

## JOHN: THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

### SYLLABUS

#### Description

This is a course in biblical theology and spirituality. Through intensive study of selected passages in the Fourth Gospel, using a variety of historical critical, literary, theological, and liberationist methods, students will come to an understanding of this Gospel, particularly of its distinctive christology, and of the implications of this christology for Christian faith, life, and ministry.

#### Objectives of the Course

- 1) That students be equipped with an overall grasp of the Fourth Gospel in its historical setting, literary character, and theological-spiritual meaning and become competent in handling this biblical text in teaching, pastoral ministry, and personal spiritual development.
- 2) That students come to appreciate the effects of the interplay of diverse methodological approaches in interpreting biblical material.
- 3) That students come to understand the christology of the Fourth Gospel in its uniqueness and in its relationship to the christologies of the rest of the New Testament.
- 4) That students come to appreciate the spirituality which underlies and is evoked by the Fourth Gospel, especially by its christology.
- 5) That students demonstrate, in written and oral form, their ability to interpret material from the Fourth Gospel using appropriate methods, good personal judgment, and hermeneutical insight.

#### Method

Lecture and discussion in class.  
Reading (approximately 10 hrs. or 150-200 pages per week)  
Weekly one hour group discussion outside class time  
Written assignments  
Oral examination at the end of the semester

#### Requirements

Careful preparation of all required *readings*  
Attendance at and active participation in all *classes*  
Attendance at, participation in, and periodic leadership of *weekly group discussion*  
*Written assignments* as explained in class  
*Oral examination* which will take place in the discussion group

#### Course Procedures

##### CLASS

2:10-3:30 p.m.	Lecture and discussion
3:30-3:45 p.m.	Break
3:45-4:45 p.m.	Questions, discussion, and continuation of lecture
4:45-5:00 p.m.	Prelection for next class

## Course Evaluation

### I. GROUP DISCUSSION

Each student will be part of a small group which will meet each week during the semester. The group will decide when and where it will meet each week for one hour of discussion; will decide who will facilitate each meeting; will decide how to handle the material to be discussed.

The facilitator will *email* to all the members of the group and to the instructor, at least a day prior to the group meeting, one or two primary question(s) about the assigned subject matter which will allow all to come to the meeting prepared for active participation.

-the subject line of the email **must** read: DISCUSSION QUESTION FOR GROUP \_\_\_\_\_ (supplying the letter of the group) so that group members do not accidentally miss the communication and so that the instructor can follow the development of the group's discussion.

-the FACILITATOR'S NAME should be in the email. The quality of the questions proposed will be taken into account in the student's final grade.

II. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: This requirement (one short reflection paper and a final interpretive paper) will be explained in the first class meeting. Consult the specific directions for each assignment at the end of the syllabus.

### III. ORAL EXAMINATION

On Wednesday, Dec. 13 each discussion group will have a 40 minute oral examination. Please be aware of this when planning your departure for Christmas break. Your group may be scheduled for late afternoon. Every student must participate in the exam with the group of which s/he has been a part during the semester.

## Appointments

Appointments may be made by phone (510-549-5035) or by email <sschneid@jstb.edu>.

## ORDER OF THE COURSE

### Sept. 5

Topic: Introduction to the course

Introduction to the Gospel of John

Text: Prior to the first class read the entire Gospel of John, preferably at one

Readings: Prior to the first class read Brown, *Introduction to the New*  
Smith, "Prolegomena...." (reader)

Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, chs. 1-6

### Sept. 12

Topic: Introduction to the Gospel (continued)

Readings: Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe*, chs. 1-6, 15

### Sept. 19

Topic: Problems in John: the "Jews"; inclusion/exclusion and sectarianism

Readings: Reihartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple*, chs. 2,5,7,8 (reader)

Culpepper, "Inclusivism..." (reader)  
Rensberger, "Spirituality and Theology..." (reader)  
O'Day, "Johannine Theologians..." (reader)  
Careter, *John...*, chs. 7-8

**Sept. 26** Topic: Overview of Theology and Spirituality of the Fourth Gospel  
Texts: Jn. 5: 1-18 (Paralyzed Man)  
Jn. 9: 1-41 (Man Born Blind)  
Readings: Schneiders, *Written...*, ch. 9  
Culpepper, "The Gospel of John as a Document..." (reader)  
Beutler, "Faith and Confession" (reader)

**Oct. 3** Topic: Johannine Christology  
Text: Jn. 1:1-18 (Prologue)  
Readings: Johnson, "Introduction" and "Jesus Sophia" in *She Who Is* (reader)

**Oct. 10** Topic: Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (John the Baptizer and First Disciples)  
Texts: Jn. 1:6-8 and 15; 1:29-36; 3:22-30; 5:33-36; 10:40-42 (John the Baptizer)  
Jn. 1:35-51 (call of the First Disciples)  
Readings: Coloe, "John as Witness and Friend," *Dwelling in the Household*  
Moloney, "The Johannine Son of Man..." (reader)  
Wink, "The Son of Man" (reader)  
Coloe, "Gathering the Household" *Dwelling...*, ch. 3 (reader)

**Oct. 17** Topic: Cana to Cana (Wedding at Cana; Temple Sign; Nicodemus)  
Texts: Jn. 2 and 3  
Readings: Coloe, *God Dwells With Us*, chs. 3-4 (reader)  
Kysar, "The Making of Metaphor" (reader)  
Schneiders, *Written...* ch. 7  
Coloe, "Life in the Household," *Dwelling...*, ch. 4 (reader)  
Borg, "Born Again" (reader)

**NB: REFLECTION PAPER IS DUE TODAY**

**[Oct. 22** **READING WEEK --- NO CLASS]**

**Oct. 31** Topic: Cana to Cana continued (Samaritan Woman and Royal Official)  
Texts: Jn. 4  
Readings: O'Day, "Introduction" and ch. 3, *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*  
Schneiders, *Written...* ch. 8

**Nov. 7** Topic: Bread of Life  
Texts: Jn. 6  
Readings: Cosgrove, "The Place..." (reader)  
Grassi, "Eating..." (reader)

**Nov. 14** Topic: Beginning of the Hour (Footwashing; First Discourse[s]; Paraclete)  
Texts: Jn. 13-16  
Readings: Coloe, "Welcome into the Household" *Dwelling...*, ch. 7 (reader)  
Schneiders, *Written...*, ch. 11  
O'Day, "Jesus as Friend..." (reader)  
Coloe, "Dwelling in the Household..." *Dwelling...*, ch. 8 (reader)

**NB: READING FOR THE FINAL PAPER SHOULD BE COMPLETE**

**[Nov. 21** No class today. THIS TIME IS FOR WRITING THE FINAL PAPER]

**Nov. 28** Topic: Resurrection of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel  
Texts: Jn. 20-21 (the Resurrection Narrative)  
Readings: Coloe, "Resurrecting the Household..." *Dwelling...*, ch. 9 (reader)  
Schneiders, *Written...*, chs. 12, 13, 14  
Schneiders, "Resurrection (of the Body)..." (reader)  
Schneiders, "Raising of the New Temple" (reader)

**NB: FINAL PAPER IS DUE IN CLASS TODAY**

**Dec. 5** Topic: Resurrection of the Christian in John  
Texts: Jn. 11 (Raising of Lazarus)  
Readings: Schneiders, *Written...*, ch. 10

**Dec. 12** Topic: Jesus' Prayer and Summary of Course  
Texts: Jn. 17  
Readings: Brown, *A Retreat With John the Evangelist*

### **REQUIRED READINGS FOR COURSE**

ALISON, James. *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination*. New York: Crossroad, 1996.

BEUTLER, Johannes. "Faith and Confession: The Purpose of John." In *Word, Theology and Community in John*. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando F. Segovia. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002. Pp. 19-32. (reader)

BORG, Marcus J. "Born Again: A New Heart" *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*, 103-125. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003. (reader)

- BROWN, Raymond E. "The Gospel According to John." In *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 333-382. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997. (reader)
- BROWN, Raymond E. *A Retreat With John the Evangelist: That You May Have Life*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.
- CARTER, Warren. *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.
- CARTER, Warren. *Pontius Pilate*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.
- COLOE, Mary L. *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001. Pp. 31-83. (reader)
- COLOE, Mary L. *Dwelling in the Household of God: Spirituality and Ecclesiology in the Fourth Gospel* [forthcoming from Liturgical Press]. Chs. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9. (reader)
- COSGROVE, Charles H. "The Place Where Jesus Is: Allusions to Baptism and the Eucharist in the Fourth Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 522-539.
- CULPEPPER, R. Alan. "The Gospel of John as a Document of Faith in a Pluralistic Culture." In *"What Is John?" Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, 107-127. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996. (reader)
- CULPEPPER, R. Alan. "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel." In *Word, Theology and Community in John*, 85-108. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando F. Segovia. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002. (reader)
- GRASSI, Joseph. "Eating Jesus' Flesh and Drinking His Blood: The Centrality and Meaning of John 6:51-58." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (January 1987): 24-30. (reader)
- JOHNSON, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 3-16 ("Introduction"); 150-169 ("Jesus-Sophia"). New York: Crossroad, 1992. (reader)
- KYSAR, Robert. "The Making of Metaphor: Another Reading of John 3:1-15." In *"What Is John?" Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, 21-41. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996. (reader)
- MOLONEY, Francis J. "The Johannine Son of Man Revisited." *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*, 66-92. Biblical Interpretation Series 72. Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2005. (reader)
- O'DAY, Gail R. "Jesus as Friend in the Gospel of John." In *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament*, 75-92. Edited by Rekha M. Chennattu and Mary L. Coloe. Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 2005. (reader)

- O'DAY, Gail R. "Johannine Theology as Sectarian Theology." In *"What Is John?" Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, 199-203. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996. (reader)
- O'DAY, Gail R. *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*, 1-10 ("Introduction"); 49-92 ("Revelation in Context [John 4:4-42]"). Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. (reader)
- REINHARTZ, Adele. *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John*, 17-31; 81-98; 131-167 (chs. 2,5,7,8). New York: Continuum, 2001.
- RENSBERGER, David. "Spirituality and Christology in Johannine Sectarianism." In *Word, Theology and Community in John*, 173-188. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando F. Segovia. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002. (reader)
- SCHNEIDERS, Sandra M. "The Raising of the New Temple: John 20:19-23 and Johannine Ecclesiology." Forthcoming in *New Testament Studies* 52 (July 2006). (reader)
- SCHNEIDERS, Sandra M. "The Resurrection (of the Body) in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Johannine Spirituality." In *Life in Abundance: Papers Given in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown*, 168-198. Edited by John R. Donahue. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005. (reader)
- SCHNEIDERS, Sandra M. *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. New York: Crossroad, 2003.
- SENIOR, Donald. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991.
- SMITH, D. Moody. "Prolegomena to a Canonical Reading of the Fourth Gospel." In *"What Is John?" Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, 169-182. Edited by Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996. (reader)
- STIBBE, Mark W. G. *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge, Eng.: University Press, 1992.
- WINK, Walter. "'The Son of Man' in the Gospel of John." In *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*. 117-123. Edited by Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. (reader)

### **DIRECTIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reflection Paper.** Due October 17 in class.

**What:** A 2-3 page reflection paper on *one* insight you have come to so far about the Gospel of John and why it is significant for you.

**How:** *Review* the course up to this point and select an insight that is significant for you. *Explain* your insight, how you came to it (reading, discussion, class, etc.), why it is important to you.

**Why:** This assignment is meant to help you **review** the first part of the course. It is an exercise in **integrated assimilation** of the Gospel which requires you to know what you are talking about (a requirement for responsible use of Scripture in ministry) but also to have interiorized it within the horizon of your own experience (a requirement for being effective in the use of Scripture in ministry).

**Format:** The paper should be **2-3 pages** in length, carefully organized, clearly and effectively written. It is to be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point type, on one side of regulation size white paper. It should be free of errors in diction, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, etc. No notes or bibliography are required.

**Final Interpretive Essay.** Due Nov. 28 in class.

**What:** A five (5) page essay using the Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John (chs. 18-19) in a specific ministerial context.

**When:** You should have finished your reading by Nov. 14. You have 2 weeks, including the week of Nov. 21 when you do not have class, to write the essay. It is to be handed in on Nov. 28 in class.

**How:** **Read the four books** on the passion assigned for the course (Alison, Carter [Pilate], Senior, Stibbe). These are four different and complimentary approaches to the Johannine passion narrative.

**Summarize** one point from each book which will help you with your project (page 1 of your essay).

**Create a ministerial context** (real or imagined) in which you will use the Johannine Passion Narrative to facilitate someone's spiritual/theological journey (page 2 of your essay). [It would be a good idea to check this with the instructor before you get to work.]

**Interpret** the Passion Narrative for the situation (pages 3-5) of your essay.

**Why:** Working intensively with the Passion Narrative using the work of an historical critic (Senior), a narrative critic (Stibbe), a social science critic (Carter), and a contemporary culture critic (Alison) should help you to integrate this section of the Gospel into your overall knowledge of the Fourth Gospel.

This is the kind of work you will need to do in ministry if you are to effectively mediate the Gospel to people in particular situations. The Gospel does not become truly

meaningful to people “in the abstract” and most people do not come to the Gospel to be academically informed about the text. They are seeking light and strength to live their lives in God. The minister, however, needs both a thorough knowledge of the text and a personally appropriated understanding of its meaning. She or he must then become adept at sharing the meaning with people in real situations.