for the exams.

You are encouraged to participate fully in class. Respectfully engage fellow students and me. Ask, answer, probe, question, discuss, and think.

## Learning Activities

The final grade will be based on the sum of points from the following learning activities.

### Required Learning Activities

1. Exams (two exams, excluding the final, 100 and 50 points)	150 points (35.7%)
2. Final exam (partially comprehensive)	100 points (23.8%)
3. Strobel take-home exam	50 points (11.9%)
4. Wright Review	25 points (6%)
5. Reflection papers	70 points (16.7%)
6. Parable Assignment	25 points (6%)

Total points: at least 420

Plus other assignments or quizzes as necessary

Plus optional activities (extra credit)

- In NO CASE will optional activities improve your overall score more than 1 letter grade!
  - Students with PERFECT attendance (meaning no absences, whether excused or not, and with less than 3 tardies) will receive a bonus of **10** points at the end of the semester.
  - In NO CASE can you receive an A or B in the class without completing the Strobel exam and the Wright review.
1. Strobel take-home exam: Students are required to read Strobel's book and answer questions taken from the content of the book. You can print the exam from my web page. Answers must be **hand-written** and legible. Each student is expected to do his or her own work. Collaboration is considered cheating. Due date for turning in answers to the questions is class time Thursday **September 10**. Notice. This serves as an exam and must be turned in on time. Late exams will receive a score of zero.
  2. Mid-term text exam: The mid-term exam will cover introductory material and the Gospel of Mark.
  3. Second text exam: The second exam will be after the mid-term and before the final and will cover the Gospel of Matthew.
  4. Final text exam: The final exam will cover both new material from the Gospel of Luke as well as material previously covered throughout the semester. The Final Exam is scheduled for **Tuesday, 10:30-12:30** of finals week.

5. Wright Book Review: Students are required to read and write a two page review (**I will not read beyond two pages**) of Tom Wright's book *The Original Jesus*. By turning in the paper you are affirming that you have in fact read the entire book. The paper should be identified with your name, date, class name, book name and author's name. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman size 10 font or larger, **stapled (each copy stapled separately)**, and should include a summary of the book's content (6 pts.), four strengths of the book (with examples, 2 points each), three weaknesses or items with which you disagree (with examples, 2 points each), and your personal reactions to the book (5 pts.). Please itemize strengths and weaknesses clearly. Students should turn in **2 copies of the paper (stapled separately)** and the paper should be submitted on time to turnitin.com. The password for this class is **synoptic** and the class ID is **2794272**. Papers not submitted to turnitin.com are considered as not turned in at all. The book should follow the guidelines for writing given on my web page. Grammar, style, and spelling will also be factored into your grade and I reserve the right to refuse to read papers that are unintelligible. Wright Book reviews are due **Tuesday, October 27**. Late items will receive a score of zero. Jammed printers and unreadable disks are not valid excuses for late assignments.

6. Reflection Papers: According to the schedule provided, students will be expected to read the texts of the synoptic gospels and turn in regular reflection papers. Each paper is worth 5 pts. and is to be no more than one page in length (hand written or typed). Each paper should represent the student's own personal reflections, lessons learned, new ideas, personal convictions, etc. based on the reading of the assigned text. While it should NOT be simply a summary of the text, comments and reflections should indicate that the student has in fact read the text. A student who fails to turn in a reflection paper on time due to an excused absence may turn the paper in when he or she returns to class.

7. Parable assignment: Will be explained in class.

Optional Book reviews (extra credit): Students whose performance on exams falls short of their goals may accumulate up to **23** "make-up" points by completing original written book reviews. Students may select an approved book related to the study of Jesus or the Gospels and write a two page review (**I will not read beyond 2 pages**). The book selected by the student must be one he/she has never read before. By turning in a review of a book, the student is affirming, "I myself have read this entire book, a book I have never read before." The paper should be identified with your name, date, class name, book name, author's name, publisher, and year of publication. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman size 10 font or larger, **stapled** and should include a summary of the book's content (6 pts.), three strengths of the book (with examples, 2 points each), three weaknesses or items with which you disagree (with examples, 2 points each), and your personal reactions to the book (5 pts.). Please itemize strengths and weaknesses clearly. Students should turn in **2 copies** of the paper (stapled separately) and the paper should be submitted on time to turnitin.com. The password for this class is **synoptic** and the class ID is **2794272**. Papers not submitted to turnitin.com are considered as not turned in at all. The book should follow the guidelines for writing given on my web page Grammar, style, and spelling will also be factored into your grade and I reserve the right to refuse to read papers that are unintelligible. Optional book reviews will not be accepted after **December 1**.

## Evaluation

Grades are meant to evaluate a particular kind of performance or achievement. I am aware that grades are incapable of measuring some things, including the most important kind of learning that Christians are to pursue—learning to be more and more like Christ in heart, mind, and actions. An academic grade cannot measure the degree to which a student has progressed in Christian character. Never let your grade in an academic class be the primary measurement of your selfhood.

**1. Grading Scale:** 90% and up = A; 80% - 89% = B; 70% - 79% = C; 60% - 69% = D; less than 60% = F

2. Attendance may affect your final grade (See attendance policy above).

3. Work submitted after the class period in which it is due will not be graded unless otherwise noted above. However, in order to be eligible for an A or B certain assignments must be turned in whether they will be graded or not. See above.

4. Unexcused absences from exams results in a score of zero for that exam. There is no penalty for missing an exam due to an excused absence, but the exam must be made up within one week of your return to class, or else a zero for that exam will be recorded. Setting up a time to make up an exam is your responsibility, not the teacher's. You would be wise to inform me ahead of time when you know you will be absent for an exam.

5. Honesty and integrity are characteristics that should describe each one of us as servants of Jesus Christ. As your instructor, I pledge that I will strive for honesty and integrity in how I handle the content of this course and in how I interact with each of you. I ask that you join me in pledging to do the same.

Academic dishonesty will result in penalties up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade and will be reported to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. All instances of dishonesty will be handled according to the procedures delineated in the Harding University catalog. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: (1) handing in work you copied from someone else rather than doing it yourself; (2) submitting a paper written in whole or in part by another student whether in this semester or a previous one; (3) copying another student's answer or using a cheat sheet during tests; (4) cutting and pasting off Internet sites; (5) handing in material you have purchased; (6) falsely stating that you have read the gospels when in fact you have not; (7) plagiarizing other authors' material.

This course offers you an opportunity to demonstrate your integrity. If you are caught cheating, you may receive an F for this course.

### *How to Succeed in this Class:*

1. Always attend and pay attention.
2. Take good but not excessive notes. Follow along in your Bible, underline important verses, and make notations in the margins. Write down definitions. Get names, and principles, but don't try to write down everything.
3. Turn in assignments on time.
4. Get involved with the material. Participate in class.
5. When you don't understand something, ask questions.
6. Tell someone else about what you have learned.

### Suggested Books for Review

The student may choose from the following books, or he/she may read a book pre-approved by the teacher.

- Barclay, William. *Jesus as They Saw Him*.  
Barnett, Paul. *Jesus and the Logic of History*.  
Blomberg, Craig. *Jesus and the Gospels*.  
Bock, Darrell L. *Studying the Historical Jesus*.  
Brown, Raymond. *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*.  
Bruce, F.F. *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*.  
\_\_\_\_\_. *Jesus: Past, Present, and Future: The Work of Christ*.  
Griffith-Jones, Robin. *The Four Witnesses*.  
Habermas, Gary R. *The Historical Jesus*.  
Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Real Jesus*.  
Kaiser, Walter. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*.  
Ladd, George Eldon. *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*.  
MacArthur, John F. *The Gospel According to Jesus*.  
Manson, T.W. *The Servant-Messiah*.  
Marshall, I. Howard. *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*.  
McDowell, Josh. *More Than a Carpenter*.  
Shelly, Rubel. *The Names of Jesus*.  
Stein, Robert H. *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation*.  
Stott, John. *The Incomparable Christ*.  
Van Voorst, Robert E. *Jesus Outside the New Testament*.  
Wilkins, Michael F. and J.P. Moreland. *Jesus Under Fire*.  
Witherington, Ben. *The Jesus Quest*.  
Woodruff, James. *Between the Rock and a Hard Place*.  
Wright, N.T., *The Challenge of Jesus*.

## Reading Schedule

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Date	Assignments
T 9/1	Mk. 1-4
TH 9/10	Strobel Exam due
T 9/15	Mk. 5-8
T 9/22	Mk. 9-10
T 9/29	Mk. 11-14
T 10/6	Mk. 15-16
TH 10/15	Mt. 1-4
TH 10/22	Mt. 5-7
T 10/27	Wright Review
T 11/3	Mt. 8-12
T 11/10	Mt. 14-23
TH 11/12	Mt. 24-28
TH 11/19	Luke 1-3
T 12/1	Luke 4-9 optional reviews
TH 12/3	Luke 10-18
T 12/8	Luke 19-24

I affirm that I have read and understand the contents of this syllabus and am willing to abide by them as a condition for participating in the class Life of Christ, taught by Dr. Allen Diles.