



**IONA SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY**  
**New Testament: Matthew and Luke–Acts**  
**March 2023**  
**The Rev. Dr. Andrew Benko**

**CLASS DESCRIPTION**

This class will give the student a basic familiarity with the themes, concerns, and distinctive theological perspectives of Matthew’s gospel and Luke-Acts, with an eye toward its applicability in a ministry setting.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES**

In (or after taking) this class, the student will:

- Recognize and describe the Jewishness of Matthew’s gospel;
- Explain how Matthew’s presentation of Jesus (as authoritative interpreter of Torah) places him in direct competition with the Pharisees, and explain how this may reflect Matthew’s Jewish-Christian setting;
- Give examples of Luke’s interest in: a) wealth/poverty, b) the relationship of Christians to Israel, and c) the place of Christians within the Roman Empire;
- Nuance the difference between modern understandings of history, and ancient ones, and give examples of how Acts functioned as “history-with-a-purpose”;
- Translate their understanding of these scriptures into a preaching message.

To demonstrate meeting these objectives, the student will:

- 1) Come to class having read the assigned scripture and textbook chapters.
- 2) Participate fully in class. Ask questions, take part in group discussion, and otherwise actively engage.
- 3) Complete an assessment to be assigned after class, examining the student’s ability to interpret scriptural passages, and use the fruits of their exegesis to help shape a homiletical message.

**Class Schedule**

- I. 9:00 – 9:50: The Gospel of Matthew
- II. 10:00 – 10:50: The Gospel of Luke
- III. 11:00 – 11:50: Comparing Synoptic passages exercise
- IV. 1:00 – 1:50: The Acts of the Apostles
- V. 2:00 – 2:50: Exegesis for preaching exercise

**Suggested Resources** (“V” = a verse-by-verse book)

Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. Intersarsity, 1993. (V)

Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*. Orbis, 2001. (V)

Thomas Long, *Matthew*. Westminster John Knox, 1997. (V)

Jerome Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. Westminster John Knox, ‘98. (V)

*A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine. Pilgrim, 2001.

Anthony Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*. University of Chicago, 1994.

*The Gospel of Luke* (commentary), Amy-Jill Levine & Bill Witherington. Cambridge, 2018. (V)

*Wisdom Commentary: Luke* (2 vols.), Barbara Reid, Shelly Matthews. Liturgical Press, 2022. (V)

*Feasting on the Gospels: Luke* (2 vols.), Cynthia Jarvis, Elizabeth Johnson. WJK, 2014 (V)

**Commentaries:** *New Interpreter’s Bible*, *Feasting on the Word*, *New Testament Library*, *Sacra Pagina*, and *Interpretation* are all quite helpful Biblical commentary series. Buying at least enough of a commentary to encompass the 4 gospels is a **very prudent investment** for a minister.

## STUDY GUIDE

Read pp.210-389 in David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation*. Second Edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

While the New Testament itself should be the focus of your study and attention, the readings from DeSilva will help you develop frameworks for understanding and attending to the details of the Gospels and Acts, and the distinctiveness of these texts, arising from their specific historical circumstances and contexts. Therefore, the best method of study will be:

- I. Read textbook on Matthew (making outline), and then read Matthew.
- II. Read textbook on Luke (and make outline), and then read Luke.
- III. Read textbook on Acts (and make outline), and then read Acts.

**Read De Silva on Matthew**, and as you do, create a framework for study by typing out each of his subheadings.

**Then read the Gospel of Matthew,**

- **typing some of your own notes and observations into those sub-headings.**
- You are creating a resource that you will use and add to over the course of your ministry, as you preach and teach on Matthew.
- Pay particular attention to Matthew's concern for Jesus's role as the proper interpreter of the Torah for a new age; note the "Jewishness" of the Gospel. Also note both: 1) signs of tension between Matthew's community and the wider, mainstream Jewish community, and 2) signs of awareness of a wider, largely gentile branch of Christianity developing outside of Matthew's community.

**Read DeSilva on Luke**, and as you do, create a framework for study by typing out each of his subheadings.

**Then read the Gospel of Luke,**

- **typing some of your own notes and observations into those sub-headings.**
- You are creating a resource that you will use and add to over the course of your ministry, as you preach and teach on Luke.
- Pay particular attention to prophetic themes in Luke: reconciliation and restoration; the proper use of wealth; both the critique of Roman ways and the desire to be respectable on Roman terms; and Luke's broader ethnic horizon, compared to Matthew.
- Note, too, the particular ways in which Luke characterizes the significance of Jesus's death, and the importance of the resurrection narratives for understanding Luke's community.

**Read DeSilva on Acts**, and as you do, create a framework for study by typing out each of his subheadings.

**Then read the Acts of the Apostles,**

- **typing some of your own notes and observations into those sub-headings.**
- You are creating a resource that you will use and add to over the course of your ministry, as you preach and teach on Acts.
- Pay particular attention to the *demographic shift in the early Jesus movement* – originating from a monocultural/monoethnic group limited to one region, growing into an international group encompassing many peoples and cultures; note bumps on the road, changes in theology/leadership inspired by this transition, and God's involvement in this growth (especially the Holy Spirit).
- Note, too, conflicts between the Jesus movement and A) mainstream Jews, and B) non-Jews. How do these new "Christians" respond to this conflict, and what sort of accusations do others make against them?