

Luke-Acts: NT642/742

Instructor: The Rev. Dr. Rob James, rjames@vst.edu

Description:

The two New Testament books of Luke and Acts, likely written by the same author, are key sources for understanding the development of the traditions about Jesus and the early Church. This course explores the Lukan construction of the major characters in the narrative, and addresses the most important themes present in the two works. Students will develop an understanding of the way that the author presents Jesus and the Church, and of the lenses through which he sees things. The course also explores the sources and literary construction of the texts, and in particular will also provide students with training on how to undertake textual criticism by exploring textual variants. Students will be encouraged to consider the various ways in which textual variants have come about and to form their own theories and opinions about them.

Prerequisites:

Students should have successfully completed at least one following, or been exempted from the following due to previous study, before taking this course:

- NT500: Synoptic Gospels
- NT501: Paul

It is recommended that students have taken both of these courses, but it is not required.

Purpose:

To introduce students to the critical study of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. This course explores the sources and literary construction of the texts, and will also provide students with training on how to undertake textual criticism by exploring textual variants. The course explores the Lukan construction of the major characters in the narrative, and addresses the most important themes present in the two works.

Competence Objectives:

1. To locate Lukan theology within its historical and cultural context.

2. To show an understanding of the construction of key Lukan characters, especially of the Lukan Jesus and the Lukan Paul.
3. To show an awareness of the key themes of Luke-Acts.
4. Show an awareness of textually and interpretatively controversial moments in Luke-Acts.
5. To show an understanding of the literary design(s) of Luke-Acts.
6. To be able to carry out a moderate level of textual criticism using the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland.

Format:

- This course is available in synchronous format on Zoom and in person.
- Asynchronous students are also welcome, but should note that there are extra requirements for them to be awarded credit. They MUST submit a synopsis of each lecture BEFORE the date of the next in-person lecture.

Required reading:

- There is no textbook as such, but students should have familiarised themselves with the translated text of Luke and Acts.
 - Students should possess, and bring with them to class, an English translation of the Bible. This should not be the King James version (neither KJV, nor NKJV), nor should it be a paraphrase. NRSV is a good choice, but other modern translations would also be acceptable.
 - The Nestle-Aland critical edition will be used regularly, although copies of pages will be provided for what we do in class. All students may want to buy a copy, but ThM students should buy a copy. Edition 28 is the latest edition, and should be used if at all possible.
- Academic articles will be on Populi for each week of the course. These should be read **in advance** of each week's class.

Recommended Commentaries:

These texts are available online via the VST Library and have multiple licences. They are also available in physical format:

- Luke:

- Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991).
- François Bovon (translated by Christine M. Thomas), *Luke 1/2/3* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002). Note that this is a three-part commentary.
- Acts:
 - Linda Maloney and Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Acts of the Apostles*, Wisdom Commentary series (Collegeville, Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical Press, 2022).
 - Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).
 - Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minneapolis, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

Assessment:

*To be awarded credit for the course, students need to complete the following **THREE assignments**, as well as meet the attendance requirements (see next section).*

1. Approximately 15 minute presentation on an academic paper.

Students will each take turns at presenting on a paper on Luke-Acts. The student will have read the paper in question in advance, and will have prepared about 15 minutes worth of commentary on the paper. (If sufficient students take the course for credit, then they will be paired for this activity, and should present for slightly longer). This presentation should include:

- A thesis statement: What is it that the author seeks to demonstrate?
- Method: What methodology has the author used? Or how have they combined methodologies?
- A summary of the main arguments: What is it that the author is arguing? How is their thesis supported by these arguments?
- Points of agreement and disagreement with others in the field. (In some cases I've given you a second paper in the readings to compare or compliment the first paper, in other cases you'll have to find other sources).
- Questions arising from the paper, including things the student disagrees with or would like to investigate further. You can critique the arguments and point out holes in these, or questions you have about them.
- Application: What is the enduring relevance of what you have read (even those bits you disagree with)? How does the article/chapter help us to imagine our way into the world of the text, and how does it help us think about applying the text today?

A written version of the presentation should be handed in, but you do not need to stick rigidly to a script when presenting to the class.

Whilst you may want to make a few changes to your written version following your presentation, it is suggested that you hand in your written version soon after your presentation, so it is fresh in your mind. However, the due date for this is **Friday 13th December 2024**.

2. An exegesis (3000-3700 words excluding footnotes and bibliography) on one of the following:

- Luke 6.1-5
- Luke 22.14-20
- Acts 9.1-25

MDiv/MATS/MAPPL/MAIIS students:

The exegesis should be structured around the following areas. Students should see the handout for detailed commentary on each of these areas.

- Textual Criticism (700-1000 words): Using the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland, the student should consider what options there are for the readings of the passage, and how the passage has developed in the textual tradition.
- Historical Criticism (500-700 words): What is the historical context of the text? Are historical layers discernable? Is there a historical reason for a textual variant?
- Literary Criticism (500-700 words): The student should think about the literary form(s) used in the passage to understand its original context (*sitz im leben*), and purpose. A comment on genre should be made as part of this. Also, what is the place of this passage within the overall composition of Luke/Acts?
- Exegesis (600-800 words): The student should then analyse the passage, to understand what the author is communicating, both within this passage and by its literary setting in the wider Lukan corpus.
- Theological and Contemporary Interpretation (600-800 words): What is the meaning or range of meanings for the world today? What political/ideological issues and critiques are raised?

MDiv/MATS/MAPPL/MAIIS students should cite at least 10 books or articles.

The due date for this is **Friday 13th December 2024**.

ThM students:

- ThM students should write the same paper as other students, but it should be **5500-6500 words** (excluding footnotes and bibliography) in length. ThM students are therefore required to do more words per section than the word counts given above.
- In addition to the other sections of the paper, following the textual criticism section, ThM students should add the following:
 - Questions of translation. The student should consider whether there are elements of the passage that could be translated in various ways, which may have a bearing on meaning. The student is encouraged to use a variety of translations (e.g. NRSV, NIV etc...), and also to look at the Greek text. Mastery of Greek is not essential for this, and the student will be encouraged to utilise various online tools to assist.

ThM students should cite at least 16 books or articles.

The due date for this is **Friday 13th December 2024**.

3. An exam:

a. For MDiv/MATS/MAPPL/MAIIS students:

- The exam is two hours.
- Students will need to answer two from a choice of six to eight questions in a three-hour exam at the end of the course.
- Students should aim for answers of at least 800 words per question.
- No referencing or footnotes are necessary. If a quotation is used, the student simply needs to say, "As Mark Goodacre says, '....'", or similar. Quotations need not be exact as this is being done under timed conditions.
- The exam is 'open book'.
- The exam is not invigilated. It will be taken via Populi, and can be taken at time convenient to the student in the designated exam week. Once the student begins the exam, Populi will time it.
- Extra time can be given for specific learning needs (e.g. dyslexia). Students should talk to the instructor prior to the exam week to ask for this extra time.
- Extra time can be given for those who are going to write in a language other than English and then use translation tools to provide the English version. Note that the English version of your text is the version of record. You have extra time in order to read through the English and to make any changes you want to make. Students should talk to the instructor prior to the exam week to ask for this extra time.

b. ThM students:

- The same as the above, but the exam is three hours, and students are expected to go into greater depth in their answers.

Attendance requirements:

Note that failure to meet these requirements will result in withdrawal from the course, but course fees will still be incurred if withdrawal happens after the add/drop date.

Synchronous students Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than two lectures will result in being withdrawn from the course. If students miss a class, they **MUST** submit a 2 page synopsis (12 point font, double spaced) of the missed class before the next class.

Asynchronous students **MUST** submit a synopsis of each lecture **BEFORE** the date of the next in-person lecture. Each synopsis should be at least two pages of 12 point type, double spaced.

Schedule of lectures

Each week from the second week on, we will begin by looking at one or two papers or chapters together (also see item 1 in assessment, above). Two or three papers are listed below for each week, and depending on how many are in the class, we will have presentations on some or all of them. But all the papers are relevant for the week in question and we will be discussing ALL of them. Please read them in advance of the class. Following that, we will undertake some textual analysis together. Although we will mainly be thinking about the textual variants, we will also look at what a text might mean for the Church/world today. Lecture and discussion(s) will follow. Details of papers/chapters and passages to be looked at are listed below.

Week 1: 12th September

An overview of Luke and Acts and an introduction to critical apparatus

- Passages: Luke 1 and 2; textual analysis on Luke 2.41-50.

Week 2: 19th September

Lucan parables

- Papers: John K. Goodrich, 'Voluntary debt remission and the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16.1–13)', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 131, no. 3 (2012), pp. 547–66
AND Rob James, 'Difficult texts: using dishonesty to enter heaven in Luke 16.9' in *Theology* 126:3 (2023), 201-4.

- Paper: Matthew Chalmers, 'Rethinking Luke 10: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Israelite' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139:3 (2020), 543-66.
- Passages: Luke 10.25-37, 15, 16.1–13; textual analysis on Luke 15.17-23.

Week 3: 26th September

Politics and Community

- Paper: Allen Brent, 'Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor', in *The Journal of Theological Studies* 48:2 (1997), 411-38
- Paper: Jason Robert Combs, 'The Polemical Origin of Luke 6.5D: Dating Codex Bezae's Sabbath-Worker Agraphon', in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42:2 (2019), 162-84.
- Passages: Luke 6.1-5, 22.47-end and 23, Acts 10; textual analysis on Luke 6.1-5.

Week 4: 3rd October

The Lukan Jesus

- Paper: Timothy W. Reardon, 'Recent Trajectories and Themes in Lukan Soteriology', in *Currents in Biblical Research* 12:1 (2012), 77-95.
- Chapter: Caleb Friedeman, 'The Mystery of Luke 1-2', in his *The Revelation of the Messiah: The Christological Mystery of Luke 1-2 and its Unveiling in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: CUP, 2023), 52-90.
- Passages: Luke 1-2, Acts 13.17-43; textual analysis on Acts 13.38-43.

Week 5: 10th October

The Lukan Paul

- Paper: Dale C. Allison Jr., 'Acts 9:1–9, 22:6–11, 26:12–18: Paul and Ezekiel', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135:4 (2016), 807-26.
- Paper: John J. Kilgallen, 'Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26.2-23): Some Considerations', in *Biblica* 69:2 (1988), 170-95.
- Passages: Acts 8-9.30, Acts 22, Acts 26; textual analysis on Acts 26.24-end.

Week 6: 17th October

The Temple

- Paper: Gregory R. Lanier, 'Luke's Distinctive Use of the Temple: Portraying the Divine Visitation', in *The Journal of Theological Studies* 65:2 (2014), 433-62.
- Paper: Nicholas J. Moore, "'He Saw heaven Opened": Heavenly Temple and Universal Mission in Luke-Acts', in *New Testament Studies* 68 (2022), 38-51.
- Passages: Luke 19.28-end, Acts 21.15-26; textual analysis on Luke 19.28-33.

24th October: NO CLASS THIS WEEK – READING WEEK

Week 7: 31st October:

Meals

- Paper: Rob James, 'Variant Readings of Luke 22.15-20 and the Relationship of Codex Bezae to Syriac Curetonian', forthcoming in the *Journal of Theological Studies*.
- Paper: Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Sharing Food and Breaking Boundaries: Reading of Acts 10-11:18 as a Key to Luke's Ecumenical Agenda in Acts', in *Transformation* 32:1 (2015), 27-37.
- Passages: Luke 14.1-24, Luke 22.1-27, Acts 10-11.18; textual analysis on Luke 22.15-20.

Week 8: 7th November:

Women in Luke-Acts

- Chapter: Elaine Wainwright, 'Women Cured of Evil Spirits and Infirmities: The Gospel of Luke', in her *Women Healing/Healing Women: The Genderisation of Healing in Early Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2017 [2006]), Chapter 6.
- Paper: Mary Rose D'Angelo, 'Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109:3 (1990), 441-61.
- Passages: Luke 8.1-3, 10.38-end, 21.1-4, 24.1-11, Acts 16; textual analysis on Luke 10.38-end.

Week 9: 14th November:

The Speeches of Acts

- Paper: Joshua D. Garroway, "'Apostolic Irresistibility" and the Interrupted Speeches in Acts' in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74:4 (2012), 738-52.

- Paper: Daniel Lynwood Smith, 'Interrupted Speech in Luke-Acts', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 134:1 (2015), 177-91.
- Passage: Acts 4.1-22, Acts 7, Acts 24; textual analysis Acts 24.10-16.

Week 10: 21st November:

Resurrection and Ascension

- Paper: Eric Franklin, 'The Ascension and the Eschatology of Luke-Acts' in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23:2 (1970), 191-200.
- Paper: Deborah Thompson Prince, "'Why Do You Seek the Living among the Dead?'" Rhetorical Questions in the Lukan Resurrection Narrative' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 135:1 (2016), 123-39.
- Paper: Shelly Matthews, 'Fleshly Resurrection, Authority Claims, and the Scriptural Practices of Lukan Christianity' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 136:1 (2017), 163-83.
- Passages: Luke 24, Acts 1.1-14; textual analysis Luke 24.1-8.

Week 11: 28th November:

The Holy Spirit and Pentecost

- Papers: Max Turner, 'The Spirit and the Power of Jesus' Miracles in the Lukan Conception' in *Novum Testamentum* 33:2 (1991), 124-52 **AND** Robert P. Menzies, 'Spirit and Power in Luke-Acts: A Response to Max Turner' in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 15:49 (1993), 11-20.
- Robert F. O'Toole, 'Acts 2.30 and the Davidic Covenant of Pentecost' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 201:2 (1983), 245-58.
- Passages: Luke 4.1-30, Acts 2.1-13; 10.37-43; textual analysis on Luke 4.8

Exam week: 2nd-6th December:

- Exam to be taken via Populi during this week, at a time to suit the student.

Additional Papers

Additional papers of use, which may also be assigned for presentations if the class exceeds the number of papers listed above. These will be on Populi in a separate folder.

Arnold, Elizabeth and James McConnell, 'Hijacked Humanity: A Postcolonial Reading of Luke 8:26-39' in *Review and Expositor* 112:4 (2015), 591-606.

Beavis, Mary Ann, 'Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111:1 (1992), 37-54.

Eubank, Nathan, 'A Disconcerting Prayer: On the Originality of Luke 23.34a', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129:3 (2010), 521-36.

James, Rob, 'Difficult texts: the Christology of the Centurion's words in Luke 23.47' in *Theology* 125:3 (2022).

Jervell, Jacob, 'The Law in Luke-Acts', in the *Harvard Theological Review*, 64 (1971), 21-36.

Jipp, Joshua W., 'Luke's Scriptural Suffering Messiah: A Search for Precedent, a Search for Identity, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72:2 (2010), 255-74.

_____, 'Paul's Areopagus Speech of Acts 17:16-34 as Both Critique and Propaganda' in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131:3 (2012), 567-88.

Nasrallah, Laura, 'The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian's Panhellenion', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127: 3 (2008), 533-66.

O'Toole, R. F., 'Luke's Understanding of Jesus' Resurrection-Ascension-Exultation' in the *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 9:3 (1979), 106-14.

_____, 'Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts' in *Biblica* 62:4 (1981), 471-98.

Staley, Jeffrey L., 'Changing Women: Postcolonial Reflections on Acts 16.6-40' in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 21:73 (1999), 113-35.

Sylva, Dennis D., 'The Meaning and Function of Acts 7.46-50', in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106:2 (1987), 261-75.

Taylor, N. H., 'Stephen, the Temple, and Early Christian Eschatology', in *Revue Biblique* 110:1 (2003), 62-85.

Course policies

1. Attendance: You are required to attend 80% of all classes. For on-campus students, this means attending class on time with no more than 2 allowable absences for any reason. For distance students, this means attending class through Zoom synchronously with class with no more than 2 allowable absences for any reason. (See notes above on what to do if you miss a class).
2. Reading and assignments: Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.

3. Academic honesty: Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
4. Inclusive language: In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when referring to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when referring to God.
5. Assignment and Course Evaluation
 - a. Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is "Not Approved") including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
 - b. Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
 - c. For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be Approved.
6. Late assignments: Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.
7. Limitation on use of social media: Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.
8. Limitation on use of class material and images: no material from Zoom classes, including screen capture pictures of their fellow students, professors, and CTAs can be posted to Facebook or any other social media without the express consent of the affected individuals.
9. VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.