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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **MTG204.7 Synoptic Gospels Exegesis and Theology for Proclamation (SCMOI)** |
| **Semester 1, 2025** |



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| Unit Supervisor & Lecturer | Very Rev. Dr Peter A. L. Hill  [frpeter@scmoi.edu.au](mailto:frpeter@scmoi.edu.au) | | |
| Delivery | Wednesday 6pm – 8pm (AEST)  Fully Online | | |
| AQF Level | 7 | Credit Points | 6 |
| *Please note*: This unit is taught in parallel with a postgraduate equivalent. This means that you will share learning experiences with students completing a postgraduate award; however, the learning outcomes, work for assessment, and some other expectations will differ. Your requirements should be clearly articulated in this unit description. If you have any concerns or queries about Tabor’s practice of parallel teaching, please speak to your lecturer. | | | |

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

This advanced exegetical unit facilitates in-depth exegetical and theological analysis of the Synoptic Gospels and their proclamation in diverse contemporary contexts*.* Students critically engage with current issues in Jesus and Gospel studies with specific focus on the Gospel of Matthew in its theological, rhetorical and socio-historical contexts and its proclamation in contemporary Christian communities. Particular attention will be given to the patristic interpretation of the Gospels. On completion of this unit, students will be better equipped to confidently and faithfully communicate the message of the Gospels.

**PREREQUISITES**

MTG201.7 Interpreting the New Testament

**CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to participate in class discussions, to complete required readings and weekly exercises and to submit assessment work on time. Attendance at the scheduled online classes is compulsory. Failure to attend three or more classes without permission may result in a fail-mark for the unit.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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| **ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS TASK THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:** | **RELATED CONTENT** | **RELATED ASSESSMENT** |
| 1. Analyse contemporary issues in Jesus and Gospel studies, explaining the significance for interpreting one of the Synoptic Gospels |  | 1 |
| 1. Analyse the theological, rhetorical and socio-historical contexts for Jesus and the Gospel traditions, explaining the significance for interpreting one of the Synoptic Gospels |  | 1, 3 |
| 1. Critically apply hermeneutical theory, exegetical methods and skills to the interpretation of one of the Synoptic Gospels in its theological, rhetorical and socio-historical contexts |  | 2, 3 |
| 1. Creatively communicate clear, coherent and appropriately targeted expositions of one of the Synoptic Gospels to diverse audiences |  | 2 |

**CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST OFFERED**

Tabor unit not previously delivered by SCMOI

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (Students should purchase these texts)

Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020).

Archbishop Averky Taushev, *The Four Gospels*. *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament* (Vol. 1; tr. Nicholas Kotar; Jordanville: HTSP, 2013).

Gregory A. White (ed.), *NET Bible Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 2004). Available as a free pdf document, online at <https://bible.org/assets/pdf/White_ntsynopsis.pdf>

The text of Holy Scripture used in class is *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008).

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY**

# Alfeyev, Hilarion*, Jesus Christ: His Life and Teaching* (Vol. 1 – 3; Yonkers, NY: SVS Press, 2018-2021).

# Bauckham, Richard J., "For Whom Were Gospels Written?" *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 55 (1999): 865–82.

# Bauckham, Richard, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

Baxter, Wayne S., “Mosaic Imagery In The Gospel Of Matthew,” *Trinity Journal* 20 (1999): 69–83

Beale, G.K, and D. A. Carson, (eds), *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

Behr, John, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2006).

Bernier, Jonathan, *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

Black, David Allan, *Why Four Gospels?* (Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2001).

Black, David Allan, and David R. Beck, (eds.), *Rethinking the Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Bock, Darrell L., and J. Ed Komosczewski (eds), *Jesus, Skepticism and the Problem of History: Criteria and Context in the Study of Christian Origins* ((Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019).

Bora, Ion-Sorin, “The Gospel of Matthew: The First Writing in the New Testament Canon,” *Orthodox Theology in Dialogue* 8 (2022): 168–77.

Brown, Jeannine K. *The Gospels as Stories: A Narrative Approach to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020).

Coogan, Jeremiah, and Jacob A. Rodriguez, “Ordering Gospel Textuality in the Second Century,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* NS 74 (2023): 57–109.

Dungan, David Laird, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor, 1999).

Evans*,* Craig A., *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007).

Evans*,* Craig A., *Jesus and the Manuscripts: What We Can Learn from the Oldest Texts* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2020).

Farley, Lawrence R., *The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith, 2008).

Ford, Mary S., *The Soul’s Longing: An Orthodox Christian Perspective on Biblical Interpretation*. (Waymart: St Tikhon Monastery Press, 2015).

Freedman, David N. (Gen. ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols; New York: Doubleday, Anchor, 1997).

Gathercole, Simon, “The Alleged Anonymity of the Canonical Gospels,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* NS 69 (2018): 447–76.

Green, Joel B., Jeanine K. Brown & Nicholas Perrin (eds)**,**Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (2nd edn; London: IVP, 2020).

Gundry, Robert H., *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

Hays, Richard B., *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

Hill, Peter A. L., “The Diatessaron: A Short Introduction,” *Orthodox Faith and Life* 1 (2019): 28–60.

Hurtado, Larry W., *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

Keener, Craig S., *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009).

Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2011).

Mihoc, Vasile, “Principles of Orthodox Hermeneutics,” in *Vetus Testamentum Congress Volume Ljubjana 2007* (Louvain: Brill, 2007), 293–320.

Mitchell, Margaret, “Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that ‘The Gospels Were Written for All Christians’,” *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 36–79.

Oden, Thomas C. (Gen. ed.), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament* (14 vols; Downers Grove: IVP, 2005).

O’Keefe, John J., and Reno, R.R., *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Perrin, Nicholas, *Jesus the Priest* (London: SPCK, 2018).

Rillera, Andrew Remington, *Lamb of the Free: Recovering the Varied Sacrificial Understandings of Jesus’s Death* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2024).

# Theophylact of Ochrid, *The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Bl. Theophylact’s Explanation of the New Testament, Vol. 1; trans. Christopher Stade; House Springs, MI: Chrysostom Press, 1992).

# Williams, D. H. (ed.), *Matthew: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators* (The Church’s Bible; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

# Zigabenos, Euthymios, *Commentary on the Holy Gospel of Matthew* (tr. Nun Christina; n.p.: Virgin Mary of Australia and Oceania, 2024).

**SEMESTER PROGRAM**

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| **Date** | **Week** | **Lecture / Workshop Topic** | **Set readings & exegesis (see Assessment Task 1)** |
| 26 Feb | 1 | What are Gospels? Testimonies to the Gospels (1st & 2nd Centuries); Why Four Gospels? Historical reliability. Sample exegesis: Matt 11:7–15 | Strauss, 463–83. |
| 3 – 7 Mar |  | **First Week of Great Lent – NO CLASSES** |  |
| 12 Mar | 2 | Historical, Geographical, Religious and Cultural Setting of the Gospels. | Strauss, 119–209.  Seminar: Matt 2:13–18 |
| 19 Mar | 3 | The Synoptic ‘Problem’ Intertextuality  ***Census Date Monday 19th, last date to withdraw without financial penalty*** | Strauss, 57–86.  Seminar: Matt 4: 1–11 |
| 26 Mar | 4 | Historical and Literary Criticism of the Gospel; Principles of Patristic Interpretation; Historical-Critical Interpretation; Rhetorical, Missional and Narrative Interpretations. | Strauss, pp. 261–96.  Seminar: Bora, “The Gospel of Matthew: The First Writing in the New Testament Canon” |
| 2 Apr | 5 | “The Quest for the Historical Jesus”  Character & Characterisation | Strauss, 415–61.  Seminar: Matt 16:12–20 |
| 9 Apr | 6 | The Birth and Infancy Narratives, the Beginning of Jesus’ Public Ministry  [*Multimedia Presentations*] | Strauss, pp. 499–524.  Seminar: Matt 1:18–25 |
| 14–25 Apr |  | **Holy Week, Pascha, Bright Week – NO CLASSES** |  |
| 30 Apr | 7 | Announcing and Inaugurating the Kingdom | Strauss, pp. 563–78.  Seminar: Baxter, “Mosaic Imagery In The Gospel Of Matthew” |
| 7 May | 8 | The Sermon on the Mount | Taushev, pp. 62–73.  Seminar: Matt 5:1– 12 |
| 14 May | 9 | Son of Man; Son of David; Son of God | Strauss, pp. 578–89.  Seminar: Matt 15:21–28 |
| 21 May | 10 | The Olivet Discourse | Taushev, pp. 185–91.  Seminar: Matt 24:32 – 44 |
| 28 May | 11 | Passover and the Institution of the Eucharist | Taushev, pp. 194 – 202.  Seminar: Matt 26:26 –30; Mark 14:22–26; Luke 22:15–20. |
| 4 June | 12 | The Passion Accounts | Strauss, pp. 591–609. Seminar: Matt 24: 32–44 |
| 11 June | 13 | The Resurrection Accounts | Strauss, pp. 611–27  Seminar: Matt 28: 16–20. |

**ASSESSMENT TASKS**

**Due Dates Summary:**

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| **Assessment** | **Words** | **Value** | **Due Date** |
| 1. Quiz | 1000 (equiv) | 30% | Weekly in Class (Weeks 2 – 11) |
| 1. Multimedia Presentation | 1500 (equiv) | 30% | Wednesday, 9 April (presentation in class) and submission of artifact by 23:59 (AEST). |
| 1. Research Essay | 2500 | 40% | Monday 2 June by 23:59 (AEST) |

**Task Description:**

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| **ASSESSMENT TASK 1**  **Title of Assessment**  Quiz  30%  *Due:* In class, Weeks 2 - 11  *1000 words (equiv)* |
| **Instructions**  Ten weekly quizzes covering the set reading for Weeks 2 – 11. Set readings are taken from the required texts for the unit. Each quiz will comprise six questions, and is counted as 3% of the final mark (i.e. 10 x 3 = 30%). Students who absent the class without previously advising the lecturer (i.e. without permission) will not be allowed to take the quiz for that week .  **Rationale and Expectations**  The quizzes are designed to reinforce student engagement with the set text and thereby enhance learning outcomes. Understanding of the set text will enable students to better understand the unit content delivered in class, and thereby to analyses and reflect on the contemporary and hermeneutical issues involved in Gospel studies. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 2**  Multimedia Presentation  30%  *Due:* Wednesday, 9 April by 23:59 (AEST)  1500 *words (equivalent)* |
| **Instructions**  Create a media presentation (e.g. slide show, video, etc; or a blend of technologies) explaining a key theme found in the Gospel of Matthew. While students will evidence interaction with a range of relevant scholarly literature through appropriate citation and referencing, the narrative of their presentation must be aimed at a non-specialist audience (which they identify) such as a youth group or an adult study group.  Students will make their presentations (MAXIMUM 10 minutes) during class time on 9 April (Week 6) and have until 23:59 (AEST) on the same day to submit their media artifact online. Half of the mark given will be for the in-class presentation, and half for the content of the media submitted. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  The assignment requires the student first to critically apply hermeneutical theory, exegetical methods and skills to the interpretation of Matthew, and then to creatively communicate a clear, coherent and appropriately targeted exposition of the relevant texts to a diverse, in this instance non-specialist, audience. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 3**  **Title of Assessment**  Research Essay  40%  Due: Monday 2 June by 23:59 (AEST)  *2500 words* |
| **Instructions**  With reference to the given socio-historical context, Matthew’s theological interest, and any rhetorical features, what, according to Jesus’ teaching, is the significance of His exorcisms and healings in this Gospel?  Your essay should evidence an engagement with patristic, Orthodox, and western Christian scholarship on the topic, including no less than 3 scholarly commentaries and at least 9 monographs and/or peer-reviewed journal articles. (Chapter 17 in Strauss (pp. 547–62) is a useful starting point for researching the relevant literature.) |
| **Rationale and Expectations**  This essay requires investigation of the nature of the Gospel text, with analyses of the theological, rhetorical and socio-historical contexts, explaining the significance of these considerations for interpreting a Synoptic Gospel. |

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Please refer to this Unit’s website tile *Assignments* (hyperlink) for further information about assignments, assessment criteria, grading scale, and the process for late submission of assignments.

Refer to the [*Student Academic Toolkit*](https://learn.tabor.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3718)for information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, referencing, formatting, and for relevant links to Tabor and faculty policy. If you are unsure, consult your lecturer or program coordinator for advice.

Please note that all assignments in this unit will be assessed with reference to the SCMOI Marking Rubric posted on the Unit Moodle page.