

Parable of Jesus
 Hartford International University for Religion and Peace
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June 2022
 T/W/Th 9:00-12:00
 Hybrid Synchronous (for both in person and online students and auditors)

Course Description:

This class will examine the nature and form of Jesus' parables and their various interpretations determined by the contexts of the "historical Jesus," Gospel narratives, political and social agendas, and homiletic interests. Methods range from historical- and literary-critical analysis to autobiographical, liberationist and ideological criticisms. Students will also explore the nuances of the Greek text (knowledge of Greek is not required). Course is a combination of lecture and discussion.

Course Objectives

1. Students will identify and address the major exegetical issues, including text-critical and translation issues, that emerge from a critical reading of the parables;
2. Students will learn the traditional understandings (through the centuries) of the parables as well as the new interpretations derived from both historical-critical and liberationist readings;
3. Students will consider how anti-Jewish stereotypes have deformed understandings of the parables;
4. Students will address how the parables function today for good news (*euangellion*).

Method: Class session will be a combination of presentation and discussion.

Readings:

- a. Amy-Jill Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus* (New York: HarperOne 2014)
- b. Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories With Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* 2d edition (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2018).
- c. Articles and videos posted to the class website

Assignments

- a. Class participation
- b. One class presentation on your original reading of a parable
- c. A paper or projects designed for people who need to hear what you have to say: academic article, op ed, Bible study, chaplaincy comfort, children's study, etc. Artistic projects (installations, compositions, etc.) also welcome. All paper and project topics/ideas must be cleared with Prof. Levine.

Program Requirements and Learning Outcomes

- a. In addition to classes, students must attend a session (by zoom or in person) with Professor Levine to verify their progress in the course.

- b. Students will be assessed on the following basis:
1. Oral presentation/leading class discussion/presentation of thesis (10%)
 2. Paper -- designed for publication or presentation in the venue of your choice: a homily or sermon (with notes); an academic article [mandatory for Ph.D. candidates]; a church, synagogue, mosque newsletter; a lesson for adults, teens or children; a meditation guide/spiritual direction based on a parable, or anything that will be useful to your intended audience. (50%).
 3. 4 review summaries [200-word *maximum*] on one of the assigned readings (article, book chapter) for each class; reflections uploaded to the class website in .doc or .docx form, prior to the class (20%; 5% each).
 - a. Each paper will be graded for both content and style. *Improvement throughout the semester will be considered in the determination of the final percentage.*
 - b. The paper should summarize and critique one article.
 - c. These exercises are designed to help you both to assess secondary scholarship and to write clearly.
 - d. Papers should serve as springboards to discussion.
 - e. See note at the end of the syllabus on plagiarism
 4. Contribution to the discussion (20%), including posting on course website with comments on readings, presentations by others in the class, bibliographic aids, etc. Assessment is based on quality, not quantity.

Bibliography

1. required
 - a. SNODGRASS, Klyne R., *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 10th anniversary Edition (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 2018). ISBN-10 : 0802875696; ISBN-13 : 978-0802875693.
 - b. LEVINE, Amy-Jill, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* (HarperOne, New York 2014). ISBN-10 : 9780061561030; ISBN-13 : 978-0061561030.
2. Each class session will have readings from articles posted on-line.
3. Students are encouraged to read widely in Gospel commentaries, volumes on parables, and periodical literature.

Hartford Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning

- Showing mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engaging in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
- Paying attention to the whole personhood of another – history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
- Demonstrating how to disagree respectfully and well
- Embodying mutuality – Learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

Pre-course work –Pre-course work is required for intensive courses in order to meet the required to fulfill credit hour requirements. To keep up with this course, you are advised to

start on the readings as soon as possible. Take notes, and then use the notes to review for discussion on the relevant days.

Schedule is subject to change depending on interests of class.

June 7 (Tuesday) – Introduction to Class

Test case I -- Widow and Judge (Luke 18.1-8)

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 449-462 and notes
- b. Levine, *Short Stories*, 221-45 and notes
- c. Barbara Reid, "A Godly Widow Persistently Pursuing Justice," *Biblical Research* 45 (2000): 25-33

Test case II -- Infertile Fig Tree (Luke 13.6-9)

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 255-65 and notes

*Week of June 6: Student enrolled will email Professor Levine to tell her the parable on which they will write their paper and help lead discussion. Students should start to schedule time for office visit.

June 8 (Wednesday) – Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37)

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 338-362 and notes
- b. Levine, *Short Stories*, 71-106 and notes
- c. Riemer Roukema, "The Good Samaritan in Ancient Christianity," *Vigiliae christianae* 58.1 (2004): 56-74
- d. Richard Bauckham, "The Scrupulous Priest and the Good Samaritan: Jesus' Parabolic Interpretation of the Law of Moses," *New Testament Studies* 44 (1998) 475-489
- e. Martina Böhm, "Samaritans in the New Testament," *Religions* 11 (2020), doi:10.3390/rel11030147.
- f. Benedikt Hensel, "Judah and Samaria in post-exilic times: A farewell to the conflict paradigm," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44.1 (2019): 19-42.

June 9 (Thursday) -- Sheep/Coin/Son(s) (Matthew 18.8-20; Luke 15.1-32)

- a. *Thomas* 107 (in Snodgrass)
- b. *Gospel of Truth* (in Snodgrass)
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 93-143 and notes
- d. Levine, *Short Stories*, 25-70 and notes
- e. Callie Callon, "Adulteresses and Meretrices: The Correlation between Squandered Patrimony and Prostitutes in the Parable of the Prodigal Son," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75.2 (2013): 259-278
- f. Susan Durber, "The Female Reader of the Parables of the Lost," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 45 (1992): 59-78
- g. J. Albert Harrill, "The Indentured Labor of the Prodigal Son [Luke 15:15]," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 714-17
- h. Mikeal C. Parsons, "The Prodigal Son's Elder Brother: The History and Ethics of Reading Luke 15.25-32," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 23 (1996): 147-74

- i. Carol Schersten LaHurd, "Rediscovering the Lost Women in Luke 15," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 24 (1994) 66–76

June 10-13

Please read and post comments to website

Sower and Seed/Purposes of Parables

- a. Matt 13.3-23
- b. Mark 4:3-20
- c. Luke 8.5-15
- d. *Thomas* 9 (in Snodgrass)
- e. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 145-177 and notes

June 14 (Tuesday)-- Parables and Slavery

Unforgiving slave

- a. Matt 18.21-35
- b. Luke 7.36-50
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 1-92 and notes
- d. Levine, *Short Stories*, "Introduction," 1-23 and "Conclusion," 275-81
- e. Warren Carter, "Resisting and Imitating the Empire: Imperial Paradigms in Two Matthean Parables," *Interpretation* 56.3 (2002): 260-272
- f. Jennifer Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119.1 (2000): 67-90

Faithful slave

- a. Matt 24.45-51
- b. Luke 12.42-46
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 494-505 and notes
- d. Catherine Hezser, "The Impact of Household Slaves on the Jewish Family in Roman Palestine," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 34.4 (2003): 375-424.
- e. Alec Hill, "The Most Troubling Parable: Why Does Jesus Say We are Like Slaves?" *Christianity Today* 58.6 (2014): 76-79.

Talents/Pounds

- a. Matt 25.13-30
- b. Luke 19.11-28
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 519-543 and notes
- d. Brian Schultz, "Jesus as Archelaus in the Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19:11-27)," *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007): 105-127
- e. Adam F. Braun, "Reframing the Parable of the Pounds in Lukan Narrative and Economic Context: Luke 19:11-28," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39.6 (2012): 442-448
- f. Justin Ukpong, "The Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30): Commendation or Critique of Exploitation?: A Social-Historical and Theological Reading," *Neotestamentica* 46.1 (2012): 190-207.

June 15 (Wednesday) -- Pharisee and Tax Collector; Friend at Midnight

Pharisee and Tax Collector

- a. Luke 18.9-14
- b. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 462-476 and notes
- c. Levine, *Short Stories*, 169-95 and notes
- d. Robert Doran, "The Pharisee and the Tax Collector: An Agonistic Story," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69.2 (2007): 259-70
- e. F. Gerald Downing, "The Ambiguity of 'The Pharisee and the Toll-collector' Luke (18:9-14) in the Greco-Roman World of Late Antiquity," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54.1 (1992): 80-99
- f. Timothy A. Friedrichsen, "The Temple, A Pharisee, A Tax Collector, and the Kingdom of G-d: Rereading a Jesus Parable (Luke 18:10-14a)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124.1 (2005): 89-119

Friend at Midnight

- a. Luke 11.5-13
- b. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 437-449 and notes
- c. Klyne Snodgrass, *Anaideia* and the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:8)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116.3 (1997): 505-513
- d. Alan F. Johnson, "Assurance for Man: The Fallacy of Translating *Anaideia* by 'Persistence,'" *Journal of Evangelical Theology* 22.2 (1979): 123-131

June 16 (Thursday) – Mustard Seed and Leaven

Mustard Seed

- a. Matt 13.31-32
- b. Mark 4.30-32
- c. Luke 13.18-19
- d. *Thomas* 20 (in Snodgrass)
- e. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 216-228 and notes
- f. Levine, *Short Stories*, 151-167 and notes

Leaven

- a. Matt 13.33
- b. Luke 13.20-21
- c. *Thomas* 96 (in Snodgrass)
- d. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 228-235 and notes
- e. Levine, *Short Stories*, 107-125 and notes
- f. Barbara Reid, "Beyond Petty Pursuits and Wearisome Widows," *Interpretation* 56.3 (2002): 284-294
- g. Ryan S. Schellenberg, "Kingdom as Contaminant? The Role of Repertoire in the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71 (2009): 527-543

June 17-20 – Please read and post comments to website

Seed Growing Secretly

- a. Mark 4.26-29
- b. *Thomas* 21 (Snodgrass)

- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 179-190 and notes

June 21 – Treasure, Pearl and Jar (Matthew 13:44-46); Two Builders (Matthew 7.24-27; Luke 6.47-49)

Treasure, Pearl and Jar

- a. *Thomas* 97 (in Snodgrass)
- b. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 236-53 and notes
- c. Levine, *Short Stories*, 127-150 and notes
- d. Catherine Hezser, “Finding a Treasure: The Treasure Motif in Jewish, Christian, and Graeco-Roman Narratives in the Context of Rabbinic Halakhah and Roman Law,” posted to Academia.edu as forthcoming in *Parables and Fables in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Albertina Oegema et al (WUNT, Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019).

Two Builders

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 327-38 and notes

June 22 (Wednesday) -- Dishonest Steward, Two Sons, Tower builder

Dishonest Steward: Luke 16.1-15

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 401-419 and notes
- b. Dieter H. Reinstorf, “The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Lk 16.1-8): A Biography of Jesus and a Lesson on mercy,” *HTS Theologiese Studies* 69.1 (2013)
- c. John K. Goodrich, “Voluntary Debt Remission and the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131.3 (2012): 547-566
- d. David Landry, “Honor Restored: New Light on the Parable of the Prudent Steward (Luke 16:1-8a),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119.2 (2000): 287-309

Two Sons: Matthew 21.28-32

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 266-75 and notes

Tower Builder and Warring King: Luke 14.28-32

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 379-388 and notes

June 23 (Thursday) – Parables of Rich Men

- a. Luke 16.19-31 (Rich Man and Lazarus)
- b. Luke 12.13-21 (Rich Fool)
- c. *Thomas* 63 (in Snodgrass)
- d. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 389-401, 419-435 and notes
- e. Levine, *Short Stories*, 247-273 and notes
- f. Darrell L. Bock, “The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Ethics of Jesus,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 40.1 (1997): 63-72
- g. Ronald F. Hock, “Lazarus and Micyllus: Greco-Roman Backgrounds to Luke 16:19-31,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106.3 (1987): 447-463
- h. Craig Morrison, “Abraham in Targum Neofiti and in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31),”

June 28 (Tuesday)-- Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20.1-16) and Two Debtors (Luke 7:36-50)

Laborers

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 362-379 and notes
- b. Levine, *Short Stories*, 197-219 and notes
- c. Donald Capps, "The Laborers in the Vineyard: Putting Humor to Work," *Pastoral Psychology* 61 (2012): 555-571
- d. J.M. Tevel, "The Labourers in the Vineyard: The Exegesis of Matthew 20,1-7 in the Early Church," *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992): 356-380

Debtors

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 77-92

June 29 (Wednesday) – Wicked Tenants (Matthew 21.33-46; Mark 12.1-12; Luke 20.9-19)

- b. *Thomas* 65-66 (in Snodgrass)
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 276-299 and notes
- d. Kelly R. Iverson, "Jews, Gentiles, and the Kingdom of G-d: The Parable of the Wicked Tenants in Narrative Perspective (Mark 12:1-12)," *Biblical Interpretation* 20 (2012): 305-335
- e. Barbara Reid, "Violent Endings in Matthew's Parables and Christian Nonviolence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66.2 (2004): 237-255

June 29 (Wednesday) – Great Feast and Wise and Foolish Virgins

Great Feast

- a. Matt 22.1-14
- b. Luke 14.15-24
- c. *Thomas* 64 (in Snodgrass)
- d. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 299-325 and notes
- e. Bruce W. Longenecker, "A Humorous Jesus? Orality, Structure and Characterisation in Luke 14:15-24, and Beyond," *Biblical Interpretation* 16 (2008): 179-204
- f. Chris Hoke, "Reading the Parable of the Great Banquet in Prison," ChristianCentury.org/article/2015-01/reading-parable-prison [warning: difficult material]

Wise and Foolish Virgins Matt 25.1-13

- a. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 505-518 and notes
- b. Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, "Got into the Party After All: Women's Issues and the Five Foolish Virgins," *Continuum* 3 (1994): 107-137
- c. Karl Paul Donfried, "The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) as a Summary of Matthean Theology," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93.3 (1974): 415-428

June 30 (Thursday)-- Final Judgment-- Dragnet, Weeds, Sheep and Goats

Dragnet

- a. Matt 13.47-50
- b. *Thomas* 8.1-2 (in Snodgrass)
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 477-494 and notes

Weeds in the Wheat

- a. Matt 13.24-30, 36-43
- b. *Thomas* 57 (in Snodgrass)
- c. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 191-216 and notes
- d. Robert K. McIver, "The Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Relationship between the Kingdom and the Church as Portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114.4 (1995): 643-659
- e. William Doty, "An Interpretation: Parable of the Weeds and Wheat," *Interpretation* 25.2 (1971): 185-193
- f. J.R.C. Cousland, "Toxic Tares: The Poisonous Weeds (zizania) in Matthew's Parable of the Tares (Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43)," *New Testament Studies* 61 (2015): 395-410.

Sheep and Goats

- a. Matt 25.31-46
- b. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 543-564 and notes
- c. Kathleen Weber, "The Image of Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31-46," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59.4 (1997): 657-678
- d. John R. Donahue, "The 'Parable' of the Sheep and the Goats: A Challenge to Christian Ethics," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 3-31

****Papers due last day of class (hard copy and electronic copy) by midnight.**

Note 1: Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course.

Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined. For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism: (a) the submission of another person's work as one's own; (b) the submission of a commercially prepared paper; (c) the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself; (d) the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.

2. Plagiarism by paraphrase: (a) mere re-arrangement of another person's works and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism; (b) paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism. See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.

3. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.

Note 2: Absences

For **intensive courses**—follow the policy for DMin: if 25% of course (one and a half days for a week intensive) is missed then the student fails the course.