

FWIS 167

The Five Gospels: How Were They Written?

Rice University, Fall 2015, 3:00-3:50pm MWF, HNZ 207

Instructor

Grant Adamson, PhD (Religious Studies)

Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Program in Writing and Communication

office: Fondren Library 414

email: gwa1@rice.edu

website: grantwadamson.com

Office hours

By appointment, weekdays.

Course description

Since they have so much in common, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels. Matthew and Luke have a lot in common too, even without Mark. Why? How were they written? The prevailing scholarly theory is that the author of the Gospel of Mark wrote first, then the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark along with another lost sayings-source known as Q. Is the theory correct? Are there alternative theories about the composition of the three synoptic gospels from the New Testament? What about the Gospel of John? And what about the Gospel of Thomas that happens to be outside the covers of the Bible? In this course, we will address these and other historical and literary issues while you write argumentative papers, deliver oral presentations, and participate in class discussion and peer review.

FWIS learning objectives and additional course goals

By taking this First-year Writing-Intensive Seminar, you will:

- Enhance your understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.
- Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college-level readings.
- Improve your ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
- Become comfortable with writing as a process and learn strategies – such as prewriting, outlining, and revision – for working through that process.
- Learn appropriate use of the work of others and, where necessary, specific practices of citation.
- Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in formal presentations and in class discussion.
- Additionally you will become familiar with the critical study of biblical literature, including some aspects of research and citation.

About the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication (CWOVC)

Plan ahead and make appointments with the peer consultants at the Center for any of your assignments in this course, especially the three papers and oral presentation. These consultants do not proofread or edit your work for you, but they will provide feedback on topics such as the

organization of your paper or presentation, the coherence of your argument, appropriate sentence structure, and grammatical errors. For more information and to schedule an appointment, visit the Center's website. See <http://cwovc.rice.edu>.

Required texts to buy/rent:

Coogan, Michael D., et al. eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford; multiple editions).
Aland, Kurt, ed., *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (American Bible Society, 1982; 2010)

Other required readings are posted or linked to on Owlspace.

Recommended texts to buy:

Booth, Wayne C., et al., *The Craft of Research* (Chicago; multiple editions).
Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say* (Norton; multiple editions).
Trimble, John R., *Writing with Style* (Prentice Hall; multiple editions).

Course requirements and policies

1. Grade overview

Attendance, preparation, and participation 15%

0-3 points/day

0 = absent

1 = was not prepared and (so) did not participate (meaningfully)

2 = prepared and participated partially

3 = prepared and participated fully

Major assignments (see instructions below)

Three papers (4-5 pages each) 15%, 20%, 25%
graded on scale below

Individual oral presentations (5 minutes each), 5%, 10%
graded on scale below

Minor assignments (see instructions below)

Statement of interest and writing goals plus diagnostic (2 pages) 2%
completed = full credit

Research assignment (2 pages) 4%
completed = full credit

Rhetorical style and mechanics assignment (2 pages) 4%
completed = full credit

2. Grading scale

100-94 (A), 93-90 (A-), 89-87 (B+), 86-84 (B), 83-80 (B-), 79-77 (C+), 76-74 (C), 73-70 (C-),
69-67 (D+), 66-64 (D), 63-60 (D-), 59-0 (F).

3. Attendance. "Students are expected to attend *all* scheduled activities for *all* of the classes for which they are registered during the entire course of the academic semester for which they are enrolled," according to university academic policies and procedures (emphasis added). See <http://ga.rice.edu/Home.aspx?id=223&libID=243>.

4. Absence. "The university understands that students participating in university-sponsored extracurricular activities *may, on rare occasions*, need to miss a class session during the

semester. As a matter of course, students should inform their instructors *in advance* of absences resulting from participation in university-sponsored activities, and faculty normally will give a reasonable opportunity to make up work missed on such occasions ... Absences for activities other than university-sponsored events *may be negotiated* on an informal basis between the student and the faculty member,” again according to university academic policies and procedures (emphasis added). See <http://ga.rice.edu/Home.aspx?id=223&libID=243>.

In case of rare absence due to university-sponsored extracurricular activities, please send me an email in advance. To negotiate any other absence, please do the same. At most, 3 total absences may be excused in either case.

5. *Deadlines and Late Work*. “No student should be given an extension of time or opportunities to improve a grade that are not available to all members of the class, *except for verified illness or justified absence* from campus,” according to university grading guidelines (emphasis added). See http://professor.rice.edu/professor/grading_guidelines1.asp.

To verify an illness or justify another cause of absence (primarily medical or family emergency) please send me an email in advance if possible, and if not, then as soon as possible after the fact. At any rate, please do so before returning to class or turning in any work late.

Otherwise deadlines in this course are not flexible, and late work will not be accepted.

6. *Electronic devices in class*. Laptops and tablets are not prohibited, but of course you will only want to use them for the purposes of our class (it goes without saying that you won’t want to text or talk on your cellphone). Before using a laptop to take notes, consider the advantages of the traditional pen-and-paper method or its equivalent. See <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>.

7. *What to bring to class*. To facilitate and ground our discussion of the reading, please bring the required text/s with you to class, either in hard copy or on an electronic device.

8. *Seminar means discussion*. In keeping with FWIS learning objectives reflected in the very designation of the FWIS as a seminar rather than a lecture course, class will be a mix of lecture and discussion, with an emphasis on the second. This is also in keeping with my teaching philosophy: While I do lecture as appropriate, I see my role as a teacher to be not only delivering information but more importantly posing carefully informed questions as prompts for reflection, discussion, and knowledge application. I believe that the give-and-take of discussion and human interaction between instructor and student as well as between the students themselves is an essential part of learning that solitary study, as imperative as it is, simply cannot get at. I am keen to foster a critical exchange of ideas in the classroom and do not expect that my interpretations or conclusions will become those of my students.

9. *Reading*. Because the papers and other assignments are based on the required texts, it’s imperative that you read them before you begin the writing process. And you’ll want to do that early. By all means, then, read ahead. Moreover you’ll find at least some rereading to be necessary as you write and revise your papers.

10. Writing and revision. Most any good writing process involves several steps, including prewriting (cataloguing and ranking your ideas), writing (articulating your ideas and their relation to one another), and rewriting or revising (re-arranging, adding to, and subtracting from what you have written). It takes time, in other words, and you should start soon enough for your papers to sit a while before they're due.

I expect you to have revised your papers already when you turn each of them in to me. Before the due date, you will have opportunities to revise in light of our regular class discussions about writing, about the reading, and about the progress of your papers. You will also have opportunities to revise in light of my interventions, the peer-review exercises, and the Q&A to follow the oral presentation of one of your papers. Additionally you are welcome to solicit individual feedback from me at any time, excepting the last two days before the due date; just make an appointment. And don't forget the consultants at the CWOVC.

After the due date of each paper, there will be no further opportunities for graded revision, with this exception: you may further revise one of your three papers and resubmit it by the end of finals. To do so, make an appointment with me no later than the last day of class. At the appointment, have an action plan ready. I will give you feedback and offer additional suggestions for revision. The grade of the optional further-revised paper will not replace the original grade; the two will be averaged.

Honor code statement

One of the purposes of FWIS is to help new students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution as well as the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly FWIS instructors will take an educational approach to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas foremost as issues for grading and opportunities for correction, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council.

In this course, you are expected to do the actual writing of your assignments in your own words, with no help from anyone else. You are strongly encouraged, however, to collaborate on all other aspects of your coursework, which includes discussing the texts and assignments with your fellow students, reading each other's writing, and making suggestions for revision.

ADA statement

If you have a documented disability and will be seeking academic adjustments or accommodations, please let me know during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

Add/Drop

Because the registration process for FWIS is unique, I include the how-to link here:
http://registrar.rice.edu/fwis_reg/#how

Proviso

The information contained in this course syllabus, other than the absence policy, is subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Schedule

UNIT ONE

M 8/24

In class: Course intro and overview

After class: Begin your statement of interest and writing goals plus diagnostic.

W 8/26

Before class: Upload a statement of your interest and writing goals plus diagnostic in Word or PDF to Owlspage by 2:55pm.

Before class: Read Booth et al. 188-199 (Owlspage); Graff & Birkenstein 55-67 (Owlspage).

In class: Lecture and discussion about summary, paraphrase, quotation and citation; ways of engaging others and their ideas

F 8/28

Before class: Read Bond 7-53 (Owlspage).

Before class: Prepare 1 page of notes or talking points (typed or hand-written, your choice), re: What is Bond saying? How does a historical reading of scripture differ from a literary reading as well as a devotional or confessional reading?

In class: Lecture and discussion about reading scripture in terms of history and literature

After class: Start the first paper.

UNIT TWO

M 8/31

In class: Lecture and discussion about writing: argument and evidence

W 9/2

In class: Lecture and discussion about oral presentations

F 9/4 [Add/drop deadline]

Before class: Be sure to have read Brown 99-111 (Owlspage); the Gospel of Mark.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt i.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

M 9/7 Labor day: no class

W 9/9

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt ii.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 9/11

Before class: Be sure to have read Brown 111-125 (Owlspage); to have studied the triple tradition that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke have in common with Mark.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iii.
In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

M 9/14

Before class: Be sure to have read the double tradition in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; Goodacre 106-161.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iv.
In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

W 9/16

Before class: Prepare for debate about prompt iv.
In class: Debate

F 9/18

Before class: Be sure to have read the material unique to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt v.
In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

M 9/21 Draft or detailed outline of first paper due at the beginning of class

Before class: Prepare a final passage from the reading that you would like to discuss, either one that we have not talked about or one that you would like to discuss further. It can be related to your paper but does not need to be.

In class: Discussion about passages

W 9/23

In class: Individual oral presentations of papers, followed by Q&A

F 9/25

In class: Individual oral presentations of papers, followed by Q&A

UNIT THREE

M 9/28 Final draft of first paper due at the beginning of class

In class: More lecture and discussion about writing: organization and flow

After class: Start the second paper.

W 9/30

Before class: Be sure to have read the Gospel of John.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt i.
In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 10/2

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt ii and prepare for debate.

In class: Debate

M 10/5

Before class: Be sure to have read van der Watt 79-91 (Owlspace); to have studied the parallels between the Gospel of John and the synoptics.

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iii.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

W 10/7

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iv.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 10/9

continuation of Wednesday

M 10/12 Midterm recess: no class

W 10/14

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt v.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 10/16

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt vi.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

M 10/19 Draft or detailed outline of second paper due at the beginning of class

Before class: Prepare a final passage from the reading that you would like to discuss, either one that we have not talked about or one that you would like to discuss further. It can be related to your paper but does not need to be.

In class: Discussion about passages

W 10/21

In class: Individual oral presentations or papers, followed by Q&A

F 10/23

In class: Individual oral presentations of papers, followed by Q&A

UNIT FOUR

M 10/26 Final draft of second paper due at the beginning of class

In class: More lecture and discussion about writing: introductions and conclusions

After class: Start the third paper.

W 10/28

Before class: Be sure to have read the Gospel of Thomas (Owlspace).

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt i.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 10/30

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt ii.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

M 11/2

Before class: Be sure to have read/skimmed Kloppenborg 199-239 (Owlspace); Denzey Lewis 240-250 (Owlspace); Patterson 251-261 (Owlspace).

In class: Lecture and discussion about the overall issues surrounding the relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the synoptics.

W 11/4

Before class: Be sure to have read/skimmed Gathercole 262-281 (Owlspace); Goodacre 282-293 (Owlspace).

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iii.

In class: Discussion about the prompt and the progress of your papers

F 11/6

Before class: Formulate a preliminary response to prompt iv and prepare for debate.

In class: Debate

M 11/9 Draft or detailed outline of third paper due at the beginning of class

Before class: Prepare a final passage from the reading that you would like to discuss, either one that we have not talked about or one that you would like to discuss further. It can be related to your paper but does not need to be.

In class: Discussion about passages

W 11/11

In class: Individual oral presentations of papers, followed by Q&A

F 11/13

In class: Individual oral presentations of papers, followed by Q&A

UNIT FIVE

M 11/16 Final draft of third paper due at the beginning of class

To class: Bring a lap top computer, if possible.

In class: Lecture and discussion about research; how to use the library and its website

In/during class: Start the research assignment.

W 11/18

In class: Examples from my research; lecture and discussion about research processes

F 11/20 Research assignment due at the beginning of class

In class: Reports and reflection on the assignment

M 11/23 No class (annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature)

W 11/25 No class, but I'll be available to meet about the optional further-revised paper

F 11/27 Thanksgiving Recess: no class

M 11/30

Before class: Read Trimble 64-93 (Owlspace).

In class: Lecture and discussion about rhetorical style and mechanics

After class: Start the rhetorical style and mechanics assignment.

W 12/2

In class: Examples from my writing; more lecture and discussion about rhetorical style

F 12/4 Rhetorical style and mechanics assignment due at the beginning of class

In class: Reports and reflection on the assignment; wrap-up discussion

[Outside of class: Last day to meet with me about the optional further-revised paper]

[Optional further-revised paper due W 12/16 by 5pm]

Assignment instructions

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Argumentative response papers

- Read through the prompts so that you have them in mind.
- Complete the unit readings listed on the schedule.
- As you read, consider what you want to write about. It can be based on the prompts or else something you come up with yourself from the reading (be sure to get my approval). Jot down your ideas. Start drafting right away.
- Your final paper should be 4-5 pages double-spaced (not counting bibliography). It should be written in Times New Roman 12pt font. It should start with your name and an appropriate title. It should include consistent citation either in the form of in-text citation or in the form of footnotes (not end-notes), author-date (not author-title), with a bibliography at the end. For details of the author-date system, see ch.15 of the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be accessed on the stacks in the library or online here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezproxy.rice.edu/16/ch15/ch15_toc.html
- Upload your draft or detailed outline (1-2 pages minimum) to Owlspage by the due date on the schedule. At the beginning of your file, as a cover sheet, please tell me: what the question is that you are writing about; what your answer to that question is; and what your top two or three reasons are for that answer, with supporting evidence. *Note: If you do not upload your draft or detailed outline by the due date, unfortunately you will not be able to participate in the peer-review exercises and the oral presentations with Q&A, and you will lose the participation points for those days.
- Upload your final draft to Owlspage by the due date on the schedule. At the beginning of your file, as a cover sheet, please tell me: what you have done to revise your paper since you uploaded your draft or detailed outline, chiefly how you addressed the feedback you got from me and any feedback you got as part of the peer-review exercises and the Q&A sessions to follow the oral presentation of one of your papers.

Individual oral presentation of one paper

- Prepare a 5-minute oral presentation of your paper.
- This includes either slides or a handout, but not both.
- You won't have time to read your full paper, so decide what to showcase, adapting sections of what you have written there.
- For yourself, consider whether you want a set of talking points or a complete script.
- Either way, rehearse your presentation more than once, and be sure that it comes in at right around 5 minutes.
- Anticipate questions.

Individual oral presentation of a writing tip

- Select a book on writing from among the titles that I list for you or one that you find yourself and I approve.
- Pick a chapter in the book and read it, looking for a specific writing tip that you would like to apply in your current paper.
- Prepare a 5-minute oral presentation that has the following elements: the bibliographic information for the book; a brief explanation of the writing tip; one or two examples of the writing tip applied; a brief statement of why you chose it and how you plan to apply it yourself in your current paper.
- This includes either slides or a hand-out, but not both.
- For yourself, consider whether you want a set of talking points or a complete script.
- Either way, rehearse your presentation more than once, and be sure that it comes in at right around 5 minutes.

MINOR ASSIGNMENTS

Statement of interest and writing goals plus diagnostic

- See separate handout from the first day of class (also posted on OwlSpace).

Research assignment

- Using the library catalog, find a single published book, book-chapter, or journal article that deals as directly as possible with the topic of one of your three papers.
- Access that publication in print on the stacks or electronically and read it (in the case of a book, select one chapter).
- In 2 pages, summarize, paraphrase, and/or quote the publication where necessary as you describe how you would interact with it, that is, the author, in a revision of your paper. Does the author support or challenge your claims? What is your response? Where would you revise your paper, and how?
- Cite the publication in-text or in footnotes, author-date, with a corresponding bibliographic entry at the end of your document.

Rhetorical style and mechanics assignment

- Reread your three papers and ask yourself: What about my writing does or does not make it enjoyable to read? Do I vary the length of my sentences? Do I choose appropriate words? Do I repeat certain words or phrases (too often)? How is the tone of my writing (e.g. serious or impersonal, playful or flippant, critical or antagonistic)? Do I make any common mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or grammar? Are they plainly mistakes? Etc.
- In 2 pages, answer these or other questions that arise from your reading of Trimble and your papers, justifying as much of your language usage as you want.