

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BNT 541 Studies in Johannine Literature: Epistles

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exegetical and expositional study of the Johannine Epistles. The course will give attention to a number of introductory issues (background, authorship, date, priority, purpose and occasion) as a means of understanding the content and message of each epistle. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the distinctive theological contribution (mainly christological/soteriological) these epistles make to the development of New Testament theology and Johannine thought in particular.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course, the student is expected to be able to:

The Cognitive Domain

1. Identify, locate and define the prominent theological themes of the three epistles.
2. Discuss the question of whether the Johannine Epistles represent a substantive theological development over the Fourth Gospel, giving rationale and concrete illustration for your position.
3. Argue the case for or against the common authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles based on elements of language and theological perspective related to Christology and/or Soteriology.
4. Discuss how the Johannine Epistles contribute to the historical development of an orthodox Christian faith. List some of the more common theories regarding *Sitz im Leben* that have been offered to explain this development.
5. Identify a number of key exegetical issues in the Johannine Epistles and explain how they relate to the broader development of Johannine theology.
6. Identify theological "movement" within the Johannine literature and explain how this movement is variously interpreted.
7. Read the Epistles of John critically with a view to a concrete historical situation posited in the various views regarding date, setting and occasion.
8. Interpret a passage in the Johannine Epistles and write an theological essay or expository sermon, employing the exegetical insights gleaned from class lectures, and your own background and introductory studies.

The Affective Domain:

1. Appreciate the unique contribution of the Johannine literature to New Testament theology.
2. Realize a greater love and appreciation for God's word and the importance of accepting theological diversity within the pervading context of the unity of Scriptural revelation.

3. Appreciate the value, challenges, and limitations of interpreting an historical text, against a proposed historical background and setting.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Marshall, I. Howard. *The Epistles of John*, in the *NICNT* series. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Reprint ed., 1988.

Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Thompson, Marianne Meye. *1-3 John*. In *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Recommended:

Stott, J.R.W. *The Epistles of John*, in the *Tyndale New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1968.

Westcott, B.F. *The Epistles of St. John*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966.

BASIC OUTLINE

- I. PROLEGOMENA:
 - A. Background and Introductory Issues
 - B. Defining Methodological Parameters and Limitations of Our Study (Critique of R. Brown's book)
- II. EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TEXTS OF THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES
- III. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS - SHARING INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
 - A. The Nature and Origin of Johannine Dualism in the Johannine Epistles
 - B. The Content of Christian "Faith"
 - C. The Believer's Union with God and/or Christ
 - D. The Unity of All Believers
 - E. *Koinonia* in I John and Its Soteriological Significance

METHODOLOGY

In this course we will seek to meet our objectives through:

1. Classroom lecture and student oral presentations
2. Guided classroom discussion of issues related to assigned reading, lectures, and class assignments
3. Individual reading, research, and writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Whenever possible absences should be announced beforehand to the professor. Excessive absenteeism is defined by the AGTS catalog and will adversely affect your course grade.
2. Completion of all required reading assignments (textbooks included).
3. Focused critical book review, (Sept. 28) of Thompson's commentary -- See Handout.
4. Mid-semester exam (October 12) - will cover background and introductory issues
5. Exegetical Outlines of 5 passages with the Johannine Epistles. Individually, these outlines will be due on the day the passages are discussed in class.
6. Annotated bibliography (November 2) of a minimum of 250 pages of collateral readings related to (A) the historical-cultural background of the Johannine literature, and/or (B) the theology and/or interpretation of selected passages. NOTE: These readings should be part of the research for your theological essay. (See below).
7. A theological essay (December 14) 10-12 pages (excluding bibliography) in length on a theological theme, topic or passage within the Johannine Epistles.

Note: Work turned in late without the prior permission of the professor will receive a grade reduction of 1/2 letter grade for every day late.

CHAPEL ATTENDANCE

Students are encouraged to attend chapel services whenever they are on campus and their schedules allow. This semester scheduled chapel services will fall on two class dates: October 12 and November 30 from 9:00 am until 10:15. Students are required to attend chapel services on those dates. Please come to class at the regular starting time of 7:30 am and we will dismiss at 8:55 am to attend chapel.

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Proportional value of assignments:

Class Participation ¹	5%	50 pts
Annotated Bibliography	15%	150 pts.
Focused Critical Book Review	15%	150 pts.
Mid-term Examination	20%	200 pts
Exegetical Outlines	15%	150 pts.
Theological Essay	30%	300 pts.
2. The total number of possible points to be earned in the semester is 1,000. Point totals are tabulated at the end of the semester and a grading curve plotted relative to the collective profile of the class.

¹ Given the fact that this class meets only 13 times this semester, each class will cover a significant amount of material. Each student is expected to come prepared for class by having read the textbook and supplemental reading assigned for that class date. Oral presenters who choose a topic MUST come prepared to present on the date assigned, or the entire class suffers. Students who are absent on the class day of their presentation will NOT be allowed to reschedule, unless their absence was due to an extraordinary emergency.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. BACKGROUND, AUTHORSHIP, INTERPRETATION, SETTING

- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. NY: Paulist Press, 1979.
- _____. "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles." pp.183-207. In *The Scrolls and the New Testament*. Edited by K. Stendahl. New York: Harper and Row, 1957.
- Cullmann, Oscar. *The Johannine Circle*. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.
- Eller, Vernard. *The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987.
- Ellis, E. Earle. *The World of St. John*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984.
- Filson, Floyd V. "First John: Purpose and Message" *Interpretation* 23(July, 1969): 259-276.
- Horner, J. "Introduction to the Johannine Epistles" *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 13(1970): 47-?
- Longenecker, Richard. *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970
- Smalley, Stephen S. *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1978.
- Smith, D. Moody. *Johannine Christianity: Essays on its Setting, Sources, and Theology*. Columbia: South Carolina: U. of South Carolina Press, 1984.
- Songer, H.S. "The Life Situation of the Johannine Epistles." *Review and Expositor* 67 (1970): 400.
- Whitacre, Rodney. *Johannine Polemic: The Role of Tradition and Theology*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982.

II. COMMENTARIES ON THE GOSPEL

- Brooke, A.E. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles. In the *International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh. T & T Clark, 1912.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.
- Bultmann, Rudolph. *The Johannine Epistles*. Translated by R.P. O'Hara. Edited by R.E. Funk. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.
- Candlish, Robert. *The First Epistle of John*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1952.
- Conner, W.T. *The Epistles of John*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1957.
- Dodd, C.H. *The Johannine Epistles*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946.
- Grayston, Kenneth. *The Johannine Epistles*. In *The New Century Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984.
- Houlden, James L. *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*. In *Harper's New Testament Commentaries*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *The Epistles of John*. In *The New International Commentary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978.
- Smith, D. "The Epistles of St. John" In *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Vol.5. Edited by W.R. Nicoll, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, Reprint ed. 1979.
- Stott, J.R.W. *The Epistles of John*. In the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964.
- Thompson, Marianne Meye. *1-3 John*. In *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Westcott, B.F. *The Johannine Epistles*. London: Macmillan Company, 1883 (Reprint by Abingdon Press, 1966).

III. HELPS FOR TEACHING AND STUDY

Bruce, F.F. *The Epistles of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

Gingrich, Raymond E. *Fellowship with the Word of Life: Studies in 1,2,3 John*. Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1977.

IV. THEOLOGY AND SELECTED TREATMENTS OF PASSAGES

Burge, Gary M. *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Cook, D.E. "Interpretation of 1 John 1:1-5." *Review and Expositor* 67(1970): 445-447.

Cook, W.R. "Harmartiological Problems in First John." *Bibliothecasacra* 123 (July-Sept., 1966): 249-260.

Hodges, Zane C. "Fellowship and Confession in 1 John 1:5-10." *Bibliothecasacra* 129 (Jan-Mar, 1972): 48-60.

Law, R. *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John*. Reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968 (3rd ed.; Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1914).

Mealand, David L. "The Language of Mystical Union in the Johannine Writings." *Downside Review* 95 (1977): 19-34.

Moody, D. "The Theology of the Johannine Letters" *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 13 (1970): 7-19.

Scroggs, Robin. *Christology in Paul and John*. In the *Proclamation Commentaries*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by James D. Hernando, Ph. D., July 4, 2005.