



Meeting days: Tuesday and Thursday	Instructor: Professor Kara Lyons-Pardue
Meeting times: 11 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.	Phone: (619) 849-2989 Office Location: Smee 203
Meeting location: Evans 121	E-mail: karalyons-pardue@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 17, 10:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M.	Office hours: Tues., 9–10 A.M.; 1:30–2:30 P.M.; Wed. 1–3 P.M.

PLNU Mission: To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description: “A study of the origins, content, and theological perspectives of the synoptic Gospels.”

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to ...

1. Describe and compare the Synoptic Gospels;
2. Apply exegetical techniques and theories of Synoptic relationships to the interpretation of particular biblical passages; and
3. Argue a presentation of Jesus that accounts for the portraits of Jesus by Matthew, Mark, Luke, modern historians, and Christian confession.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, Revised Standard Version (Rev. ed.; American Bible Soc., 2010). ISBN 978-1585169429
2. Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark* (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament; Baker, 2011). ISBN 978-0801034374
3. Bruce Fisk, *Hitchhiker’s Guide to Jesus: Reading the Gospels on the Ground* (Baker, 2011). ISBN 978-0801036064
4. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2011). ISBN 978-0199575275

RECOMMENDED:

1. *The Peoples’ Bible: NRSV Version, with the Apocrypha* (Fortress Press, 2008). ISBN 978-0806656250
2. *The Peoples’ Companion to the Bible* (Eds., Curtiss Paul DeYoung, et al; Fortress, 2010). ISBN 978-0800697020

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. In this course, a significant portion of the grade is based on attendance and participation. Additionally, as per PLNU policy, if the student is absent from more than 10% of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report that may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20%, *even if the absences are school-approved individually*, the student will be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class,

the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the undergrad student catalog.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due, as indicated by the schedule below.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (i.e., cheating or plagiarism)

The university catalog spells out at great length the actions that constitute a breach of Academic Honesty (See [Academic Honesty](#)). These include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding academic dishonesty, and malicious intent. The PLNU catalog includes lengthy descriptions of each, which each student should read for greater understanding. The infractions and stated response policy of the university is the policy of this professor: an incident of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the assignment (at minimum) and possibly failure of the course. *Dr. Lyons-Pardue believes when a student commits academic dishonesty—cheating or plagiarizing—he/she insults the professor and betrays his/her peers. Worse damage is done to the student’s own character and education. The professor may pursue the highest penalties for the offense.*

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. Thus, terms like “man” or “mankind” or the pronoun “he,” should not be used to refer to all humans. Instead “humanity,” “humans,” and “he or she” better acknowledge women as full persons.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. Once the student has filed with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), and has spoken to the professor, the instructor will follow the accommodations that the DRC recommends for the student. For more information, see [Academic Policies](#) in the undergrad student catalog.

FERPA POLICY

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by distributing all grades and papers individually. Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the “Information Release” section of the student portal. See [Policy Statements](#) in the undergrad student catalog.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

This course’s final exam is scheduled for **Thursday, December 17, 10:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M.** (See the [Class Schedules](#) site.) Absolutely no requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Students are encouraged to use technology, especially the Canvas site, for learning and communication outside of class. *In class, however, the professor has banned the use of electronic devices, except by permission or in the case of specific need.* (Please speak to Dr. Lyons-Pardue if you require a laptop for learning purposes and we can make adjustments.) For the sake of optimal student learning, knowing well the distractions available with just one click, laptops, iPads, and any mobile phones are banned during class. Your brain thanks you (as do your fellow students & professor & grade).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

This course will be graded on a 1,000-point scale. The following are the grading categories and point-values:

Assessment Item	% of Total GRADE
Class Attendance	10% = 100 points
Reading Comprehension Checks	20% = 200 points
“Who Is Jesus?” 2-part project	10% = 100 points
Dictionary Abstract	5% = 50 points
Exegetical Work Mini-Projects	25% = 250 points
Exegetical Summary Paper	10% = 100 points
Final Interpretive Project (sermon, song, Bible Study)	20% = 150 points

Class Attendance is worth 10% of the student’s total grade. This may seem like “fluff points,” but is awarded based on the conviction that the class functions best when all students are present and contributing. (Two tardy arrivals will be considered an absence.)

Perfect attendance = 100 pts; 2 absences (or equivalent) = 90 pts; 3 absences = 60 pts; 4 absences = 20 pts; ≤ 5 absences = 0 pts (See attendance policy.)

Reading Comprehension Checks assess reading in two ways, Discussion Questions and Engagement. *Fulfills Outcomes #1-3.*

- a. The timely submission of **Discussion Questions** over the week’s all-class assigned readings every week by midnight on the Monday night before class (i.e., 12:00 a.m. Tuesday) via Canvas. (See course schedule below.) The student must submit at least 2 discussion questions each week that the Discussion Board is assigned. The quality of the questions—that is, their representation of thorough reading and awareness of significant interpretive issues—will determine half of the student’s score in this category.
- b. Proof of thoughtful **Engagement** with key concepts from discussion and reading will be assessed based on in-class discussion. Students should engage substantively, with reference to assigned readings and biblical texts, respecting fellow students’ varying levels of prior preparation *and* refraining from dominating class discussion. Students are encouraged to ask clarifying questions, which will count toward engagement and ensure that in-class discussion is beneficial to all students. ****For students who are not verbal processors or fail to engage in conversation in a particular week, a 700-word reflection paper (of substantive content, covering at least 3 peer questions, and citing readings) can substitute for the week’s in-class discussion.**
 - i. While writing a reflection paper is an acceptable way to earn Engagement points, the class itself relies on student discussion. If widespread participation becomes a problem, the professor reserves the right to call on students at random.

The **“Who Is Jesus?” Group/Individual Project** will consist of two parts. The first will be a group exercise in the first or second week of class. Students will work together to describe Jesus in one page. On the last day of class, after a semester spent closely reading the Synoptic Gospels and inquiring into the person of Jesus, each student will submit a new, expanded (~800-word) statement of her/his perspective on Jesus, making note of new insights. *Fulfills Outcome #3.*

Dictionary Article Abstract and Presentation (50 pts): From a list of instructor-approved options, the student will select one topic (with an assigned presentation/due date). Summarize the article topic in 250-300 words based on research in the *specified* Bible Dictionary. (An example will be provided on Canvas.) The student must make copies of his/her abstract for each class member and the professor. Half of the assignment (25 pts) will be based on the quality and comprehensibility of the in-class presentation (3-5 minutes). The remaining 25 points are based on the submitted abstract; including the quality of writing, accuracy, and selection of additional salient information for presentation. This ongoing learning exercise serves to introduce a diverse body of scholarly topics and literature to the class, while holding each student responsible for educating her classmates. The articles will represent a range of views and should not be confused with the opinion of the instructor. Each student must present summaries in class that will enrich the education of his/her fellow students and contribute to a rich compendium of resources for studying the Synoptic Gospels. *Remember that a report or summary is not a line-by-line paraphrase or condensation of the original.* Instead, by summarizing in your own words and presenting the information according to your assessment, you can demonstrate your own analysis of the original. *Fulfills Outcomes #1-2.*

Exegetical Work Mini-Projects will consist of 250 possible points and will each treat the same, student-selected passage (see Calendar below). These mini-projects form the basis of the student's Exegetical Summary Paper (see below).

- 1) **Boundaries and Literary Context Mini-Project** (50 pts): This paper will explain the student's passage selection (submitted previously and based on the professor's approval), the selection's delimitations (inclusive verses) and rationale, as well as examine the literary context of the selected passage. *Fulfills Outcome #2.*
- 2) **Translation and Word Meanings Mini-Project** (50 pts): This project will result in the student's translation of the passage (either from Greek or based on a variety of comparative English translations). Another subject under investigation is the theologically- and interpretively-significant terms. Students will (with the instructor's prior assistance) identify and research the usage and meaning range of 2-3 terms using appropriate Concordances, Lexicons, and Bible Dictionaries. *Fulfills Outcomes #1-2.*
- 3) **Synoptic Comparison Mini-Project** (50 pts): This paper will describe and reflect on the parallel passage(s) in other Gospels. The multi-faceted differences and similarities require explanation. Finally, the student must reflect on the impact of the differences on the story and the main message of the *parallel* text(s). *Fulfills Outcome #1.*
- 4) **Historical Issues Mini-Project** (50 pts): This paper will explore relevant historical matters informing the selected passage. It is vital not to take one's historical location as universal. Thus, this project will allow students to survey accessible and applicable resources (Bible Dictionaries and Commentaries) to gain a broader historical context for at least one broad issue (provenance/audience/date/textual-critical status of the Gospel) and one specific matter (e.g., Jewish marriage practices, Roman temples, ancient agricultural practices) of historical significance. *Fulfills Outcome #2.*
- 5) **Message, Narrative, and Theological Significance Mini-Project** (50 pts): The student will synthesize and analyze the main message, narrative structure, and impact of this passage within the context of the larger Gospel. Finally, s/he will discuss relevant theological themes and, plainly, what this passage tells believers about Jesus. *Fulfills Outcomes #1-3.*

The **Exegetical Summary Paper** (worth 100 pts) is a tightly-structured, *revised*, and *expanded* (as needed) compilation of the above mini-projects. Responding to the professor's feedback and suggestions, students will merge these disparate analyses into a strong start at a classic, written staple in Biblical Studies: an exegetical paper. The full exegetical paper (usually consisting of verse-by-verse treatment of a passage) is not required for this course. However, by piecing together and improving the work completed across the semester, students will gain a solid understand of the exegetical process. These Exegetical Summary Papers will add one concluding section: one that explains how this groundwork undergirds and supports the creative exegetical work we are calling the Final Interpretive Project (see below). *Fulfills Outcomes #1-3.*

The **Final Interpretive Project** (200 pts) relies on the creative integration of the careful exegetical learning expressed in the Mini-Projects and the Exegetical Summary. It can take the form of an Illustrated Children's Book, a Sermon (video and manuscript), a performance (Screenplay and video), a song (with musical and lyrical components), a Bible Study (including fleshed out leader's guide and group discussion prompts). As creativity is encouraged, the student is welcome to pitch a different idea and/or some alteration an above item, depending on instructor approval. For the Final Interpretive Project, 10% of the grade (20 pts) will be based on the presentation of this final project (or a portion thereof) during the course's final exam time (**Thursday, December 17, 10:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M.**) *Fulfills Outcomes #1 and 3.*

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Symbol Guide: ➤ All-Class Reading Due *Have read* by class time Tues. Significant schedule alterations in red.

② Discussion Questions *Posted to Canvas* by midnight Mon (=12a.m. Tues)

☐ **Writing Assignments Due** *Usually due Thursday at start of class* (see comments on each)

wk	Date	Assignments	WEEKLY TOPIC
1	Thurs, Sept. 3		<u>WHO IS JESUS?</u> <u>INTRODUCTION TO CLASS</u>
2	Tues, Sept. 8 Thurs, Sept. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gospel According to Mark (Read in one sitting) ➤ Reread Mark chs. 1–3 ➤ Beavis, <i>Mark</i> PAIDEIA commentary (pp. 3-73) <p>② Discussion Questions due (12:00 a.m. Tues.)</p> <p>Thursday <i>in class</i>: ☐ Part 1: “Who Is Jesus?” Group Paper</p>	<u>MARK</u> <u>WHAT IS A GOSPEL?</u>
3	Tues, Sept. 15 Thurs, Sept. 17	<p>For Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gospel According to Matthew (Read in 2-3 sittings) <p>For Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gospel According to Luke (Read in 2-3 sittings) 	<u>SYNOPTIC GOSPELS</u>
4	Tues, Sept. 22 Thurs, Sept. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mark chs. 4–8 ➤ Beavis, <i>Mark</i> PAIDEIA commentary (pp. 74-134) <p>② Discussion Questions due</p> <p>Tuesday midnight: ☐ Passage Selections DUE to Prof. by email</p>	<u>MARK</u> <u>PARABLES</u>
5	Tues, Sept. 29 Thurs, Oct. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mark chs. 9–15 ➤ Beavis, <i>Mark</i> PAIDEIA commentary (pp. 134-238) <p>② Discussion Questions due</p>	<u>MARK</u> <u>THE ROAD TO THE CROSS</u>
6	Tues, Oct. 6 Thurs, Oct. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mark ch. 16 ➤ Beavis, <i>Mark</i> PAIDEIA commentary (pp. 239-250) ➤ Juel, “A Disquieting Silence: The Matter of an Ending” <p>② Discussion Questions due</p> <p>Thursday <i>in class</i>: ☐ Boundaries & Literary Context Mini-Project #1 DUE</p>	<u>MARK</u> <u>THE ENDINGS</u>
7	Tues, Oct. 13 Thurs, Oct. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fisk, <i>Hitchhiker’s Guide</i> (pp. 7-57; stop before “A Floor ...”) <p>② Discussion Questions due</p> <p>Tuesday: Class canceled in favor of attending at least two Wiley lectures. *More info in class and on Canvas. Attendance of two or more lectures is mandatory (and will contribute to Mini-Project #5).</p> <p>Class on Thursday as normal.</p>	<u>JESUS AND THE GOSPELS</u>
8	Tues, Oct. 20 Thurs, Oct. 22	<p>Tuesday <i>in class</i>: Library Resource Day (details to follow)</p> <p>Thursday <i>in class</i>: Group work day (preparing for Mini-Projects #2 & 4)</p> <p>Thurs. by email: ☐ Translation & Word Meanings Mini-Project #2 DUE</p>	<u>LIBRARY, RESOURCES</u>

Wk	Date	Assignments	WEEKLY TOPIC
9	Tues, Oct. 27 Thurs, Oct. 29	<p>➤ Fisk, <i>Hitchhiker's Guide</i> (pp. 57-102)</p> <p>☐ Pericope Assignment (in <i>Synopsis</i>): #138 (Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56); #146 (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10b-17; [John 6:1-15]); #147 (Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; [John 6:16-21]); #161 (Matt. 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36) + Your selected pericope *See <i>handout</i> for assignment information</p> <p>② Discussion Questions due (over Fisk & pericope work)</p> <p>Thursday in class: ☐ Synoptic Comparison Mini-Project #3 DUE</p>	<p><u>SYNOPTIC PARALLELS</u></p> <p><u>SYNOPTIC PROBLEM</u></p>
10	Tues, Nov. 3 Thurs, Nov. 5	<p>➤ Fisk, <i>Hitchhiker's Guide</i> (pp. 103-150)</p> <p>☐ Pericopes Assignment (in <i>Synopsis</i>): #14-16 (Matt. 3:7-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:7-18; [John 1:24-28]); #20 (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13); #51 (Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:20b-23); #279 (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24); #330 (Matt. 26:36-46 & par); Crucifixion accounts #344, 345, 346, 347, 348; Resurrection account #352</p> <p>② Discussion Questions due (over Fisk & pericope work)</p>	<p><u>Q</u></p> <p><u>PASSION & RESURRECTION</u></p>
11	Tues, Nov. 10 Thurs, Nov. 12	<p>➤ Fisk, <i>Hitchhiker's Guide</i> (pp. 151-228)</p> <p>➤ Bultmann, "Message of Jesus and the Problem of Mythology"</p> <p>② Discussion Questions due</p> <p>Thursday in class: ☐ Historical Issues Mini-Project #4 DUE</p>	<p><u>JESUS AND HISTORY</u></p>
12	Tues, Nov. 17 Thurs, Nov. 19	<p>➤ <i>Gospel of Thomas</i> (links provided—to this and below—on Canvas)</p> <p>➤ <i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Protoevangelium of James</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Gospel of Peter</i></p> <p>② Discussion Questions due</p>	<p><u>APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS</u></p>
13	Tues, Nov. 24 Thurs, Nov. 26	<p>Tues. by email: ☐ Message, Narrative, & Theo. Sig. Mini-Project #5 DUE</p> <p>Thursday: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS</p>	<p><u>EXEGESIS</u></p>
14	Tues, Dec. 1 Thurs, Dec. 3	<p>➤ Fisk, <i>Hitchhiker's Guide</i> (pp. 229-267)</p> <p>➤ Levine, "Misusing Jesus"</p> <p>AND <u>one</u> of the following (in consultation with group):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bockmuehl, "God's Life as a Jew" ➤ Daley, "The Word and His Flesh" ➤ Steinmetz, "Eucharist and the Identity of Jesus" <p>② Discussion Questions due</p>	<p><u>HISTORICAL JESUS</u></p> <p><u>CHRISTOLOGY</u></p>
15	Tues, Dec. 8 Thurs, Dec. 10	<p>➤ Bauckham, <i>Jesus: A Very Short Introduction</i></p> <p>② Discussion Questions due</p> <p>Thursday: ☐ Part 2: "Who Is Jesus?" Individual Paper</p>	<p><u>JESUS</u></p>
<p>FINAL EXAM: Thursday, Dec. 17, 10:30 – 1:00 P.M.</p> <p>☐ Exegetical Summary Paper DUE ☐ Final Interpretive Project DUE</p>			