

**NT-2277 – The Johannine Corpus.**

Spring, 2020: Mon/Thurs 9:40 - 11:00 a.m.

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Office hours (Office no. and internal ext. 209): Mon. and Thurs. 11:10-12:30 and by appointment.

- ☛ **PLEASE NOTE** that there will be no class on Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> of February (*Washington and Lincoln's birthdays observed*), no class the week of 23-27 March (*Spring Break*) and no class on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of April (Easter Monday).

1. This lecture course for MDiv and MA/MTS students provides a critical survey of the Gospel of John, the Johannine Epistles, and the Revelation of John (Apocalypse) with respect to authorship, date and place of composition, and community. Jewish background to this body of writing is important as are concerns with who truly rules the world and commands allegiance. The course will identify the complex chains of vocabulary and expanding symbols that provide the matrix for Johannine christology, soteriology, and eschatology. There will be a detailed exegesis of key passages of the Gospel of John. The letters will be briefly discussed as reflections on the Gospel, as the Johannine community's response to threats from within and without. The Revelation of John will be presented against late first-century concerns with the Roman Imperial Cult and Christian worship. Evaluation will be based on ten weekly topical summaries of readings posted on Moodle (25%), midterm exam (25%), research paper (25%) and a final exam (25%).

2. Bibliography will be distributed the first day of class. **There is no required text, but all students are expected to read the Gospel of John, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation and to bring a Bible to class.** Here are some suggested commentaries.

Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John. A Concise Commentary* (Collegeville [Minn.]: Liturgical Press, 1988); ISBN-13: 978-0814612835; retail price \$12.95 (Amazon price \$9.95).

Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); ISBN-13: 978-0801034541; retail price \$30.00 (Amazon price \$27.00).

Ruth B. Edwards, *Discovering John: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); ISBN-13: 978-0802872401; paperback; retail price \$22.00 (Amazon price \$17.35).

Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998); ISBN-13: 978-0814658062; retail price \$44.95 (Amazon price \$29.67).

David Rensberger, *1 John. 2 John. 3 John* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997); ISBN-13: 978-0687057221; retail price \$23.00 (Amazon price \$20.40).

M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011 [first printed 1989]); ISBN-13: 978-0664236281; retail price \$25 (Amazon price \$18.31).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation. Vision of a Just World* (Proclamation Commentaries; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); ISBN-13: 978-0800625108; retail price \$18.00 (Amazon price \$16.20).

All are available through <http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20>

[Worth knowing but expensive is C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John. An introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text* (2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed.; London: SPCK, 1978). Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0664221805; list price \$50.00, amazon price \$42.79.]

3. General introductory material, including professor's notes on Johannine themes and on the apocalyptic, together with scanned material for special topics exercises will be available on GTU Library's Moodle site.

#### 4. Course objectives.

- a. The student should be able to discuss the dating, authorship and *Sitz-im-Leben* of the Gospel, the Letters, and the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse).
- b. The student should be able to identify the way in which various sections of the Gospel of John are interrelated through a complex of vocabulary and images, and identify the recurrence of these themes in the Johannine epistles.
- c. The student should be able to discuss the Christology and soteriology of John, to include major themes of the Prologue, the Marriage Feast at Cana, the Woman at the Well, the Good Shepherd Discourse, the Vine and Branches Discourse, and the Farewell Discourses.
- d. The student should develop an understanding of the role of the Spirit/Paraclete in Johannine thought.
- e. The student should have an understanding of the eschatology of the evangelist, and how this differs from the eschatology of the First Letter, and from the eschatology of the Apocalypse.
- f. The student should be able to discuss the origins, structure and theology of the Johannine Passion Narrative and contrast it with the Synoptic Tradition.
- g. The student should be able to identify and discuss major themes of the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse).

#### 5. Course requirements.

- ☛ On Thursday 06 February part of the class period will be devoted to a field trip to the GTU Library to familiarize the student with tools available for basic research in Biblical studies, including bibliographies, reference works, and important periodicals in English. Please print out and bring along the file on Moodle entitled "Tools for Biblical Study." You may find the following library link helpful: <http://libguides.gtu.edu/exegesis>. Staff can help you with any difficulty.
- There are ten (10) exercises, short summaries of at least one paragraph but no more than one page related to basic questions in Johannine studies. They are to be based on material that will be posted on Moodle or close reading of Scripture. They may be submitted by e-mail or in hardcopy form. See §7 below.
- The midterm will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March.
- The final research paper will be due on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May. See §6 below.
- The final examination will be on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May. [If graduating students need grades submitted early, please see me.]

#### 6. The research paper.

- The research paper should be 8 - 10 pages long, counting footnotes but not counting bibliography. The paper is due on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May.
- The research paper must be either a detailed exegesis of a passage from the Gospel of John, 1 John, Revelation, or an extensive analysis of a theme in the Gospel. In either case it must examine the Old Testament background, the background in contemporary Jewish culture (and Greco-Roman culture where relevant), the relationship to the Gospel and 1 John as a whole, and the value for the Johannine community and an understanding of early Christianity.
- The topic must be approved by the professor. By March 2<sup>nd</sup> you must have made an appointment with the professor to discuss your topic. By March 16<sup>th</sup> you must have submitted for review a bibliography of at least 20 (twenty) titles, at least half of which must be from periodical literature. The bibliography is to be based on research in the bibliographic tools which will be explained at the beginning of the course. You must indicate for at least half of the titles the volume and page number of the resource from which you drew the title. Bibliography may also include titles taken from other

sources such as commentaries. You will discover that as you read periodic literature, you will come across other titles that you may wish to consult. Therefore, your final paper may include more than the originally submitted titles. You do not need to use them all; however, your written work must reflect consultation with more than a just few titles.

- PLEASE NOTE that the GTU and DSPT require research paper formatting, including bibliographies, to conform to Turabian [Turabian, Kate L., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*; revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and the University of Chicago Press editorial staff. Eighth edition. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2013.]

## 7. The special topics. Required and related readings are posted on Moodle.

- 📖 [due 06 Feb] From a Jewish perspective how is Jesus like God and different from God? How is the eternal *logos* like the Old Testament “word” and in what way does it reflect a Hellenistic understanding of *logos*?  
**Readings:** J. Ashton, “The Transformation of Wisdom”; W. Kelber, “The Birth of a Beginning”; C. H. Dodd, “Son of God;” C. H. Dodd, “Logos”; T. H. Tobin, “Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation.”  
(Additional readings are posted, if you wish to consult them.)
- 📖 [due 13 Feb] What is the role of images and symbols in the gospel of John? How do “expanding symbols” function in the Gospel of John? How does John reflect the renewal of creation especially, though not exclusively, through the seven signs in the first half of the gospel?  
**Readings:** C. H. Dodd, “Symbolism”; D. A. Lee, “Symbolism and ‘Signs’ in the Fourth Gospel”; R. Kieffer, “Different Levels in Johannine Imagery”; R. A. Culpepper on symbolism (in *Anatomy of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel*) especially pp. 189-198; J. K. Brown, “Creation’s Renewal in the Gospel of John”. (Additional reading you may find useful for Wedding at Cana: M. M. Thompson, “Baptism with Water and with the Holy Spirit: Purification in the Gospel of John.”)
- 📖 [due 20 Feb] Discuss the opposition of different physical spaces and of perceptions of time within the Gospel of John. How are space and time related in the gospel? What is associated with or seen as representative of each side of the opposition?  
**Readings:** J. H. Neyrey, “Spaces and Places, Whence and Whither, Homes and Rooms. ‘Territoriality’ in the Fourth Gospel”; C. H. Dodd, “Eternal life”; “Johannine Eschatology” [a selection of readings from C. K. Barrett, R. Schnackenburg, R. E. Brown, F. Matera]; R. Zimmermann, “Eschatology and Time in the Gospel of John.”
- 📖 [due 27 Feb] How are the women in the gospel of John related with respect to their interaction with Jesus, their role in establishing kinship within the household of God, and their role in furthering the mission of Jesus and the church in the world? Show, where relevant, how the different passages in which women appear are related to one another. Read 20:1-18 carefully and identify similarities to 4:1-42.  
**Readings:** John 2:1-12, 4:4-42, 11:1-44, 12:1-8, 19:25-27, 20:1-18; T. K. Seim, “Roles of Women in the Gospel of John”; S. Schneiders, “A Case Study: A Feminist Interpretation of John 4:1-42”.
- 📖 [due 05 Mar] **Read** John 4:46-54, 5:19-29, and 6:35-58 carefully. Identify the themes common to 4:46-54 and 5:19-29 and common to 4:46-54 and 6:35-58 and propose an interpretation of 4:46-54 on that basis.
- 📖 [due 12 Mar] How does John relate the prophet Isaiah to themes of the first twelve chapters (and beyond) of the Gospel? How does the evangelist make the prophet a witness to his gospel? How does

the prophet's temple vision (Isaiah 6) relate to what the disciples see and to what others see or fail to see?

**Reading:** C. H. Williams, "The Testimony of Isaiah and Johannine Christology"; J. Fekkes on Old Testament Prophets and early Christianity in "Isaiah and the Book of Revelation" pp. 125-128 [of course, you may read the rest of the article].

☞ [due 02 Apr] How are the themes of Departure and Return organized in the 1<sup>st</sup> Farewell Discourse (John 13:31-14:31) and what are the dominant ideas?

**Readings:** F. F. Segovia, "Structure and Ideas of John 13:31-14:31;" F. Matera, "Johannine Images for Jesus's Death."

☞ [due 16 Apr] What features of the Roman Imperial Cult are reflected in the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation?

**Readings:** D. Cuss, "Language of the Imperial Cult in the New Testament"; L. B. Richey, "Roman Imperial Ideology and the Gospel of John"; D. R. Barr, "John's Ironic Empire" [**NB:** extract from a published dissertation with much detail that you do not need to include in your summary.]

☞ [due 23 Apr] **Read** the 1<sup>st</sup> Letter of John carefully and identify ten (10) motifs or phrases that occur in the Gospel of John. What is the relationship between 1 John and the Gospel of John?

**Readings:** R. E. Brown, "1 John and Gospel of John;" R. E. Brown, "Interrelationship of Epistles and Gospel of John."

☞ [due 30 Apr] What is the relationship between the Book of Revelation and the Johannine school? How is the outlook of John of Patmos as prophet related to the outlook of John the evangelist?

**Reading:** E. Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Book of Revelation and John's Gospel;" J. Fekkes, "Isaiah and the Book of Revelation"; Eusebius, *History of the Church* 7.25.18-23 [Dionysius of Alexandria on authorship of Revelation].

## 8. Preparing for Class

### *The Gospel of John*

Read the Gospel through. Then re-read each section carefully before it is discussed in class using the following guidelines.

#### **a. Be alert to dualism in John**

Types of dualism.<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>*Theological*. for example, God and Man, Creator and Creature. <sup>2</sup>*Metaphysical*. God & Satan/Belial. Satan and Michael. God and Death. <sup>3</sup>*Spatial*. Heaven and Earth. <sup>4</sup>*Cosmic*. Opposing spirits or divisions under which the world of men and lesser spirits are subordinated. [Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness is an opposition found in 1 John]. <sup>5</sup>*Ethical*. Division of man into opposing groups: the righteous and the wicked; the good and the impious. <sup>6</sup>*Physical or anthropological*. Body and soul, dust and spirit, flesh and spirit. <sup>7</sup>*Psychological*. Opposed inclinations within an individual. <sup>8</sup>*Soteriological*. Those who believe and those who reject. <sup>9</sup>*Eschatological*. This age and the age to come.

#### **b. Pay attention to the use of the following words:**

love (*both noun and verb*)

truth, true

know

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<sup>1</sup>See J. H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS III,13-IV,26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 15 (1968-69) 389-418; J. Duhaine, "Le dualisme de Qumrân et la littérature de sagesse vétérotestamentaire," *Église et Théologie* 19 (1988) 401-422; J. G. Gammie, "Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 93 (1974) 356-385.

work (*both noun and verb*)  
“I am”  
life, live (*noun, verb*)  
world  
judge (*verb*)  
witness (*both noun and verb*)  
father  
send  
keep  
love (*both noun and verb*)  
light  
glory

As you become aware of how these words are used, pay attention also to their negatives: “I am”/“I am not,” “know”/“not know,” “see”/“not see,” and the like; pay attention to notional contrasts: “love”/“hate,” “father”/“son,” “light”/“darkness,” and the like.

**c.** Pay attention to the relationship between seeing and faith. Is understanding necessary for faith? Which comes first, love or faith, and which of the two dominates?

**d.** Be alert to John’s use of contrasting space: inside/outside (e.g., courtyard/house, in the world/not of the world), up/down, horizontal/vertical (space and time), God’s realm/the world, and the like.

**e.** As you read the Gospel, be aware of how themes are repeated. How do recurring words and phrases link the different sections? How does an earlier use affect the understanding of later section? How does a later use modify the understanding of an earlier section?

### ***The Johannine Epistles***

**a.** Read *1 John* as a running reflection on the Gospel. Identify parallels between *1 John* and the *Gospel of John*. Is the meaning the same in the two works? Identify differences that occur within similarities. For example, the opening of *1 John* uses a familiar theme from the Gospel but adds something. For example, “paraclete” is used differently. For example, the eschatology of the letter is different from the Gospel’s.

**b.** As you read *1-3 John* be aware that the author is more concerned with threats arising from within the community than from the world. How does that contrast with threats to Jesus in the Gospel? How does the figure of Judas in the Gospel become the model for opposition from within?

### ***The Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse)***

Consider the importance of literary reinterpretation by being sensitive to use of Old Testament language and images, especially from Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Isaiah. Note the importance of writing for the author. Note shifting perspectives between earth and heaven. Note the “morphing” of images (e.g., lion becomes lamb). Note how groups of seven interlock. Pay attention to dualities, e.g., whore of Babylon and Bride of Christ, banquet of the Lamb and carrion feast for birds of prey. Look for liturgical elements. Be aware of Eucharistic motifs, references to eating and drinking, bread, cup, wine, blood, especially in the concluding chapters.

## COURSE OUTLINE.

### I. Background Issues.

☛ The following works may be helpful for background issues.

R. Alan Culpepper, “The Theology of the Gospel of John” [[on Moodle under Background Issues](#)] is a good general introduction.

The section in C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* entitled “Leading Ideas” is a useful introduction to Johannine issues. Dodd’s essays on “Eternal Life” (week of 3-7 Feb), “Son of Man” and Son of God,” “Logos” (week of 10-14 Feb), and “Symbolism” (week of 17-21 Feb) are on the Moodle site.

Ruth Edwards on authorship, audience, and place and date of composition provide a concise introduction to the discussion of these issues [[on Moodle under Background Issues](#)].

Birger Olsson. “The History of the Johannine Movement” [[on Moodle under Background Issues](#)].

Karl-Gustav Sandelin. “The Johannine Writings within the Setting of Their Cultural History” [[on Moodle under Background Issues](#)].

a. The relationship of the Epistles to one another and to the gospel. (**Read** R.E. Brown, “Interrelationship of Epistles and Gospel of John” on the Moodle site.)

b. The relationship of *Revelation (Apocalypse)* to the epistles and to the gospel. (**Read** E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Book of Revelation and John’s Gospel” on the Moodle site.)

c. Authorship: John son of Zebedee? Beloved Disciple? Other Disciple? The Elder (*ho presbyteros*)? None of the above?

d. Date and place of composition.

e. The Johannine Church.

f. John and Judaism (including the Essenes).

g. John and the Synoptics.

h. The structure of the gospel – patterns and dislocations (*aporiae*).

i. Johannine Christology.

j. Johannine eschatology.

### ***The Gospel According to John.***

☛ See detailed outline on Moodle under Background Materials.

### II. The Prologue (John 1:1-18; **read** also Prov 8:22-31, Sir 24:1-8).

### III. Book of Signs: The Public Ministry of Jesus.

a. John and Jesus (John 1:19-51).

b. The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-1-12).

c. The Cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13-25).

d. Nicodemus (3:1-21).

e. The Water of Life – the Gift of the Spirit (4:1-42)

f. General discussion of chapters 4, 5 and 6.

g. The Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:1-15)

h. The Walking on the Water (6:16-21).

i. The Bread of Life Discourse (6:22-59).

j. Defection and Confession (6:60-71).

k. Various Controversies (7-8) [*to be summarized*].

l. The Man Born Blind (9:1-41) [*to be summarized*].

m. The Good Shepherd Discourse (10:1-21).

n. The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44).

o. End of Public Ministry (12) [*to be summarized*].

IV. Book of Glory, Part 1: The Last Supper (13-17).

a. Introduction (13:1-30).

b. First Farewell Discourse: Jesus Speaks of His Departure – the Gift of the Spirit/Paraclete (14:1-31).

c. Second Farewell Discourse, part 1: The Parable of the Vine and the Branches (15:1-17).

d. Second Farewell Discourse, part 2: Judgment on the World – the Gift of the Spirit/Paraclete (15:18-16:4a)

e. Third Farewell Discourse (16:4b-33) [*to be summarized*].

f. Final Prayer (17:1-26).

V. Book of Glory, Part 2: The Passion Narrative (18-19).

a. Arrest (18:1-11).

b. Hearing before the Jewish Authorities (18:12-27).

c. Trial before Pilate (18:28-19:16).

d. Passion (19:17-42).

VI. Empty Tomb and Resurrection Appearances in Jerusalem (20:1-31).

VII. Epilogue (21).

VIII. 1 John

IX. Revelation of John (Apocalypse).