"The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel."

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2027
Course Title	**THE PARABLES OF JESUS**
Course Code	**NEWT 0528 1P**
Date **Time** **Delivery Format**	From January 14, 2027 to April 8, 2027 **Every Thursday** From 2:15 PM to 5:05 PM IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The classes will be IN-PERSON on Thursday from 2:15 to 5:05 pm.
Instructor **Contact Information**	**DUNCAN REID, PhD** Email: dreid@tyndale.ca Tyndale Phone Number: (416) 226-6620 Ext. 2273
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Jesus' kingdom proclamation was his extensive use of parables. These metaphorical teaching tools have both perplexed and inspired their hearers from the time they were first spoken and recorded. This course will explore various interpretive approaches to a representative sample of parables with the goal of hearing their challenge afresh in our contemporary world.
Prerequisite: BIBL 0501. Recommended: NEWT 0522.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish different interpretive approaches to a parable over the course of the last 2000 years;
2. Explain how an understanding of the first-century historical context enhances the interpretation of parables;

3. Identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of different interpretative approaches to parables;
4. Recognize the impact of interpreter bias and discuss the merits of allowing for more than one interpretive option when considering a given parable;
5. Critically evaluate and creatively discuss how parables can help shape our contemporary theological outlook and spiritual formation.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Gowler, David B. *What Are They Saying About the Parables?* 2nd ed. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2021. ISBN 978-0-8091-5458-6

Levine, Amy-Jill. *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. ISBN 978-0-06-156103-0

Lischer, Richard. *Reading the Parables*. Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014. ISBN 978-0-664-26025-5

Various articles appear under required reading in the course schedule below. These are all posted on the course page.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Culpepper, R. Allan. *The People of the Parables: Galilee in the Time of Jesus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2024.

Long, Thomas G. *Proclaiming the Parables: Preaching and Teaching the Kingdom of God*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2024. ISBN 9780664268619

Gowler, David B. *The Parables After Jesus: Their Imaginative Receptions Across Two Millenia*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020. ISBN 9780801049996

Hedrick, Charles. *Many Things in Parables: Jesus and His Modern Critics*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

Hultgren, Arland J. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids MI; Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Snodgrass, Klyne. *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*. Second ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018. ISBN 9780802875693

Zimmermann, Ruben. *Puzzling the Parables of Jesus: Methods and Interpretation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8006-9975-8

Tyndale recommends STEPBible – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Students will be evaluated based on the following assignments. Additional details and grading rubrics will be provided in class and posted on the course page.

1. Critical Book Reflection (20%): Due Friday January 29

Write a reflection on the following required text: Lischer, Richard. *Reading the Parables*. Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014.

Your reflection should be 4 to 6 pages in length (maximum 6) and include the following elements:

(a) Briefly describe your approach to reading and interpreting the parables prior to taking this course, indicating whether it matches one or more of the approaches discussed by Lischer in chapter 2? In what ways, if any, does your reading of Lischer's book invite you to reconsider your approach to the parables? Explain your answer. (1 page maximum)

(b) In what ways does our situatedness as readers influence our reading of parables? Discuss this in relation to Lischer's comments on reading the parables with the evangelists (chapter 3), in light of the human condition (chapter 4), in reading with the poor (chapter 5), and reading with the Saints (chapter 6). How does this help you to reflect critically and constructively on your own and other's situatedness in reading the parables today? (4 pages maximum)

(c) Conclude your reflection by indicating (1) your biggest takeaway from reading this book and (2) your biggest suggestion for how this book could be improved. Explain your answers. (1 page maximum)

This assignment addresses all of the course leaning outcomes.

2. Interpreting the Parable of the Two Sons in Luke 15:11–32 (30%): Due Friday Feb 26

Your paper should be a 8–10 pages in length (maximum 10) and should include the following four elements: (a) Identify and summarize of at least one interpretation from each of the following historical periods of the church: 100–500 CE, 500–1500 CE, 1500–1700 CE, and 1700-1900 CE; (b) Identify and summarize at least 3 different interpretations from the period of

1900–present (make sure in all cases to read and cite the original commentator and not just someone else's summary of them); (c) Discuss the value of completing this survey, how we might go about differentiating between better and worse readings, and how all of this potentially enriches our reading of the parable today; (d) Based on your research and findings, identify at least one way that the parable might be appropriated afresh in a contemporary context of your choosing.
Note: make sure for sections 'a' and 'b' (summarizing interpretations) that you read and cite the original commentator and not just someone else's summary of them (though you can use these also).
This assignment potentially addresses all the course learning outcomes.

3. Final Research Project (50%): Due Friday April 9

This paper should be approximately 10–12 pages in length (maximum 12). Choose from the following options but please consult with the instructor to confirm your choice of parable and/or research question (note: you cannot choose the Prodigal Son for this assignment):

(a) Research paper: Identify a research question related to a particular parable or an aspect of parable research. Research and write a paper that responds to your research question in the following format: (i) Paper *introduction* that identifies your research question, indicating why it is important and how you plan to address it; (ii) Paper *body* that presents your research in a clear and organized manner; (iii) Paper *conclusion* that provides the answer to your research question based on your research.

(b) Exegesis paper: Write an exegesis paper on a parable of your choice and include the following elements: (i) Literary analysis (significant structural and literary features of the parable plus literary context within a particular gospel); (ii) Historical context (socio-historical background in first century Galilee plus possible literary and metaphorical resonances with the OT, Second Temple Judaism, and the Greco-Roman world); (iii) Interpretation (identify and weigh up interpretive options); (iv) Appropriation (identify one way in which the parable might be appropriated into our contemporary context).

(c) Lecture: Write a lecture on a particular parable or an aspect of parable research. The lecture is intended to be delivered to a group of senior seminary students who have completed introductory Bible courses and 3 semesters of Greek. Your lecture should therefore assume familiarity with the basics of academic biblical study and should engage with the Greek text.

(d) Sermon: Write a sermon to be delivered in a church of your choosing (identify which one it is) on a parable of your choice. It should be written as a full manuscript, not point form or outline. Your sermon should be rooted in an exegetical analysis of the parable (as per option 'b' above) but should be presented in a way that engages meaningfully with your chosen audience (e.g., not overly technical or dry or lecture-like). You should include footnotes that flesh out and/or provide exegetical explanations that are inappropriate to include in the sermon.

(e) Re-written Parable: Re-write either the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) or the Unjust Steward (16:1–8) for a contemporary audience. Indicate your chosen audience (e.g., age, social location etc.) and re-write the parable in a way that connects into their world. Your re-written parable should appear at the beginning of your paper. The remainder of the paper is a commentary on your parable, explaining the process you went through to arrive at your finished product (interpretive/exegetical decisions made about the parable; understanding your audience; intended impact etc.).

(f) Play or short story: Write a play or short story that contemporizes either the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) or the Unjust Steward (16:1–8) for a contemporary audience of your choice (make sure to indicate who your audience is). Your play or short story should be based on exegetical analysis of the parable (as per option 'b') and your exegetical decisions should be explained/justified in footnotes.

Note: If you would like to choose a different parable for options (e) and (f) then please consult with the instructor.

This assignment potentially addresses all the course learning outcomes.

Style and submission guidelines, AI, and late penalties:

All assignments should be type written, *double-spaced, 12-point font Times New Roman (10-point font for footnotes), and one-inch margins*. Make sure to include page numbers and a title page (title of paper; your name; due date; course code and name of professor). They should be submitted in pdf format and uploaded to the appropriate portal on the course Moodle page.

Please label the file with your name and assignment indicator (e.g., John Smith_Book Review or John Smith_Prodigal Son). The deadline for submission is midnight on the due date.

It is expected that written work is submitted in a straightforward style of academic prose and demonstrates clear organization, argument and coherent thought. It ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. Ensure that you have accurately and fully documented any secondary sources used in your paper (including footnotes and bibliography). If English grammar is difficult for you then you are expected to seek help (e.g., from the writing services of the Centre for Academic Excellence).

Artificial intelligence (AI) programs are useful research tools and are not off limits in the research process, but they should not be your sole means of research. You need to learn how to find first-hand academic resources and engaged directly with them. AI must not be used to write your papers and, if detected, will be considered plagiarism. If you use AI to write your paper and submit it as if you wrote it, it is not only a question of academic integrity and ethics, but you are also short-changing your learning experience.

See Section VI below for late penalty policy.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	%	Due date
1. Book review	20%	Friday Jan 29
2. Interpreting the parable of the two sons	30%	Friday Feb 26
3. Final Research Project	50%	Friday April 9
Total Grade	**100%**	

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Note: The full titles of articles/books listed below appear in the bibliography. PDF copies of articles/chapters are posted on the course page (except course texts: Gowler and Levine). Note that occasionally there is a choice of articles to read, although you are of course free to read both!

Week 1: Jan 14
Course introduction and syllabus
Lecture: General Introduction to Parables
Required reading: Gowler 2021, 1–14 (14 pages); Levine 2014, 1–27 (27 pages)
Recommended reading: Zimmermann 2018

Week 2: Jan 21
Lecture: Interpretive Approaches to Parables
Required reading: Gowler 2021, 15–26 (12 pages)

Week 3: Jan 28
Assignment: Critical Book Reflection due on Friday January 29
Lecture: Parables in Mark (1)
- Overview of parables in Mark
- Purpose of parables in Mark 4:10–12
- Parable of the Sower (Mar 4:1–9, 13–20)

Required reading:
- General: Gowler 2021, 27–42 (16 pages);
- Sower: Juel 2002 (11 pages); Herzog 2012 (10 pages);

Week 4: Feb 4
Lecture: Parables in Mark (2)
- The Growing Seed and the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:26–32)
- The Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1–12)

Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 43–68 (26 pages);
- Mustard seed: Schellenburg 2009 (17 pages); Levine 2014, 165–82 (19 pages)
- Tenants: Lanier 2016 (40 pages)

Week 5: Feb 11

Lecture: Parables in Matthew (1)

- Introduction to parables in Matthew
- Parables of wheat and the weeds (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43)
- Parables of the treasure and the pearl (Matt 13:44–50)

Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 69–93 (25 pages)
- Weeds and wheat: McIver 1995 (16 pages) OR Cousland 2015 (16 pages)
- Pearl: Levine 2014, 139–64 (26 pages)

Feb 18: No Class (Reading Week)

Week 6: Feb 25

Lecture: Parables in Matthew (2)

- The Unmerciful Servant (18:23–25)
- Workers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-16)

Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 94–107 (14 pages)
- Unmerciful servant: Van Eck 2015 (10 pages); O'Halloran 2020 (10 pages)
- Vineyard: Eubank 2013 (19 pages); Van Eck & Kloppenborg 2015 (9 pages); Levine 2014, 213–37 (25 pages)

Week 7: Mar 4

Lecture: Parables in Matthew (3)

- The Dragnet (13:47–50)
- The Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1–13)
- The Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31–46)

Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 108–132 (25 pages)
- Dragnet: Snodgrass 2018, 482–494 (11 pages)
- Virgins: Zimmermann 2015, 261–92 (31 pages)
- Sheep and goats: Snodgrass 2018, 543–63 (21 pages)

Week 8: Mar 11

Lecture: Parables in Q (Matthew and Luke double tradition)

- The Leaven (Matt 13:33; Luke; 13:20–21)
- The Lost Sheep (Matt 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7)
- The Talents and Pounds (Matt 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27)

Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 133–153 (21 pages)
- Leaven: Schellenberg 2009 (as above); Levine 2014, 117–137 (21 pages)
- Lost sheep: Zimmermann 2015, 211–36 (24 pages)
- Talents and Pounds/Minas: Snodgrass 2018, 519–543 (25 pages)

Week 9: Mar 18

Lecture: Parables in Luke (1)

- Introduction to Lukan Parables
- The barren fig tree (Luke 13:6–9)
- The Unjust Judge (18:1–8)
- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (18:9–14)

Required reading:

- Fig tree: Hedrick 1997 (16 pages)
- Judge: Levine 2014, 239–65 (27 pages)
- Pharisee and tax collector: Levine 2014, 183–212 (30 pages)

Week 10: Mar 25

Assignment: Interpreting the Parable of the Two Sons due on Friday February 26

Lecture: Parables in Luke (2)

- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)
- The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8–10)
- The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32)

Required reading:

- Samaritan: Levine 2014, 77–115 (39 pages)
- Coin and Son: Levine 2014, 27–76 (50 pages); Parsons 1996 (28 pages)

Week 11: April 1

Lecture: Parables in Luke (3)

- The Unjust Steward (16:1–8)
- The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19–31)

Required reading:

- Unjust Steward: Ireland 1989 (26 pages); Jerkins 2021 (11 pages)
- Rich Man and Lazarus: Adewale 2006 (16 pages); Levine 2014, 267–96 (30 pages)

Week 12: April 8

Assignment: Final Research Project due on Friday January 29

Lecture: Parables in John + Parables in the Life of Faith
Required reading:

- General: Gowler 2021, 154–176 (23 pages); Levine 2014, 297–305 (9 pages)
- John: Zimmermann 2011 (34 pages) OR Zimmermann 2015, 333–360 (26 pages)

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A more complete bibliography is posted on the course page.

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VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to "Guidelines for Interactions" on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Integrity website for further details.

For proper citation style, consult Citation Guides for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult Writing Services.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tyndale Seminary's Academic Calendar provides a definition and broad descriptions of types of Academic Dishonesty using AI.

Academic dishonesty includes the submission of work for which previous credit was given, the submission of work under one's own name that is largely the result of another person's efforts, aiding another's dishonesty, cheating on exams and giving false information for the purpose of gaining admission, credits, etc. … Academic dishonesty also includes submitting academic work which has been written, rewritten, or substantially edited by an artificial intelligence program. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 173.)

AI programs are not adequate information sources for academic writing. Students should not use AI in academic writing without explicit permission from their course instructor. Given the tendency of AI programs to give inaccurate information and even falsify citations, students are cautioned against using AI prompts to begin researching or summarizing a topic. Instructors may deduct points from [or give a failing grade to] assignments for the improper use of AI sources. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 174.)

Students *may* use AI as an enhanced search engine, provided they are extremely careful about checking its sources. That means personally verifying texts and claims *every time* by clicking through to the source link or independently searching. This also means public information sources like Wikipedia are not satisfactory sources. We recommend using sites like Google Scholar or the variety of journal and research databases available with a Tyndale student ID.

Students *may* use AI to transcribe interviews, videos, or dictations of their own ideas when preparing for assignments. But they must read through the transcripts themselves and *manually* verify accuracy, make selections to quote, or edit for concision and clarity. This use of AI is reserved only for ideas that students have created themselves. Students may not submit course lectures, videos, or other course material to AI or any other software to transcribe, synthesize, annotate, or otherwise summarize course content.

Students *may not* use AI in any aspect of the planning and writing process for class assignments, including but not limited to early planning, ideas, outlining, argumentation, grammar, syntax, or phrasing. Struggling with all this is fundamental part of human learning. This struggle is precisely what develops writing ability and is essential to developing critical thinking and communication skills. If further clarification is required, students should ask their professors, not an AI assistant.

Students *may not* use Grammarly or similar AI copyediting programs, including Copilot in Microsoft Word. Tyndale students are expected to write with sophistication in English. Use of a LLM to edit/re-write/re-phrase/alter student work will be viewed as a breach of the Tyndale AI policy. Students should also be aware that many of these programs can/will change student ideas without permission or notification and should be careful to turn off any generative AI features in any software they use for course assignments.

Special Note:
Students should carefully discern and justify any use of AI tools. Convenience, efficiency, academic pressure, lack of time or even health issues are not sufficient reasons to rely on AI. If personal or external difficulties affect your work, you should first speak with your instructor before using AI assistance. Your personal formation, theological reflection, and authentic engagement with the course remain the priority in completing assignments.

Some course professors may allow AI use for specific projects within specific limits. All Seminary syllabi (or course pages on Moodle) will contain guidelines for permitted uses of AI. When using AI for any professor-approved application in assignments, students should save all rough work and earlier versions of their assignments before editing. Students may be required to produce these versions on request. The name of the AI software used must be noted (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) including the specific version number and model of that software, and the specific text of all prompts employed to get the results must be reported in the submitted assignment.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software
Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also

detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- Student Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity (Guide, Video, Spectrum)

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the Extension Request Form. The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tyndale Library supports courses with e-journals, e-books, and the mail delivery of books and circulating materials. See the Library FAQ page.

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary Grading System & Scale.