PHILLIPS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER

The following syllabus is the teaching and learning guide for the last time this course was taught. It will give you a good idea of the descriptions of the course, how it was taught, the reading, the papers and other assignments, the intended outcomes, and the workload. By examining this syllabus and others, you will be able to form an impression of what graduate theological education at Phillips Theological Seminary requires of students.

Due to periodic curriculum revisions, course names and/or numbers may be different on this syllabus than what the name and/or number of the current offered course may be.

This syllabus is provided for your information only. The faculty reserves the right to revise the curriculum, and each professor reserves the right to decide how best to meet the learning goals of the curriculum. Therefore, the following syllabus is an historical artifact rather than a promise of how the course will be taught in the future, or that the course will be taught again.

By Phillips Theological Seminary copyright policy, the syllabus is the intellectual property of the individual faculty member, with usage rights granted to PTS. Please contact the copyright owner if you seek to use the syllabus, for other than your personal enrichment.
Learning to read the parables was the most revolutionary experience in my life. It forever changed my life. For the first time I felt that I had come face to face, or better ear to ear, with Jesus. The process of learning to read the parables has never stopped and continues to this day. My hope is that for something like that will happen in this course. To deal with the parables you must approach them slowly and as Emily Dickenson says, at a slant.

A major aspect in learning to hear the parables requires unlearning the past. The parables have been buried in allegory. Not necessarily a bad thing, for without the burial, the parables would have been lost. Parable is a particularly Jewish genre, not practiced by Greeks or even modern Americans. Not really any other culture. So we must practice cultural otherness to hear the parable. This is not easy and it is controversial.

The course is divided into four parts. In Part 1 we will gather the evidence. We will arrive at a list of parables. Part 2 will lay out the issue of method in which a principal issue will be allegory and parable: what is the difference? In part 3 will examine a selection of parables and in Part 4 you will demonstrate what you have learned by presenting to the group your reading of a selected parable.

**Requirements:**

1) Posting will be on Wednesday and Thursday, from midnight to midnight, i.e., 48 hours. You are required to make 2 posts. I will set no upper limit, but make your posts substantive.
2) Required readings are listed in the Syllabus for each week.
3) Your presentation/paper.
   a) On Monday February 6 I will post a list of parables from which you can select one for your presentation. Selection will be on a first come first served basis. I will keep the list updated. Email me (brandon.scott@ptstulsa.edu) with your selection. You must have made your selection by March 4 or I will assign you a parable.
   b) Dates of presentation will be announced on March 4. You can in your email request a date and I will try to honor it, but I reserve the right to arrange the presentations to fit a pedagogical purpose.
   c) Each paper will deal with three aspects.
      1. The use the parable in the gospel(s) in which it appears.
      2. A reading of the parable in the context of the historical Jesus.
3. How this parable and its reading coheres with the other parables and/or sayings of Jesus.

d) Your paper must be posted on Blackboard by Monday of the week in which it will be discussed. Email the paper to me and I will post it.
e) Draw up a list of questions to post in the Discussions to facilitate the discussion of your paper. These must be posted by Tuesday at midnight (send them to me and I will post them).

4) Grading.
   a) Half of your grade will be based on the quality of your posts.
   b) Half of your grade will be based on your presentation.

Any week you do not make 2 posts will count as an absence and 3 absences results in automatic failure in compliance with PTS Policy.

**Required Books**


**Course Outline**

*Part 1 Gathering the Data*

Week 1 Jan 22-28

Synoptic Gospels

Week 2 Jan 29-Feb 4

Q-Gospel; Gospel of Thomas

*Part 2 Method*

Week 3 Feb 5-11

The Great Divide: Allegory or Parable

Reading:

Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, 3-21

Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, 7-62

Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 9-16
Funk, *Funk on Parables*, 29-51
Extra Reading:
Crossan, *Parables*, 4-16

**Part 3 Selected Parables**
Week 4 Feb 12-18
Leaven, Mustard Seed, The Banquet
Funk, *Funk on Parables*, chapters 6 and 7
Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, chapter 15, chapter 19, chapter 5
Extra Reading:
Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, 74-8; 146-9
Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 11

Week 5 Feb 19-25
The Wicked Tenants
Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, chapter 4; chapter 6
Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, chapter 8, chapter 10
Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, 78-86

Week 6 Feb 26-Mar 3
Dishonest Steward
Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, chapter 8, chapter 11
Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, chapter 13
Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, chapter 9
Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, 209-16

Week 7 Mar 4-Mar 10
The Samaritan
Funk, *Funk on Parables*, chapters 4 and 5
Scott, *Hear then the Parable*, chapter 7
Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, chapter 7
Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, 182-5

Week 8 Mar 11-17
Parable and Kingdom
Funk, *Funk on Parables*, chapters 11 and 12
Scott, *Re-Imagine the World*, chapter 12
Buttrick, *Speaking in Parables*, chapter 2 and 3
Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, chapter 14
March 18-Apr 7 PTS Break

**Part 4: Student Presentations**

Week 9 Apr 8-14
   Daniel Pigg (Rich Fool)

Week 10 Apr 15-21
   Bill Davis (Lost Sheep)
   Judy Hall (Lost Coin)
   Dan Adolphson (Prodigals)

Week 11 Apr 22-28
   Amy Grogan (Hidden Treasure)

Week 12 Apr 29-May 5
   Marnie Leinberger (Unforgiving Debtor)
   Aaron Krueger (Seed Growing Secretly)

Week 13 May 6-12