

Gospel of John Online NT 735Z

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Elective. *Three credit hours.*

Course Description

The course begins with discussions of introductory problems related to the interpretation of the Gospel of John. The next period of the term is devoted to a thorough reading of the Gospel in an effort to understand its central message and purpose, its content, and its historical situation. The structure of the Gospel is analyzed, followed by a general exposition of its content. The latter part of the term is devoted to more detailed interpretation of several individual passages. Throughout the term special attention is given to recent literature on the Gospel of John.

Course Objectives

The Seminary Mission Statement maintains that "The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church." The ministry of the church is grounded in an understanding of the life, work, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus as well as a knowledge of the experiences of those who first followed Him. This course is a direct expression of the Seminary's mission.

More specifically, by the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. To introduce the student to the unique features of the Gospel of John in comparison to the Synoptic Gospels.
2. To enable the student to describe each of the four divisions of the Gospel of John and to summarize the contents of each one.
3. To describe the likely historical background of the Gospel of John by explaining each of these issues: authorship, date, purposes, and the historical situation addressed in John.

4. To show how the Gospel of John makes its unique contributions to the understanding of New Testament Christianity.
5. To enable the student to interact with modern approaches to interpreting the Gospel of John in light of some of the critical problems presented by this Gospel to the modern interpreter.
6. To provide the student with the ability to evaluate critically current assessments of the historical value of John for understanding the development of New Testament Christianity.
7. To provide the student with the ability to interpret any passage from John in light of the author's intended purpose for his audience.

Required Texts

Students continue to be responsible for securing their own required textbooks. As a convenience, there is a bookstore on the seminary's home page. To access this site and its information, locate textbooks, and compare prices, go to <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>

The online bookstore will be a portal with links to Amazon, CBD, Barnes & Noble, the Erskine Campus Bookstore, and perhaps others. A limited number of copies of each textbook may be available from the Erskine Campus Bookstore, and copies may be ordered through that Bookstore.

- *The Gospel of John*, F. F. Bruce, Eerdmans (see Bibliography for complete citation)
- *Interpreting the Gospel of John*, Gary M. Burge, Baker (see Bibliography for complete citation)

Recommended Reading

- Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*. Revised edition. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, Texas: Word, 1987.
- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John: Introduction, Translation and Notes*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible. Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday, 1966, 1970.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Kysar, R. *John's Story of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
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- Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. New International Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Ridderbos, Hermann. *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Smalley, S. S. *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1988.

Grading Criteria

The following grading scale, from the Seminary catalog is used to assign a numeric value to each completed assignment. All scores are weighted equally. Your final grade is the average of each grade received. A letter grade will be computed on the basis of your average raw score using the following grade scale recently adopted by the Seminary faculty:

- A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.
- B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.
- C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.
- D Level Work = Inadequate mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

Erskine Seminary Grading Scale:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

Course Components

FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachments unless otherwise notified.

2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number. Failure to include this information will result in a returned assignment.

COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program." It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, "Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities." You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High speed access to the Internet

Course Assignments

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through five learning components.

The first is the **Lecture Component**. The student will demonstrate his/her mastery of the material by listening to the e-lectures.

The second is the **Reading Component**. The student will complete the reading of the required textbooks and prepare a Summary Paper. Students build on the e-lectures by completing the required reading and the Summary Paper.

The third is the **Collaborative Component**. The student will participate in an online journal. Each student is expected to actively participate in ongoing journal postings in the online classroom for this course located on the EDEN web page.

The fourth is the **Exegetical Component**. The student will choose a passage from John and will prepare a thorough exegetical study using the guidelines provided in this syllabus.

The fifth is the **Practical Theology** component. Here, the student has a number of options for demonstrating the practical value of the Gospel of John for the life of the church today.

ASSIGNMENT ONE: E-Lectures

Master the content of course lectures by listening and watching all e-lectures and writing a one-page summary (double-spaced) of the contents of the e-lecture. In your summary, discuss the major points made in the lecture series. If you choose, you can write a one-page outline of the lecture instead of a paper in narrative form. This entire paper should be no more than 16 pages in length.

Completing this assignment will count 10% of your final grade. The total estimated time required for successful completion of this assignment is 30 hours.

ASSIGNMENT TWO: Required Reading

Read and summarize the required reading for the course. For this assignment, you will be reading 2 books. Follow the directions below and produce one paper of not more than 20 pages (double-spaced) in which you do the following:

1. Read F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 1-27. While you read, keep a notepad (hard copy or electronic) handy to write down thoughts or ideas that come to your mind, comments or reactions, questions that are raised while reading, areas of confusion or insights that strike you as significant.
2. From your reading, describe Bruce's understanding of the following issues related to the Gospel of John:
 - a. The identity of the author
 - b. How the Gospel of John was received and used in the early church
 - c. Bruce's understanding of the real message of John
3. Read Gary M. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John*, pp. 9-83.
4. From your reading, describe Burge's understanding of the following issues related to the Gospel of John:
 - a. A summary of the history of the interpretation of John from the earliest times until the present with an emphasis on current trends in the study of John
 - b. A description of Burge's understanding of how the Gospel of John came into existence
5. From your reading of both books, note strengths and weaknesses in their arguments and indicate the value of their insights to the study of John.

This Summary Paper should be no more than 20 pages long (double-spaced). It will be evaluated on the basis of how cogently and succinctly you summarize the assigned reading above as well as how you seem to understand what is said. It will also be graded on style and form. The total

estimated time required for successful completion of Assignment Two is 40 hours. **This Summary Paper will count 20% of your final grade.**

ASSIGNMENT THREE: Online journal

There is evidence to suggest that students who actively engage with others in an online environment earn higher scores than other students. Online discussions and interaction provide a rich and stimulating environment of collaboration, interaction, and community building. Students participating in online discussions tend to provide more thought-provoking comments, richly detailed responses, and insightful observations.

Each student will post an entry to the online journal each **week**. As the student completes the required reading for this course, listens to the e-lectures, or thinks through course-related issues, he or she will post an entry relating significant insights, questions, or challenges for others.

In order to facilitate community building, fellow students will respond **each week** to the journal entries as a way of encouraging each other and adding to the observations posted by their classmates. Additionally, peer mentors and/or the course professor will respond **to selected entries**. Retroactive posting will not be accepted. The following rubric may serve as a guide to assisting you in online postings.

Please note:

Part of your grade depends on collaborative learning

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Exegetical Paper

Resources:

Gary M. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John*
Greek text, lexicons, Greek grammars, commentaries
Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*
English translations
New Testament introductions, Bible dictionaries, New Testament commentaries on your book
James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1992).
Word study books (Vines'; Kittel; Wuest's), Bible dictionaries

Prepare an exegetical paper (12-15 pages, double-spaced) where you choose a passage from the Gospel of John and do a thorough exegetical study of it. You will benefit greatly by reviewing Gary M. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John*, pp. 85-187. The following steps apply to any text in the New Testament. Use them to format your paper.

Step 1: Choose your text.

The text must be a self-contained unit. This means that it needs to have a definite beginning, a definite ending, and some movement or progression between the two. The paragraph divisions in recent English translations are usually good indicators of self-contained units. Your text may be made up of one or more paragraphs. You need to decide how many paragraphs you will treat, but remember that your text must make sense and you must treat thoroughly each part.

Step 2: Translate the text if you work with Greek. In your translation, parse all verbals (verbs, participles, infinitives) and describe any unusual features of syntax, grammar, etc. Discuss any significant textual variants and establish what you think is the more original reading of the text you study.

Step 3: If you do not work with the Greek, compare 4 English translations. Reproduce your passage in each of these translations. Write down any significant differences in meaning among the 4 translations. You do not have to resolve these differences at this point; just note them.

Step 4: Write a basic introduction to the book where your text is found. In your introduction, deal at least with these issues:

- a. Authorship
- b. Date
- c. Audience
- d. Situation addressed
- e. Purpose(s)
- f. Structure (outline the whole book broadly or in detail)
- g. Special features of the book
- h. Critical problems or questions about the book

Step 5: Study the literary form of your passage. Is it a saying, a parable, a miracle story, a narrative, etc.? How does the literary form of your passage have any significance for the meaning of the passage?

Step 6: Study the literary structure of your passage. How is your passage put together? Identify each sentence as a question, a statement, an explanation, a clarification, etc. Describe the relationships that the sentences of your passage have to one another. The best way to show this is to produce a sentence outline of your passage.

Step 7: Note how your passage fits into the overall structure of the New Testament book out of which it comes. What place does it have? Is it an introduction to the book? Is it a conclusion? Is it the heart of the book? How does the position of the passage in relation to the whole book affect your understanding of it?

Step 8: Examine significant words in your passage. Choose words whose meanings are not obvious. Use word study books to discover the range of meanings that a word may have but concentrate on what your word means in the context of your passage.

Step 9: Summarize the meaning of your passage in your own words. State in one sentence what this passage meant to the original hearers/readers in light of your research above. State in one sentence what it means in light of the realities of modern life.

Step 10: Suggest issues that this passage addresses today and specific ways that this passage addresses them. Suggest creative ways that you can preach and teach this passage.

Your paper should be fully documented, using at least 10 different sources. It will be evaluated on the basis of content and style. It should be fully documented. Mail a hard copy or e-mail your paper to me. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for this paper to be returned to you. **This paper will count 25% of your final grade. The total estimated time required for successful completion of this assignment is 20 hours.**

ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Practical Theology

The purpose of this assignment is to enable you to find a practical way to communicate to others what you have learned about the Gospel of John. What you turn in should be no more than 10 pages (double-spaced) and should be well-written. You may choose one of these options, or you may devise one of your own.

1. Produce a teaching plan you would use to teach the Gospel of John to a group of people in your church. Be sure to identify the group and then outline how you would teach all or part of John.
2. Write a sermon on a passage in John. You may use the passage you have chosen for your exegetical paper above.
3. Write a reflective essay in which you describe contemporary issues in the church and in the world which are addressed by John. How does John address them?
4. Think through the contents of this Gospel. Imagine that you could write a letter to John asking him questions about his Gospel. Write this letter. In it, reflect on your questions that have surfaced as you have studied John.

Submit your paper either in hard copy or by e-mail to me. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your graded paper to be returned to you. **The total estimated time required for successful completion of this assignment is 10 hours. This assignment will count 25% of your final grade.**

Reading/Lecture Schedule

The following course management system is designed to provide you an advance organizer of course assignments.

MODULE #1

All work for the first module should be completed four weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Lectures to View	Assignments Due
1	Lectures 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin 1-page summary of e-lectures • Online Journal • Begin reading textbooks <i>Gospel of John & Interpreting the Gospel of John</i>
2	Lectures 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Continue reading textbooks
3	Lectures 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Continue reading textbooks
4	Lectures 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Assignment 2 due

MODULE #2

All work for the second module should be completed eight weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Lectures to view	Assignments Due
5	Lectures 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary of e-lectures • Online Journal • Begin Assignment 4
6	Lectures 16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Continue Assignment 4
7	Lectures 19-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Continue Assignment 4
8	Lectures 22-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working on 1-page summary • Online Journal • Assignment 4 due

MODULE #3

All work for the third module (and the course) should be completed thirteen weeks from the start of the semester.

Week	Lectures to view	Assignments Due
9	Lectures 25-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Journal • Begin working on Assignment 5
10	Lectures 28-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Journal • Continue working on Assignment 5
11	Lectures 31-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Journal • Continue working on Assignment 5
12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Journal • Continue working on Assignment 5
13		Assignment 5 due

Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

Conduct in Theological Discussions: Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

Language about God and Humanity: Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Late or Incomplete Work: The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may

communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F."

Drop/Add/Withdrawal: Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community:

Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered 'documented' when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred, and when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism was motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own. Where such plagiarism involves the theft of the academic work of another student, whether at Erskine or any other institution, it shall be designated 'documented theft of another student's work.'

The instructor involved, in consultation with the Dean, may recommend measures deemed appropriate. In cases of documented plagiarism or documented theft of another student's work, the offending student will automatically receive the following penalties:

- Failure of the course(s) in which plagiarized or stolen work is submitted
- Dismissal from the Seminary for a minimum of one semester
- Forfeiture of the right to tuition refunds during the semester(s) affected

Before such penalties are imposed, a committee of at least three faculty members must agree that they are appropriate to the case. Appeals in such

cases may only be addressed, in writing, to the President of Erskine College and Theological Seminary.

Selection Bibliography

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