



NT/OT 3A03
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
Mondays, 1:30 – 3:20 p.m.
Location: **TBA**

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Course Statement

This course introduces the discipline of biblical theology, which integrates the contents and theological themes of the Old and New Testaments as the essential foundation for Christian discipleship and ministry. More specifically, this course examines the language of Exodus 34:6–7, tracing the development of a biblical theology of God through the Hebrew Bible, its various ancient renderings, then via intertestamental literature to the New Testament and the person of Jesus, and thereafter in rabbinic and patristic exegesis. Greek and Hebrew are used but not required.

Prerequisites: OT 1A03 & NT 1A03 (Old Testament/New Testament Introduction)

Course Objectives

Cognitive:

[KNOWING]

- ▶ To introduce basic approaches to the discipline of biblical theology.
- ▶ To delineate the contours of a biblical theology of God, concentrating on the Jewish tradition of the “thirteen attributes of love” from Exodus 34:6–7, and tracing the subsequent development of this theology, primarily within Jewish and Christian traditions.
- ▶ To examine aspects of the historical process of formulation, reception, transmission, and evolution as they apply to biblical theological traditions.
- ▶ To explore the relevance of biblical theology for contemporary North American culture, and inter-faith relations in particular.

Experiential/ Characteristic:

[BEING]

- ▶ To review and reform aspects of personal discipleship, identity, and devotion in relation to the divine character.
- ▶ To evaluate and enact a holistic biblical spirituality and worldview in the context of Christian life and ministry.

Practical:

[DOING]

- ▶ To develop greater proficiency in reading canonical texts for their theological assumptions, orientation, and world view.
- ▶ To develop and apply ministry resources for use in the context of professional ministry.

Lecture/Seminar Outline and Schedule

January 7, 14	What is “Biblical Theology”?	
January 21	Names and the Naming of God	Article Review due
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ###-###	
Supplemental:	Emmanuel Clapsis, “Naming God: An Orthodox View.” <i>Ecumenical Review</i> 44 (1992), 100–112. (via MILLS ATLA database)	
	Janet Martin Soskice, “The Gift of the Name: Moses and the Burning Bush.” <i>Gregorianum</i> 79.2 (1998), 231–46. MILLS Periodicals BX 800 .A1G7	
January 28	Compassion	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ###-###	
Supplemental:	Moses Maimonides, <i>The Guide of the Perplexed</i> . Tr. Shlomo Pines. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. I.54–55 (pp. 123–29). MILLS BM 545 .D313 1933 (Reserve)	
	Jacob Neusner, <i>A Rabbi Talks With Jesus: An Intermillennial, Interfaith Exchange</i> . New York: Doubleday, 1993. Pp. 75–99. MILLS BM 620 .N48 1993 (Reserve)	
February 4	Grace and Graciousness	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ###-###	
Supplemental:	T. B. Dozeman, “Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Yahweh’s Gracious and Compassionate Character.” <i>JBL</i> 108 (1989), 207–23. (via MILLS ATLA database)	
February 11	Forbearance	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ###-###	
Supplemental:	Tertullian, <i>Of Patience</i> , tr. S. Thelwall. <i>ANF</i> 3.707–17. < http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-56.htm#P12189_3412415 >	
February 18	Reading Week (classes cancelled)	
February 25	Steadfast Love	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ###-###	
Supplemental:	Hermann Spieckermann, “God’s Steadfast Love: Towards a New Conception of Old Testament Theology.” <i>Biblica</i> 81 (2000), 305–27. (via MILLS ATLA database)	

March 4	Truth, Faith, and Fidelity	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ### ###	
Supplemental:	Gabriel Hébert, “‘Faithfulness’ and ‘Faith’.” <i>Theology</i> 58, no. 424 (1955), 373–79. MILLS Periodicals BR 1.T5 Lester J. Kuyper, “Grace and Truth: An Old Testament Description of God and Its Use in the Johannine Gospel.” <i>Interpretation</i> 18 (1964), 3–19. (via MILLS ATLA database)	
March 11	Forgiveness and Justice	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ### ###	
Supplemental:	Albert H. Friedlander, “Judaism and the Concept of Forgiving.” <i>Christian Jewish Relations</i> 19.1 (1986), 6–13. MILLS Periodicals DS 101.C47	
March 18	The Sins of the Fathers	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , 330–54	
Supplemental:	J. H. Charlesworth, “Prayer of Manasseh.” Ed. James H. Charlesworth. <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday, 1985. 2.625–37. MILLS BS 1700 .O43 1983b (Reserve) Judith H. Newman, “Form and Function in the Prayer of Manasseh.” (unpublished paper; on CourseLink page)	
March 25	The Imitation of God	<i>Adult Education Presentations</i> [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ### ###	
Supplemental:	James R. Payton, Jr., “‘Like God’: Monastic Responses to the Sinful.” (unpublished paper; on CourseLink page) Robert V. Rakestraw, “Becoming like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis.” <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> 40/2 (June, 1997), 257–69. (via MILLS ATLA database)	
April 1	Experiencing God: Faith in Practice	Essay due [<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Optional:	Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. <i>Experiencing God</i> . Revised Edition. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.	
April 8	God: A Working Knowledge	[<i>Congregational Worship Resource due</i>]
Reading:	<i>Unfolding Mystery</i> , ### ###	
April 12	Final date for submission of late assignments	

Texts and Resources

Michael P. Knowles, *The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: The God of Sinai in Our Midst*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.

The course text is available for purchase through the College bookstore, and/or from

READ On Bookstore	books@readon.ca
304 The East Mall Suite 100	www.readon.ca
Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2	Tel: (416) 622-2934

In addition to the course text, the article for the first assignment, the course bibliography, and a “Researching Biblical Traditions” bibliography, are all posted in PDF format at <http://divinity2.mcmaster.ca:8111/courselink/faculty.aspx?id=2>, accessible via the login password provided by the instructor. Supplementary course readings are either on reserve at Mills Library (see following), available from Mills Periodicals (3rd floor), or accessible online as indicated above.

On reserve:

Blackaby, Henry T., and Claude V. King. *Experiencing God*. Revised Edition. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998. MILLS BV 4501.2 .B537 1998

Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday, 1983, 1985. MILLS BS 1700 .O43 1983b

Kugel, James L. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. MILLS BS 1225.2 .K85 1998

Maimonides, Moses. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Tr. Shlomo Pines. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. MILLS BM 545 .D313 1933

Neusner, Jacob. *A Rabbi Talks With Jesus: An Intermillennial, Interfaith Exchange*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. MILLS BM 620 .N48 1993

Assignments

- | | % of Final Grade |
|---|------------------|
| 1. <i>Article Review</i> : “How May We Speak of God?” | 20% |

Summarize and evaluate the following article in terms of its understanding of biblical theology. According to Moberly, to what extent can we know and speak about God? Explain whether and to what extent you agree or disagree with his argument.

Moberly, R. W. L. "How May We Speak of God? A Reconsideration of the Nature of Biblical Theology." *Tyndale Bulletin* 53.2 (2002), 177–202.

Due: January 21

Length: ±1,500 words/6 pages

2. *Leading Congregational Worship*

20%

Once between January 28 and April 8, each student will use the required and supplemental readings assigned for the given week (together with relevant biblical material) as the basis for composing a worship outline for use in a congregational setting. Material submitted for evaluation will include a brief summary of the reading material; an explanation of how its main themes (e.g. divine compassion, forgiveness, imitation of God, etc.) are relevant to pastoral practice, worship, and the formation of Christian community; and an outline for a one-hour service of congregational worship. The service in question should focus on some aspect of the divine character and/or the divine/human relationship, creatively inviting the congregants to understand, encounter, and experience God in this way. A study guide, which includes devotional suggestions linked to each chapter of the course text, is available at <http://www.ivpress.com/discussionguides/> (although the actual contents of this guide should be considered off-limits for your own worship outline). As part of this assignment, students will lead the class in a 5-minute devotional exercise at the beginning of the class (see sign-up sheet below).

Due: 1:30 p.m. on the day of the assigned readings (late submissions not permitted)
January 28 – April 8

Length: ±1500 words/6 pages

3. *Adult Education Presentation*

30%

Students will work in pairs to complete this assignment, with each pair of students offering an adult education presentation to the remainder of the class on a topic of their choice (see separate sign-up sheet). The primary purpose of the presentation is not simply to summarize the content of biblical and post-biblical texts, lectures, or other readings (although it should refer to and be based on these), but will seek to facilitate a conceptual, experiential, and practical understanding of some aspect of the divine character, along the lines of the exercises in Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*. For example, if your task is to explore "grace," the class exercise should enable your audience both to understand and to *experience* grace. Format and method of presentation are the students' prerogative, subject only to the proviso that presentations should address and engage a full range of learning styles. Creativity is encouraged. For additional resources, see the course and "Researching Biblical Traditions" bibliographies (on the CourseLink website).

Dates: January 28 – March 25

Length: 20 – 25 minutes

4. *Essay*

30%

Topics for the essay will be similar to those of the educational presentation, although students are free to expand or narrow the focus of their investigation, or to explore a different theological motif. Essays may focus on:

- a. The theology (that is, depiction of God) evidenced within a specific biblical passage, book or genre;
- b. An aspect of the divine character as portrayed across a range of biblical and post-biblical literatures; or
- c. Interpretation of the divine character within a specific historical period, denomination, or school of theological thought, in relation to the biblical evidence.

The essay will trace one or more aspects of the linguistic, literary, and/or theological development of the chosen motif within Jewish, Christian, and/or Islamic canonical and extra-canonical texts. Reference may be made to Intertestamental literature; the Ante- and Post-Nicene Fathers; rabbinic, mystical, or modern Jewish literature; Islamic theological and devotional traditions; and/or Christian theology representing a specific historical period or confessional outlook. After outlining exegetical and theological dimensions of the question, the essay should draw out implications for contemporary Christian discipleship, teaching, and ministry, e.g., Trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, mission, worship, prayer, pastoral care, social justice, inter-faith dialogue, etc. (depending on your own areas of interest). In addition to conceptual content, essays must outline specific ecclesiological, missiological, and/or devotional implications of the theological trajectories under consideration. For resources, see the course and “Researching Biblical Traditions” bibliographies.

Due: April 1

Length: 2,500–3,000 words/10–12 pages

Style

Stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses* (<http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuide.pdf>). Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. See also “CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS,” below. Electronic submission of assignments (whether via email, fax, or posting to the web) is not permitted.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence 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: www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php

Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College is committed to employing inclusive language for human beings in worship services, written materials, and all publications. With regard to biblical texts, the integrity of original expressions (including references to God) should be respected; the NRSV

and TNIV provide appropriate examples of the use of inclusive language for human subjects. With the exception of direct quotations from historical documents, inclusive language is to be used in all assignments submitted for academic credit.

Late Submission Penalty

Assignments are due in class at 1:30 p.m. on the due date, after which they will be considered late and penalized accordingly. The penalty for late submission of assignments is 1% per calendar day (without limit).

*Final date for late submission of course assignments is the last day of classes, April 12
Assignments received after this date will not be accepted for grading or credit*

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content		Argument		Presentation	
90–100 A+ 85–89 A 80–84 A–	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements		Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions		Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation	
77–79 B+ 73–76 B 70–72 B–	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts, and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements		Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion		General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax	
67–69 C+ 63–66 C 60–62 C–	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements		Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements		Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style	
57–59 D+ 53–56 D 50–52 D–	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing		Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion		Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors	
0–49% F	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing		Incomprehensible or illogical structure/argumentation		Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax	