

UNIFICATION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCR 5432 - THE PARABLES OF JESUS
Intensive 2022

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will focus on a close study of the parables of Jesus in their cultural and literary contexts. Special attention will be given to recent literary analysis of the parables in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of Thomas.

The parables of Jesus are found in the three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the Gospel of Thomas. We will be studying all or most of the parables found in these texts. In our examination of these stories, we'll consider their literary form and placement within each gospel and the ways scholars of the New Testament and early Christianity have analyzed these texts. Special attention will be given to recent literary analysis of the parables in the Synoptic Gospels.

New Testament scholars believe that Mark's gospel was the first gospel to be written, and was used as a source by both Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke also had access to other sources, both oral and written, for their accounts of Jesus' teaching. One of these hypothesized sources is known as "Q" (for German Quelle, or Source), and is usually taken to refer to material shared by Matthew and Luke. But the parallel versions of the parables point to a more complicated picture: some parables appear in all three NT gospels and Thomas; some appear only in Matthew and Luke; some in Matthew and Thomas; some in Luke and Thomas. Scholars of the synoptic problem are interested in these inter-relationships and the formation of the gospel traditions in their oral and written form.

Our concern in this course is not so much with the sources, but with the analysis and interpretation of the parables as individual stories, in different versions, and as parts of larger compositions (i.e., Mark, Matt, Lk.). In this course, we'll examine the parables as parts of these gospel texts, but we will also consider their life as parabolic stories both before and after the writing of the gospels. Most important, we'll consider our own contexts as scholars and interpreters of the parables.

The Parables of Jesus remain the vehicle of choice by modern scholars for arriving at the clearest view of Jesus' teaching. They remain relatively unaffected by quests for the historical Jesus and controversies over putative rabbinic, gnostic or Hellenistic sources for the message of the kingdom of God. At the same time, important changes have taken

place in the art of parabolic interpretation. The older theory, which was based on a distinction between moral themes and nativistic story-telling, has given way to seeing parables as shock therapy with the reader in the role of the victim. Instead of rural scenes of timeless agricultural routines – planting and harvesting – the critic now mines the stories for angles on bureaucrats, bankers, and imperial corruption. Desperate men and women inhabit the world of the parables – an accused embezzler, an impoverished widow. Sometimes the moral lesson is crystal clear. Jesus' social commentary manages to combine the highest spiritual values with the lives of born-losers. Instead of clarifying Jesus, the parables have been described by one writer as designed to focus light on the inmost thought of the reader.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the course students will:

1. Interpret the parables of Jesus with regard to both form and content.
2. Recognize the distinction that have been made between parables, allegories, and exemplary stories.
3. Understand modern methods of literary criticism that will aid and illuminate the study of the parables.
4. Recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables that have been inserted by the writer for various reasons.
5. Understand the contemporary application of Jesus' parables.

TEXTBOOKS

RSV Version of the Bible

John Crossan, In Parables, Harper and Row Publishers. San Francisco. ISBN 0-06-061609-1, 1992- \$14.13

Robert Funk, The Parables of Jesus, The Jesus Seminar. Polebridge Press, California. ISBN 0-944344-07-0, 1998 -\$18

Eta Linneman, Parables of Jesus Introduction and Exposition, Hollen Street Press Limited, Great Britain. 0-281-02891-5, \$13.95

Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, Parables of the Kingdom, Liturgical Press. Collegeville, Minnesota. ISBN 978-0-8146-2993-2, 2017 -\$9.95

Charles W. Hedrick, Many Things in Parables, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville. ISBN 0-664-22427-X, 2004 -\$21.87

Grading Rubric:

In calculating the final grade for the course, letter grades for assignments are converted into the following numerical equivalents, and the total is then converted back to a letter grade:

A	97	A-	91.5	B+	87
B	82	B-	77	C+	72.5
C	67.5	C-	62.5	D+	57.5
D	53	D-	50	F	0

This scale severely penalizes Fs. Therefore, it is better to hand in a poorly done assignment than not to hand one in at all.

In computing the cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.) the following quality point scale is used:

A 4.00	A- 3.67	B+ 3.33
B 3.00	B- 2.67	C+ 2.33
C 2.00	C- 1.67	D+ 1.33
D 1.00	D- 0.67	F 0.00

Incompletes are given only when there are compelling medical or personal reasons.

*See UTS catalog for a detailed grading policy.

Netiquette

When posting online or by email, you need to follow the same ethical standards and laws as you would in face-to-face communications. Your language should be respectful of faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone, and do not provide personal information that could put yourself at risk. The Seminaries LMS has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. Yet please be aware that anything that you post in discussions and groups in which other students participate can be retrieved by others and copied.

Do not download and share course materials without permission of the instructor, as this may violate copyright. UTS reserves the right to delete postings on UTS maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing abusive, hateful or

embarrassing to any person or entity, or otherwise, is a violation of the Student Code.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to Director of the DMin. Program for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

The first instance of plagiarism in this course, the student must repeat the assignment. If the student plagiarizes again, the student will receive an "F" for the course.

Evaluation

Book Reviews and reflections:	25%
Attendance and participation:	10%
Class Presentations	5%
Written assignments	5%
Final Paper	25%

Pre-Course Assignment: Reflections and report on one of the books listed in the required texts to be presented on the second day of the classes.

Post Course Assignment: Reading of all materials required and a 12–15-page paper on Parables. Topic may be selected in consultation with the professor.

Class Schedule:

Monday: Introduction to the Gospels and the Teaching styles of Jesus - Discussion on the first 2 chapters of *John Crossan, In Parables*, Discussion on the pre-recorded Lecture.

Tuesday: Presentation on book reports. Discussion on Chapters 3 & 4 - *John Crossan, In Parables*. Discussion on the pre-recorded lecture.

Wednesday: Classification of Parables. Parables of Grace, Parables of the Kingdom, Parables of Judgement. *Robert Funk, The Parables of Jesus*,

Thursday: Parables of the Kingdom and Judgement: Interpretation of the parables of the Kingdom: *Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, Parables of the Kingdom*

Friday: Parables of Grace - Discussion on the final paper. Summary of learning. Evaluation.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Older Allegorical Interpretation

Roukema, R. 'The Good Samaritan in Ancient Christianity'. *Vigiliae Christianae* 58, no. 1 (2004): 56–74.

Wailes, Stephen L. *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables*. Publications of the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Modern Singular Interpretation and Form Criticism Bultmann, Rudolf. *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Translated by John Marsh. Revised. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Dibelius, Martin. *From Tradition to Gospel*. Greenwood, S.C.: Attic, 1971.

Dodd, C. H. *Parables of the Kingdom*. Revised edition. Prentice Hall College Div, 1961.

Manson, T. W. *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of Its Form and Content*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1935.

Manson, William. 'The Purpose of the Parables: A Re-Examination of St Mark 4:10-12'. *The Expository Times* 68, no. 5 (February 1957): 132–35.

Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*. 2nd rev. New York: Scribner, 1972.

Jesus' Parables and Jewish Parables

Daube, David. *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 2. New York: Arno Press, 1973.

Johnston, Robert M, and Harvey K McArthur. *They Also Taught in Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era*. Grand Rapids: Academie Bks; Zondervan, 1990.

Neusner, Jacob. 'The Parable ("Mashal")'. In *Ancient Israel, Judaism, and Christianity in Contemporary Perspective: Essays in Memory of Karl-Johan Illman*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, Antti Laato, Risto Nurmela, and Karl-Gustav Sandelin, 259–83. Lanham, Md: UPA, 2005.

Oesterley, W. O. E. *The Gospel Parables in the Light of Their Jewish Background*. Warburton Lectures. London: SPCK, 1936.

Safrai, Ze'ev, and R. Steven Notley. *Parables of the Sages*. Annotated edition edition. Jerusalem: Carta Jerusalem, 2015.

Stern, D. *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, UK, 1991.

Stern, Frank. *A Rabbi Looks at Jesus' Parables*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Young, Brad H. *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*. Hendrickson Publishing, 2009.

Modern Existential, Structuralist and Post-structuralist Interpretation

Fuchs, Ernst. *Studies of the Historical Jesus*. Studies in Biblical Theology 42. London,: SCM Press, 1964.

Crossan, John Dominic. In *Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*. New York, 1973.

Crossan, John Dominic. *Cliffs of Fall: Paradox and Polyvalence in the Parables of Jesus*. New York: Seabury Pr, 1980.

Crossan, John Dominic. In *Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*. 2nd ed. Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1994.

Crossan, John Dominic. *The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction About Jesus*. New York: HarperOne, 2014.

Capon, Robert Farrar. *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus*. Chicago: Eerdmans, 2002.

Funk, Robert W. *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology*. Harper & Row, 1966.

Funk, Robert Walter. *Parables and Presence: Forms of the New Testament Tradition*. First Edition. Fortress Pr, 1982.

Groupe d'Entrevernes., and Jacques. Geninasca. *Signs and Parables: Semiotics and Gospel Texts*. Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series ; 23. Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978.

Linnemann, Eta. *Jesus of the Parables: Introduction and Exposition*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Patte, Daniel. *Semiology and Parables: Exploration of the Possibilities Offered by Structuralism for Exegesis*. Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 9. Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976.

Perrin, Norman. *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbolism and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation*. First paperback edition. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Perrin, Norman. *Parable and Gospel*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006. Ricoeur, Paul. 'Biblical Hermeneutics'. *Semeia* 4 (1975): 29–148.

Schillington, V. George, ed. *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997.

Scott, Bernard Brandon. *Hear Then the Parable: Commentary on the Parables of Jesus*. Revised. Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress, 1989.

Scott, Bernard Brandon. *Re-Imagine the World*. Polebridge Press, 2011.

Thiselton, Anthony C. 'Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuchs's Hermeneutics in the Light of Linguistic Philosophy'. *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23, no. 4 (November 1970): 437–68.

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Tolbert, Mary Ann. *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989.

Modern Rhetorical and Neo-allegorical Interpretation

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Poet and Peasant: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976.

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables, Their Culture and Style*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting The Parables*. Downers Grove Ill.: IVP Academic, 2006.

Boucher, Madeleine I. *The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 6. Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1977.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*. *The Bible in Its World; Bible in Its World*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Hultgren, Arland J. 'Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Giving Voice to Their Theological Significance'. In *Hermeneutik Der Gleichnisse Jesu: Methodische Neuansätze Zum*

Grading Rubric: The Rev. Dr. Jacob David: This explains how papers are evaluated, points for different levels of proficiency. To earn a good grade, study this rubric. Make sure that your paper includes all its elements and meets all the criteria.

Main Elements	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not evident	Value 60 total
1.Theological content	Theological understanding of the parables	Biblical understanding	Unclear discussion	Coherent flow of thought	15
2. Challenges of leadership as Pastor and Prophet	Description of the context of present understanding	The understanding of complex post-modern living	Description of the relevance of the parables	A Non-traditional understanding of biblical interpretation	15
3. Application of theological principles in Ministry	Problems in application are discussed and analyzed	Problems are discussed but analysis is weak	Practical, innovative ways of understanding the parables	Analysis of your willingness to teach the new understanding	20
4. Your personal analysis	Your opinion backed by your theological and scriptural understanding.	Rationale behind your understanding	Your view is weakly argued	Lack of documentation for your opinion.	10
General Criteria					40 total
Critical thinking	Insightful analysis and conclusions supported with evidence	Logical analysis but evidence is thin.	No coherent flow of defense with evidence	No evidence presented	15
Research and citations	Six or more different scholarly sources used and correctly cited.	Six or more different scholarly sources but deficient citations.	Fewer than six sources. Deficient citations	No evidence of research	15
Writing	Grammar, spelling, and use of quotations are satisfactory	Weakness in grammar, spelling, paragraphing or quotations	Weakness in two areas	Weakness in three or more areas	10
					100

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Grading Rubric: This explains how papers are evaluated, points for different levels of proficiency. To earn a good grade, study this rubric. Make sure that your paper includes all its elements and meets all

Learning outcomes	Novice	Approaching	Proficient	Advanced	Score
1. Interpret the parables with form and content	Can understand interpretation of parables	Can understand interpretation of parables 30%	Can understand interpretation of parables 60%	Can understand interpretation of parables 80%	
2. Distinction of parables, allegories and exemplary stories	Can identify distinctions of parables and other stories	Can identify distinctions of parables and other stories 30%	Can identify distinctions of parables and other stories 60%	Can identify distinctions of parables and other stories 80%	
3. understand methods of literary criticism	Limited ability to understand methods of literary criticism	ability to understand methods of literary criticism 30%	ability to understand methods of literary criticism 60%	ability to understand methods of literary criticism 80%	
4. Recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables inserted by the writers	Limited ability to recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables inserted by the writers	Limited ability to recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables inserted by the writers 30%	Limited ability to recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables inserted by the writers 60%	Limited ability to recognize and identify redactional elements in the parables inserted by the writers 80%	
5. Understand the social situation in which Jesus lived, and see those differences and similarities with our own lives.	Limited understanding of social situation in which Jesus lived, and see those differences and similarities with our own lives.	understanding of social situation in which Jesus lived, and see those differences and similarities with our own lives. 30%	understanding of social situation in which Jesus lived, and see those differences and similarities with our own lives.60%	understanding of social situation in which Jesus lived, and see those differences and similarities with our own lives.80%	

Assessment Map of Assignments to Course Objectives: 2022

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Course Objectives	Class Presentations and reports	Group Presentations	Written Assignments	Final Paper
Understanding God's purpose for the ministry in your life				
Be familiar with understanding of God's ministry from different religious perspectives				
Developing tools for ministry and create a broad common ground for caring for souls.				
Recognize their own strengths and weaknesses the essential role in ministry of God and God's representatives for conceiving peaceful solutions and for actually building peace				
Recognize the organic connection between peaceful individuals and families and realizing a peaceful society				
Models for effective faith formation and Pastoral Ministry				