



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

NT 735
The Gospel of John
Fall, 2011
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Due West Campus
Thursdays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course begins with class 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. ELECTIVE (Exegesis). Three hours credit.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

“The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.”(ETS 2010-2011 *Catalog*, p. 6). A part of this education involves mastering the content of Scripture and finding creative ways to teach and preach Biblical texts. Of particular interest in this course is how the preacher/teacher moves from a careful study of the text to using it to address the realities of the modern world. A study of the Gospel of John is a direct expression of the Seminary’s mission statement.

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the significant differences between John and the Synoptic Gospels with regard to structure, style, contents, and theology;
2. Write a basic introduction to John by summarizing the major options for authorship, date, and purposes;
3. Outline the basic structure of John;
4. Describe the likely audiences for the Gospel of John;
5. Summarize the major views concerning the origins of the Gospel of John;
6. Summarize the major options for identifying the Johannine community;

7. Interpret any passage in the Gospel of John in light of John's overall purposes;
8. Describe the significance of the Gospel of John for the church's life and ministry today and particularly its value as a model for preaching to contemporary audiences;
9. Begin a bibliography of major books, articles, etc. on the Gospel of John to be used in further exegetical work on this Gospel.

III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Each student must purchase the following books for the course:

Robert Kysar, *John, The Maverick Gospel*, Third Edition. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2007. ISBN 9780-6642-3056-2

Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. ISBN 0-8028-2504-4

Gerard S. Sloyan, *What Are They Saying About John?*, Rev. Ed. (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2006. ISBN 9780-8091-4337-2

In addition, each student will need a New Testament in the translation of his/her choice. Students who are proficient in Greek are encouraged to use the Greek New Testament (either UBS or Nestle).

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students must attend every class meeting. If a student must be absent for all or part of a session, he/she is responsible for all work done and due for that session. Normally, a student who misses all or part of a session will be required to do additional work. This extra work must be negotiated with the professor. **A student who misses more than 3 sessions will not pass the course.**
2. Students must be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation consists of completion of all reading and/or writing

assignments for that day. Much of the format of this course will be lecture/discussion. Thus, it is imperative that each student be adequately prepared in order to participate in an informed manner in classroom discussions.

3. Students may occasionally be given short, informal research-type assignments on which to report back to the group. These are voluntary and will not be graded. Nothing written is required to be turned in.
4. **Three one-hour tests will be given.** See the **Course Outline** for the dates and contents of these tests. The third test will be given during the scheduled exam days (**December 8**) at the end of the semester. Students will be given instructions on how to prepare for these tests prior to these dates.
5. **One major paper will be required.** If the student is taking this course to fulfill his/her New Testament exegesis requirement, then he/she must choose a passage from John and do a thorough, detailed exegetical study of it using the exegetical procedure learned in the basic course in exegesis. To fulfill the exegesis requirement, the student must have successfully completed **BI 102: Principles of Exegesis**. The student who does an exegesis paper is strongly advised to read carefully Gary M. Burge, *Interpreting the Gospel of John*, pp. 87-158.

If the student is using this course simply to fulfill his/her Bible elective or free elective requirement, then he/she may choose to do an exegesis paper or a research paper related to the background, structure, theology, etc. of John. A list of possible topics is included in this syllabus. The student may choose one of these or may devise his/her own.

The major paper for the course should be no more than 20 pages long (typed, double-spaced). The paper must be well-researched, well-written, show use of at least 10 scholarly sources, and must be fully documented using Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition or later as the guide. The paper will be graded primarily on content but also on style and form. The student should take careful note of the **GUIDELINES FOR THE MAJOR PAPER** included in this syllabus. **The finished copy of the paper is due no later than December 2.**

6. The student will be required to write an analysis of the book by Robert Kysar. A guide-sheet will be provided for this paper. **This paper is due in Session 8 (October 20).**
7. The student is encouraged to keep a loose-leaf notebook for the course. He/she can use it for class notes, reading notes, hand-outs, sermon/lesson ideas, bibliographical information, etc. If done properly, this notebook can be a great resource for further study, teaching, and preaching from the Gospel of John.
8. No specific bibliography is included with this syllabus. The student is encouraged to use the bibliographies in the textbooks used for the course. Major works of importance on the Gospel of John will be suggested throughout the course.

9. The student should review pertinent Seminary policies which will be followed in this class by going to the following link:
http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf
10. If the student is using his/her exegetical paper in this course for his/her portfolio requirement, then it is the student's responsibility to provide a clean copy to the staff to go into his/her file. The student should review the portfolio requirement for his/her particular degree program.
11. My fall semester office hours are posted on my office door (Office 20). It is advisable for the student to make an appointment before coming.

V. EVALUATION

The Seminary grade scale will be used (ETS 2010-2011 *Catalog*, p.46). The student's final course grade will be calculated as follows.

Three one-hour tests	=	60%
Major paper	=	30%
Kysar analysis	=	10%

COURSE OUTLINE

Sessions 1 and 2: September 1, 8

Course introduction, procedures, etc.

- I. An Introduction to the Gospel of John
 - A. Defining “Gospel”
 - B. The probable origins of the Gospels
 - C. John and the Synoptic Gospels
 - D. The complex thought-world of John
 - E. Authorship
 - F. Date
 - G. Purpose(s)
 - H. The historical situation behind John
 - I. The Fourth Gospel and the Johannine letters
 - J. The structure of John
 - K. A brief history of Johannine scholarship

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 1 AND 2:

1. Read the entire Gospel of John in a translation of your choice. Note the style, tone, and emphases in this Gospel.
2. Read Gerard S. Sloyan, *What Are They Saying About John?*, Revised Edition in its entirety. Be prepared to discuss major interpretive problems with the Gospel of John that are dealt with in this book.
3. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 3-59.

Session 3: September 15

- II. The World of the Late First Century, A.D.
 - A. Introduction
 - B. The condition of the Roman Empire
 - C. The church and Judaism
 - D. The church and Rome
 - E. The Christian gospel under fire from within and without
 - F. The character of Christianity in Asia Minor
 - G. John as a theologian

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 3:

1. Read “Beyond Jerusalem, Jamnia, and the Julio-Claudians” and “The Dominion of Domitian” in Ben Witherington III, *A New Testament History: A Narrative Account* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), pp. 379-409. **(to be provided)**

Session 4: September 22

- III. The Prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-18)
 - A. Introduction
 - B. The place of the Prologue in John’s Gospel
 - C. The Word and God (1:1-2)
 - D. The Word and Creation (1:3-5)
 - E. The Word and John the Baptist (1:6-8)
 - F. The Word Become Flesh (1:9-14)
 - G. The Completeness of the Word (1:15-18)
 - H. *Excursus*: Hebrew and Greek Understandings of the Word (Logos)

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 4:

1. Read carefully John 1:1-18. Note the poetic quality and the choice of words in this passage. Note the words and phrases that are repeated. How does this prologue set the whole context for John’s story of Jesus?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 63-113.

Sessions 5 and 6: September 29 and October 6

TEST # 1 ON I – III ABOVE (September 29, first part of period)

- IV. The Book of Signs: Part I (1:19—6:71)
 - A. Introduction
 - B. The significance of the word “sign”
 - C. The beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (1:19-51)
 1. The witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34)
 2. The first disciples of Jesus (1:35-51)
 - D. **The first sign**: The Wedding Feast at Cana (2:1-11)
 - E. Interlude (2:12)
 - F. The cleansing of the Temple and its aftermath (2:13-25)
 - G. Jesus and Nicodemus: The best of Judaism (3:1-36)

- H. Jesus and the Samaritan woman: The worst of Judaism (4:1-42)
- I. Interlude (4:43-45)
- J. **The second sign:** The Healing of the Nobleman's Son (4:46-54)
- K. **The third sign:** The Healing of the Lame Man and its Aftermath (5:1-47)
- L. **The fourth sign:** The Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15)
- M. **The fifth sign:** Jesus' Walking on the Water (6:16-21)
- N. Jesus as the Bread of Life (6:22-66)
- O. The confession of Simon Peter (6:67-71)

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 5 AND 6:

1. Read carefully John 1:19—6:71 in a translation of your choice. Note any peculiar emphases, features, etc. of John's story of Jesus.
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 114-346.

Sessions 7 and 8: October 13, 20

- V. The Book of Signs: Part II (7:1—12:50)
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Controversies about who Jesus is (7:1-52)
 - C. Jesus and the adulterous woman (8:1-11)
 - D. Jesus as the Light of the World (8:12-59)
 - E. **The sixth sign:** The Healing of the Blind Man (9:1-41)
 - F. Jesus as the Good Shepherd (10:1-42)
 - G. **The seventh sign:** The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-57)
 - H. The end of Jesus' public ministry (12:1-50)

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 7 AND 8:

1. Read John 7:1—12:50 in a translation of your choice. Note any peculiarities, emphases, etc. of the text. Note especially how the hostility against Jesus grows. What are the points of conflict between Jesus and His enemies? Note how John uses irony and paradox.
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 347—541; 778-786.
3. **The analysis of the Kysar book is due on October 20.**

Sessions 9, 10, 11, and 12: October 27, November 3, 10, 17

TEST # 2 ON IV – V ABOVE (October 27, first part of period)

Note: No Class on November 24 (Thanksgiving Day)

- VI. The Book of Passion (13:1—20:31)
- A. Introduction
 - B. The Passion narratives of the Gospels
 - C. The farewell discourses in the Gospel of John
 - D. The supreme example of servanthood (13:1-20)
 - E. The prediction of Jesus' betrayal (13:21-30)
 - F. The questions of the disciples and Jesus' response to them (13:31—14:31)
 - G. Jesus as the True Vine (15:1-16)
 - H. The future of the disciples (15:17—16:33)
 - I. The High Priestly prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)
 - J. The arrest of Jesus (18:1-12)
Excursus: The legal and political realities of the arrest of Jesus
 - K. The Jewish trial and Peter's denials (18:13-27)
 - L. The Roman trial (18:28—19:16a)
 - M. The death of Jesus (19:16b—42)
 - N. The resurrection of Jesus (20:1-29)
 - O. The purpose of John's Gospel (20:30-31)

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSIONS 9, 10, 11, AND 12:

1. Read carefully John 13:1—20:31 in a translation of your choice. Note the dominant themes which keep occurring. How does this section of John help us to understand discipleship? Note the use of contrasts in John's story here.
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 542-756.

Session 13: December 1

- VII. The Epilogue (21:1-25)
- A. Introduction
 - B. Critical problems with the Epilogue
 - C. The miraculous catch of fish (21:1-14)
 - D. The restoration of Peter (21:15-19)
 - E. The role of the Beloved Disciple (21:20-23)
 - F. The authentication of the Gospel (21:24-25)
- VIII. The Gospel of John and Ministry Today
- A. Introduction
 - B. How does the Gospel of John help us understand the world?

- C. How does the Gospel of John inform ministry in the world?
- D. Preaching the Gospel of John
- E. Teaching the Gospel of John

ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 13:

1. Read John 21:1-25 in a translation of your choice. What things are unusual about this scene? How is this whole scene somewhat anti-climactic for John's story? What is John's purpose in this scene?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised Edition, pp. 757—777.

Session 14: December 8

TEST # 3 ON VI – VIII ABOVE

POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS

Below are some suggested research topics for this course. Most of these topics are broad and will need to be narrowed down. The student is free to choose one of these or develop his/her own.

1. The Meaning of "The Jews" in John's Gospel
2. Greco-Roman Traditions Reflected in John 1:1-18
3. The Gospel of John and Gnosticism
4. The Character of Christianity in Asia Minor in the First Century A.D.
5. The Identity of the Johannine Community
6. The Meaning of "Son of Man" in the Gospel of John
7. Discipleship in the Gospel of John
8. The Use of the Exodus Tradition in the Gospel of John
9. Current Trends in Scholarship on the Gospel of John
10. The Problem of the Day of the Crucifixion in the Gospel of John

11. The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls
12. The Realized Eschatology of C. H. Dodd
13. Jewish-Christian Relations in the Late First Century A.D.
14. The Identity of the “Beloved Disciple” in the Gospel of John
15. Divine Election in the Gospel of John
16. The Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John
17. The Johannine School
18. The Value of John for Recovering the Historical Jesus
19. The *Hermetica* as a Possible Background for John’s Gospel
20. An Analysis of R. Alan Culpepper’s *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*
21. Docetism in the Church Late in the First Century A.D.
22. The Gnostic Redeemer Myth
23. The Contributions of C. H. Dodd to the Study of John

GUIDELINES FOR THE MAJOR PAPER

1. The major paper should be no more than 20 pages (typed and double-spaced).
2. In addition to the body of the paper, you must also include the following items as a part of the paper:
 - a. A Title Page
 - b. A Thesis/Summary Statement Where You Describe What the Paper is About
 - c. An Outline of the Contents of the Paper
 - d. Documentation (Footnotes at the Bottom or Notes at the End of the Paper)
 - e. Bibliography in Alphabetical Order and In Proper Form of All Sources Consulted in the Paper
3. Make sure that your footnotes or endnotes are in proper form according to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition or later. If you are not certain about how to do footnotes, consult this source and/or ask the professor.
4. You must have at least 10 scholarly resources for the paper including at least 2 journal articles. **You can have no more than one Internet source out of your 10 sources.**
5. **The finished copy of the paper is due in the professor's hands no later than Friday, December 2.** Papers received after that day may be graded down at least one letter grade for lateness.
6. The professor is willing to look at an outline and/or rough draft of the paper at any time during the process to give feedback without a grade.