

McMaster Divinity College  
Instructor: Beth Stovell, B.A., M.C.S.  
Email: [bethstovell@gmail.com](mailto:bethstovell@gmail.com)  
Office hours by appointment

Fall Semester 2009  
Monday, 7:00-9:00 pm  
NT 2XA3: 3 units  
Compass Point Bible  
Church, Burlington, ON

---

## 1. Course Description:

This course will explore the portrait of Jesus described in the Gospel of John by identifying the major symbols used throughout the Gospel. Tracing the story of Jesus' life from his incarnation to his death and resurrection, this course will examine the historical and literary context and overall message of John's Gospel. Special emphasis will be placed on contextualizing the message of John's Gospel for the Church today, including caring for new believers, encouraging spiritual growth and faith, developing a deeper sense of community, and demonstrating service that is rooted in God's love.

## 2. Course Objectives:

### a. *Knowing*

- To develop an awareness of the literary and historical context of John's Gospel.
- To learn to identify past and present approaches to reading and interpreting the Gospel of John.
- To identify the major theological themes of John's Gospel and their importance to one's understanding of Jesus Christ.

### b. *Being*

- To be encouraged by means of the course readings and discussion to evaluate one's own acceptance and application of the teachings of Jesus (as presented by John) with the goal of enhancing and solidifying one's faith.
- To grow in both individual and communal aspects of Christian spirituality by meditating on the life and love of Jesus Christ as presented in John's Gospel.

### c. *Doing*

- To be involved not only in the academic study of the Gospel of John, but also in its application for the life of the church today through preaching, teaching, and other functions of the church.

## 3. Course Requirements:

### a. *Reading*

1. By the end of the course, learners will have read through the Gospel of John *twice* in its entirety. It is *strongly recommended* that learners read through the gospel once

(in one sitting, if possible) *before* the course begins. By the end of the course, learners will have read the gospel through a *second* time.

2. Students will read a commentary on the Gospel of John. Credit students will read Morris's commentary in the NICNT series; audit students should read Whitacre's commentary in the IVPNT series (see section 5 below).
3. Credit students will read Fleer and Bland (eds.) *Preaching John's Gospel* (audit students are strongly encouraged to read this book, too). There will be two assignments that require the use of this book (see next section).
4. Not counting the biblical text, *credit students* will read a total of 991 pages. That averages out to about 83 pages per week or 12 pages per day over 12 weeks.

b. *Writing*

1. Sermon Critiques (2 x 5%=10%)
  - a. Students will choose *two* sermons from Fleer and Bland to critique.
  - b. In each critique, students should discuss how well they think the author of the sermon handled the text of John in light of the research presented in course readings and course discussions *not* on homiletic prowess of the author, length of the sermon, etc.
  - c. These critiques must not exceed 800 words.
  - d. The first sermon critique is due **October 5**. The second sermon critique is due **October 26**.
2. Sermon/Ministry Project (30%)
  - a. The sermon or ministry project must be based on a text from John's Gospel.
  - b. The project may be a sermon or a ministry project which may include a teaching session for a Bible study, a small group study, a Sunday School course, or a ministry conference/gathering/retreat. While creativity in reaching a student's particular ministry context is encouraged, all projects outside this scope should be approved by the instructor.
  - c. Students must specify in a short abstract at the top of the document who the real or imagined target audience is for this project (e. g., urban church, multi-cultural, low-income, para-church organization such as InterVarsity, YWAM, etc.) as well as any other pertinent information (e. g., a sermon for a special occasion such as a communion service, or a Bible study for a three day women's retreat, etc.)
  - d. This course is neither a homiletics course nor a course in pastoral theology. The purpose of this assignment is to assess each student's ability to move from "doing theology" in an academic setting to "applying theology" in a pastoral setting. While I will *not* be assessing this assignment for homiletic prowess, I still expect each student to practice sound homiletic and teaching principles.

- e. The length of the project should be equivalent to a 20-30 minute presentation (i.e., it should not take you more than 30 minutes to read the final product). It may be written in a style that is meant to be “spoken” or read aloud, and thus it does *not* have to follow the MacDiv style guide (though any sources used should still be documented).
  - f. The sermon/ministry project is due **November 9**.
3. Presentation of Sermon/Ministry Project (10%)
- a. Students will present their sermon/ministry projects. This may be in the form of a homily (“sermonette”) or a powerpoint presentation lasting no longer than 15 minutes. Other forms of presentation may be permitted, but must be approved with the instructor in advance.
  - b. The goal of this presentation is for students to clearly share the major points of their sermon/ministry project with their classmates in a memorable way.
  - c. Presentations will be given on **November 16** and **November 30**. Students will sign up for their presentation date during the second week of class.
4. Interpretive Essay (40%)
- a. Each credit student will write an “interpretive essay” of 3000 words (maximum length, not counting footnotes) examining either a text from John (i. e., an exegesis) or a “hot topic” in the study of John (e.g. authorship, historicity, relation to the Synoptic Gospels, relation to the Johannine corpus, portrayal of women in John’s Gospel, etc.). The text or topic must be approved by the instructor.
  - b. If a student chooses to complete an exegesis essay and has access to Greek (i. e., has taken Greek and Greek exegesis courses), s/he is strongly encouraged to make use of those skills; otherwise, it is not required. In exegetical papers, students should focus on theological theme(s) in her/his chosen text.
  - c. In addition to any historical, cultural, exegetical work, each paper must include an “application” or “significance for the church today” section.
  - d. The paper must follow the McMaster Divinity College style guide for writing term papers and essays. The guide is available here: [http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide\\_000.pdf](http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide_000.pdf)
  - e. The essay is due the final day of class: **December 7 at 5 p.m.** via e-mail to the instructor at [bethstovell@gmail.com](mailto:bethstovell@gmail.com)
- c. *Class Participation*
1. Online discussion forum (10%)
- a. Credit students will participate in five online discussions throughout the first 10 weeks of the course. This discussion will centre around a question(s) posted by the instructor (often about the commentary reading). Each discussion will last for two weeks. Audit students are encouraged to participate as well.

- b. The student is required to post his/her thoughts with regard to the question(s) followed by significant engagement for the length of the discussion period.
  - c. Assessment of these discussions will be based on the *quality* of the posts, not the quantity. However, for a two-week discussion to continue, students should plan on posting *early* and *often*.
  - d. The course forum will be located at <http://groups.google.com/group/gospelofjohn>
  - e. Students will receive e-mail invitations to the online forum before the second week of class and will need to register to join. (The instructor is the forum's administrator and can provide help if you need it).
2. In-class discussion
- a. Participation in class discussions is required for the course to be most effective. This will include taking part in in-class discussions and group discussions.

#### 4. Course Assessment

a. *By Assignment*

Assignment	Percentage
Sermon Critiques (2 x 5%)	10%
Sermon/Ministry Project	30%
Sermon/Ministry Project Presentation	10%
Interpretive Essay	40%
Online Forum Participation	10%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>

b. *Grading Scale*

Perctntag	Letter	Grade Guideline
90-100%	A+	for work displaying mastery of the subject matter, creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationship
85-89	A	
80-84	A-	
77-79	B+	for work displaying a good level of competence and comprehension
73-76	B	
70-72	B-	

Percentag	Letter	Grade Guideline
67-69	C+	for work that meets the basic requirements of the course, but demonstrates a low level of comprehension
63-66	C	
60-62	C-	
57-59	D+	for work that falls below the minimum requirements
53-56	D	

### 5. Course Readings:

a. *Required for All Students*

English Bible, NRSV, TNIV, or NIV preferred.

Fleer, David and Dave Bland, eds. *Preaching John's Gospel: The World It Imagines*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008. (ISBN-13:978-0827230071)

b. *Required for Credit Students (optional for non-credit students)*

Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. (ISBN-13: 978-0802825044)

c. *Highly Recommended for Non-Credit Students*

Whitacre, Rodney. A. *John*. The IVP New Testament Series. Edited by Grant Osborne. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. (ISBN-13: 978-0830818044)

All required textbooks for this class and others at the Divinity College are available from R.E.A.D. On Books and should be purchased as early as possible. They can be contacted at: 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1; phone: 416-620-2934 ext. 4; FAX: 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca); or <http://www.readon.ca>. The books are available through other book services as well.

## 6. Course Schedule (subject to change):

**Note:** all NICNT readings are for *credit* students; all IVPNT readings are for *non-credit* students. All other readings are required for credit students and optional for audit students.

Dates (Wk #)	Lesson and Discussion Topics	Assigned Reading (read for the following class)	Assignment(s) Due
14-Sep-2009 (Week 1)	<b>Introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course intro</li> <li>• Issues in the Gospel of John:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. John and the Synoptics;</li> <li>2. John and History;</li> <li>3. John's Theology and the Johannine Corpus</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John 1-3</li> <li>• NICNT, 63-222</li> <li>• IVPNT, 45-100</li> <li>• Fleer and Bland, 83-104,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read John in its entirety (before the first class)</li> <li>• if possible, NICNT, 1-59; IVPNT, 13-44.</li> </ul>
<b>The Book of Signs: John 1-12</b>			
21-Sep-2009 (Week 2)	<b>Jesus, The Word Who Became Flesh:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prologue (1:1-18)</li> <li>• The Messiah provides new wine and new birth (1:19-3:36)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John 4:1-7:52</li> <li>• NICNT, 222-385</li> <li>• IVPNT, 100-203</li> <li>• Fleer and Bland, 111-138</li> </ul>	
28-Sep-2009 (Week 3)	<b>Jesus, The Bread of Life:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Messiah offers the Spirit and life (4:1-7:52)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John 7:53-10:42</li> <li>• NICNT, 386-472, 778-786</li> <li>• IVPNT, 203-276</li> <li>• Fleer and Bland, 145-161</li> </ul>	
5-Oct-2009 (Week 4)	<b>Jesus, The Light of the World and Good Shepherd:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Messiah gives sight to the blind and light in the darkness, but some do not see. (John 7:53-10:42)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John 11-12</li> <li>• NICNT, 473-541</li> <li>• IVPNT, 276-326</li> <li>• Fleer and Bland, 61-77</li> </ul>	Sermon Critique #1
12-Oct-2009 (Week 5)	NO CLASS-Thanksgiving Holiday		
19-Oct-2009 (Week 6)	<b>Jesus, The Resurrection and the Life:</b> <p>The Messiah gives life to the dead and is proclaimed king, but his enemies plot his death. (John 11-12)</p>	John 13-14 NICNT, 542-591 IVPNT, 327-371 Fleer and Bland, 33-47	

Dates (Wk #)	Lesson and Discussion Topics	Assigned Reading (read for the following class)	Assignment(s) Due
<b>The Book of Glory: John 13-21</b>			
26-Oct-2009 (Week 7)	<b>Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and the Life:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Messiah speaks of love and peace to his followers before his death.(John 13-14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John 15-17</li> <li>NICNT, 592-653</li> <li>IVPNT, 371-423</li> <li>Fleer and Bland, 48-52, 78-82</li> </ul>	Sermon Critique #2
2-Nov-2009 (Week 8)	<b>Jesus, The True Vine:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Messiah speaks of the need for unity in the midst of persecution and the work of the Holy Spirit to his followers and prays for them to the Father, leading up to his death (John 15-17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John 18-19</li> <li>NICNT, 654-730</li> <li>IVPNT, 424-470</li> </ul>	
9-Nov-2009 (Week 9)	<b>Jesus, The King of the Jews:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Messiah is tried, crucified, and buried. (John 18-19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John 20-21</li> <li>NICNT, 731-777</li> <li>IVPNT, 470-501</li> <li>Fleer and Bland, 5-16, 26-31, 139-143</li> </ul>	Sermon Ministry Project
16-Nov-2009 (Week 10)	Sermon/Ministry Project Presentations		Presentations
23-Nov-2009 (Week 11) Lecturer: Matt Lowe	<b>Jesus, The Messiah, the Son of God:</b> The Messiah is resurrected and visits his disciples. (John 20-21)	N/A	
30-Nov-2009 (Week 12)	Sermon/Ministry Project Presentations Concluding Remarks		Presentations
7-Dec-2009	Interpretive Essay due by 5:00 p.m. via e-mail ( <a href="mailto:belhstovell@gmail.com">belhstovell@gmail.com</a> )		

## 7. Policies

### a. Statement on Academic Honesty

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g. failure of the

assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at <http://www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php>.

*b. Gender Inclusive Language*

- McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Gender Inclusive language at <http://www.macdiv.ca/regs/language.php>.

*c. Sexual Harassment*

- Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

**6. Select Bibliography:**

*a. General Books on the Gospel of John*

- Bauckham, Richard. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Beasley-Murray, George Raymond. *John*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1999.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. The Pillar New Testament Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. *The Gospel of John*. The New Cambridge Bible Series. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Smalley, Stephen S. *John: Evangelist & Interpreter*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Smith, D. Moody. *The Fourth Gospel in Four Dimensions: Judaism and Jesus, the Gospels and Scripture*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008.
- Talbert, Charles H. *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

- Thatcher, Tom and Stephen D Moore. *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel As Literature*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Whitacre, Rodney. A. *John*. The IVP New Testament Series. Edited by Grant Osborne. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- b. *Preaching and Specific Topics in the Gospel of John*
- Allison, Dale C, Jr. "The Living Water (John 4:10-14, 6:35C, 7:37-39)." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 30, 2 (1986): 143-157.
- Anderson, Paul N. *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1996.
- Anderson, Paul N. *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered*. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.
- Ball, David Mark. *"I Am" in John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues & Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Bystrom, Raymond O. *God Among Us: Studies in the Gospel of John*. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Productions, 2003.
- Choi, P Richard. "I Am the Vine: An Investigation of the Relations Between John 15:1-6 and Some Parables of the Synoptic Gospels." *Biblical Research* 45 (2000): 51-75.
- Coloe, Mary L. *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Cotterell, Peter. "The Nicodemus Conversation: A Fresh Appraisal." *Expository Times* 96, 8 (1985): 237-242.
- Deeley, Mary Katharine. "Ezekiel's shepherd and John's Jesus : a case study in the appropriation of biblical texts." In *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel*, 252-264. Ithaca, NY: Sheffield Academic Pr, 1997.
- Fleer, David and Dave Bland, eds. *Preaching John's Gospel: The World It Imagines*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008.
- Freed, Edwin D. "Ego Eimi in John 1:20 and 4:25." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41, 2 (1979): 288-291.
- Hysten, Susan. *Allusion and Meaning in John 6*. New York: W. de Gruyter, 2005.
- Janzen, J Gerald. "'I Am the Light of the World' (John 8:12): Connotation and Context." *Encounter* 67, 2 (2006): 115-135.
- Koester, Craig R. *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. "Jesus the Good Shepherd Who Will Also Bring Other Sheep (John 10:16): The Old Testament Background of a Familiar Metaphor." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12, 1 (2002): 67-96.

- Leyrer, Daniel P. "Exegetical brief: John 19:28 'I Am Thirsty' and the Fulfillment of Scripture." *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 103, 2 (2006): 119-121.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. " 'I Am the Door' (John 10:7, 9): Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, 2 (2007): 271-291.
- O'Day, Gail R. *The Word Disclosed: Preaching the Gospel of John*. Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2002.
- Okorie, A M. "The Self-Revelation of Jesus in the 'I Am' Sayings of John's Gospel." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 28, 5 (2001): 486-490.
- Williamson, Lamar. *Preaching the Gospel of John: Proclaiming the Living Word*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the instructor. The syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the instructor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.