

**Ph.D./M.A. Seminar
Interdisciplinary Studies—Biblical Theology
CHTH G125 – C04
CH/MS/NT/OT/TH 6ZB6
McMaster Divinity College
Winter Semester 2017
Monday 3:30 – 5:20 pm**

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I. Description

Drawing on recent studies and debates within the study of Biblical and Old Testament Theology, this course provides an opportunity for deeper reflection on the hermeneutics of Scripture within theology. In this course students will locate their academic discipline(s) within the broader context of theological and cultural reflection. It also exposes students to the resources of the biblical tradition for their M.A./Ph.D. studies.

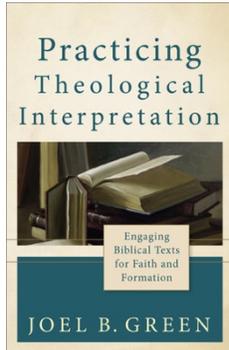
II. Purpose

A. Knowing: To know the breadth of disciplines within the theological academy and to locate one's own discipline within that context. To know the role that canonical resources play within the theological enterprise and the role that theological resources play within the exegetical enterprise. To know the development of the discipline of biblical theology and the impact of hermeneutical shifts on this discipline.

B. Being: To fully embrace the global agenda of the theological enterprise. To gain sensitivity and appreciation for theological disciplines outside one's own expertise. To reflect on and embrace a spiritual theology for the academic vocation.

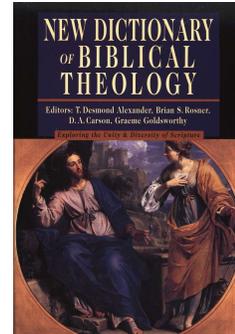
C. Doing: To articulate the mission of one's own particular discipline within the larger theological enterprise. To showcase the biblical resources available for carrying out one's particular academic theological pursuit. To learn the skills and contact points for dialogue with those within other theological disciplines and for facilitating such dialogue among colleagues.

III. Reading Resources



Green, Joel B. *Practicing Theological Interpretation: Engaging Biblical Texts for Faith and Formation* (Theological Explorations for the Church Catholic). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

Alexander, T. Desmond, & Rosner, Brian S., ed. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2000.



Articles distributed in class or available in the Course Dropbox.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

IV. Schedule

A. Phase 1: Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and the Theological Disciplines (Jan 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb 6, 13)

The first phase of this course is a combination of reading, lecture and discussion to lay the historical and hermeneutical foundations for understanding the discipline of Biblical Theology within the larger context of the Theological Disciplines. Outside of class seminar participants will be reading and working on their Position Papers (see Phase 2) as well as doing preparatory reading for class discussion.

B. Phase 2: Presentations of Theological Discipline Position Papers (Feb 27)

In this week the students will work within smaller groups, which will each have representatives from various disciplines of theological research, facilitated by faculty members.

C. Phase 3: Seminar Papers (Mar 6, 13, 20, 27, Apr 3)

In these weeks seminar participants will present major seminar papers. These papers will be reviewed by group members prior to class.

D. Phase 4: Wrap up (Apr 10)

V. Learning Experiences

A. Theological Discipline Position Paper

Contribution: For this paper the student will write a 5,000 word research essay articulating the hermeneutical, historical and theological foundation for the particular discipline they are pursuing within theology and the ways in which that discipline relates to the larger theological agenda.

- **Historical Foundations:** The paper will provide an orientation to the history of the particular sub-discipline within theology (thus, if Old Testament, then the history of the study of the Old Testament within Christian Theology and beyond; if Ethics, then the history of Ethics within Christian Theology and beyond). This history will have to be selective, by identifying key figures or streams over the past 2 millennia or over the past 2 centuries. The history should end with a concentrated overview of present approaches to the sub-discipline in which the student is taking her or his place.
- **Hermeneutical Foundations:** The paper will provide an orientation to key hermeneutical and epistemological issues which have shaped their particular sub-discipline of theology. This may be integrated with the historical foundations as one traces from pre-modern, to modern, to post-modern approaches to the study of the sub-discipline, but the paper should show sensitivity to recent shifts and advances in hermeneutics that must be taken into account when articulating one's sub-discipline of theology.
- **Theological Foundations:** Having oriented the reader to the historical and hermeneutical foundations for a particular sub-discipline of theology, the paper will then articulated where the student places herself or himself within the sub-discipline, based on the various approaches articulated in the historical foundations, taking into account the hermeneutical realities articulated in the hermeneutical foundations section, and then based on particular theological foundations. This theology may be drawn from whatever sources are considered legitimate for the student, ranging from biblical texts, to creedal expressions, to systematic theological categories, etc. It is not enough to just describe the history and hermeneutics of a sub-discipline and then articulate a preference for a certain approach. One's approach must be linked to a theological basis.
- **Larger Theological Agenda:** Finally, the paper will show how the student's sub-discipline of theology relates to the broader array of theological sub-disciplines ranging from those focused on the horizon of Scripture (traditionally, exegetical theology, biblical theology) to those focused on the horizon of Culture (traditionally, systematic theology, historical theology, practical theology).

Although this paper will have a personal dimension, it must not be journalistic autobiography, but rather must engage in deep hermeneutical, historical and theological reflection that engages key primary and secondary theological resources. Those resources will include (but not be limited to) the articles read in class, as well as those available in the textbooks and in the course dropbox, as well as any others the writer finds helpful. Papers are due in .pdf digital form by **February 17** (11:59 p.m., place in Course Dropbox).

Peer Review: Contributors will be put in groups of 3 led by a Divinity College professor and will be required to read their group members' position papers prior to the February 27 class and come prepared to reflectively interact. A 2 page written review (focus on the content of the paper, both areas for affirmation and improvement/clarification) is to be prepared for *each* other member of the group. This will form the foundation for the oral discussion in your groups (you will not read this formally, but use as a basis for conversation) and then a digital .pdf copy sent to the other members of the group immediately after your session. Each contributor should come prepared to articulate, defend and even revise their approach in light of the discussion.

Value: Contribution: 25%; Review: 10%

Due: Paper: February 17, 11:59 p.m.

Reviews: immediately after the session on February 27.

Submission: .pdf digital format to Course Dropbox

B. Seminar Paper

For this learning experience the student will write a minimum 20 page research paper that has a direct relationship to one's concentration for the doctoral degree. There is some flexibility on the topic, but it must be related in some way to exegetical and biblical theology, that is, the study of the canonical resources for theological reflection. Half of this paper must focus on texts and discussions related to the discipline of exegetical/biblical theology while the other half of the paper must interact with texts and discussions related to at least one other non-biblical theological discipline. The precise topic will be chosen in consultation with the professor, but it should be a topic that is conducive to interaction across the theological disciplines. For instance:

- one could study recent approaches to eschatology in systematic theology alongside recent exegetical/biblical theological work on eschatology in Pauline literature;
- one could study recent research within Old Testament studies on the genre of lament alongside recent systematic theology which uses trauma theory to structure theological categories;
- one could study the kerygmatic form of the gospels and recent discussion on this topic alongside recent pastoral theological reflection on homiletics;
- one could study recent study of approaches to war through the history of theology alongside a study of the Divine Warrior motif in the Bible.

The key is that you responsibly work with the best original and secondary resources within both biblical studies and non-biblical studies. In class the student will provide a precis of the paper and then class members are required to engage the paper in reflective and critical interaction (comments on papers will be posted to our Course Dropbox weekly and will form part of the basis of your participation mark).

Value: 45%

Due: 2 Saturdays prior to presentation in class at 11:59 p.m.

Submission: .pdf digital format to Course Dropbox

C. Class Experiences

This is a graduate seminar style class of collaborative learning in which professor and students are engaged in active learning together. Learning to critically (in its positive sense) engage material is essential to functioning in a graduate program and is expected of all students in our MA/PhD. It is expected that all students will not only attend these sessions, but also that they will assume responsibility for contributing to and learning from the experience. This means that readings will be completed prior to arrival in class and that student and presenter alike will pursue the acquisition of knowledge in the learning environment. It is expected that ALL members of the class will ask questions and contribute insights whenever opportunity is given, during and following presentations by professor or student alike. Students are graded on their level of preparation and contribution.

Value: 20%

VI. Dropbox

We'll be using Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) this semester for sharing resources for reading as well as distributing papers for evaluation. You will receive an invitation to Dropbox early in the semester which will lead you through the process for signing up and gaining access to our shared Dropbox.

VII. Format and Evaluation

So I can properly evaluate your work the following style guide is to be used for papers in this class.

- **Medium for Submission:** All material in this class is to be submitted in digital format to me via email. Please use .pdf format and ensure that what you send is what you want me to read. If you need a program for creating .pdfs go to <http://primopdf.com> for a free .pdf maker.
- **Style:** All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the MDC Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/MDCStyleGuide>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Title page, footnoting where appropriate and bibliography are not included in the length required. Material should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps an outline may accompany the “paper” but this is not included in the length of the “paper.” Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.
- **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.

- **Citations:** You must cite the source of your material very carefully using a consistent system, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum as I favour integration of secondary literature (footnoted).
- **Statement on Academic Honesty:** 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 ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

***this is a special issue for those pursuing second and third degrees in theology. It is understood that students will be building on earlier ideas and work, but it is expected that students will not hand in material that is merely "warmed over" previous work. If there is reason for concern speak with the professor about this.

So I can properly evaluate your work and help you grow in your biblical and writing skills the following evaluation guide should be kept in mind as you write:

- **Presentation:** Is the spelling correct? Does the grammar/syntax reflect proper English? Is the paper laid out properly?
- **Argumentation:** Is there a good introduction and conclusion? Does the argument flow with ample support? Is the question answered?
- **Content:** Are all the points considered? Is there proper documentation of sources used?

VIII. Accountability

Note on Timeliness of Submissions: Since this is a seminar style course all participants must be timely in their submission of material. People will need to read the various submissions and once the schedule is set there is no room to switch dates. For that reason there are considerable penalties for late materials in this course. Each **DAY** a paper is late will mean **the loss of half a letter grade (5%)**. Take this into account when planning out your semester.

Note on Timeliness of Attendance: From time to time you may find that you are late for class. Late arrivals, hereafter called "tardies," are unacceptable and will lead to a negative disposition in the professor and your classmates. Such "tardies," however, can be redeemed at the rate of Timbits for the entire class at the session following the second tardy as well as a coffee for the professor.

Rule of the Timbits (הלכה התמבתיים): Because “tardies” raise the ire of the covenant community (bound by this covenantal syllabus document delivered here at the foot of the “Mountain”), those who are late for class must have a means by which to atone for such “accidental sins” (בשגגה, if they are defiant sins, בַּיַד רָמָה, then the offender will be “cut off” from the community, see Num 15:27-31).¹ which means anyone late for class will need to bring Timbits for the entire class (מנחה) no later than the next class meeting plus a Tim Hortons coffee (נסך) for the professor (cream, no sugar). This מנחה and נסך will function simultaneously as both a sin offering (חטאת, Leviticus 4) atoning for the accidental sin of the offender and a peace offering (שְׁלָמִים, Leviticus 3) enhancing the fellowship of the covenant community. See the high professor for further details and any torah-rulings (see Haggai 2:10-14) regarding specific situations.

Especially important is to take seriously the cry of Joel of old in 1:13:

חַגְרוּ וְסַפְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים	Gird yourselves <i>with sackcloth</i>
הַלֵּילֹל מִשְׁרְתֵי מִזְבֵּחַ	And lament, O priests;
בָּאוּ לֵינוּ בַשָּׁקִים מִשְׁרְתֵי אֱלֹהֵי	Wail, O ministers of the altar!
כִּי נִמְנָע מִבַּיִת אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךְ:	Come, spend the night in sackcloth
	O ministers of my God,
	For <u>the grain offering and the drink offering</u>
	Are withheld from the house of your God.

And note his promise of a reward to those repent in 2:14:

מִי יוֹדֵעַ יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם	Who knows whether He will turn and relent
וְהִשְׁאִיר אַחֲרָיו בְּרָכָה	And leave a blessing behind Him,
מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךְ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	<u>Even a grain offering and a drink offering</u>
	For the LORD your God?

¹ Of course, see the “definitive” work on this: Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 53-54. For specific torah ruling also see the fuller הלכה התמבתיים in our Dropbox.

IX. Select Bibliography

Key volumes on the relationship between Theological Disciplines

- Bartholomew, Craig, Mary Healy, Karl Möller, and Robin Parry, eds.
2004 *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*. Vol. 5 of *Scripture and Hermeneutics Series*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Farley, Edward
1983 *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Green, J. B. and M. Turner, eds.
2000 *Between Two Horizons. Spanning New Testament studies and systematic theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Helmer, Christine, & Petrey, Taylor G., eds.
2005 *Biblical interpretation: history, context, and reality*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Marshall, I. Howard.
2004 *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Meadors, Gary T., ed.
2009 *Four Views of Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.
- Muller, Richard A.
1991 *The Study of Theology: From Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 7. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.
- Ollenburger, B. C., ed.
1991 *So Wide a Sea: Essays on Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies.
- Treier, Daniel J.
2008 *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Welker, Michael, & Schweitzer, Friedrich, eds.
2005 *Reconsidering the Boundaries Between Theological Disciplines. Zur Neubestimmung der Grenzen zwischen den theologischen Disziplinen*. Theology: Research and Science 8. Münster: Lit Verlag.

Key journal volumes on the relationship between Theological Disciplines

***Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 167-289 (papers presented at the University of Chicago Divinity School, May 7-9, 1995)**

- Collins, J. J.
1996 "Introduction: The Bible and Christian Theology," *Journal of Religion* 76:167-171.
- Ogden, S. M.
1996 "Theology and Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of Religion* 76:172-188.
- Wood, C. M.
1996 "Scripture, Authenticity, and Truth," *Journal of Religion* 76:189-205.
- Morgan, R.
1996 "Can the Critical Study of Scripture Provide a Doctrinal Norm," *Journal of Religion* 76:206-232.
- Jeanrond, W. G.
1996 "Criteria for New Biblical Theologies," *Journal of Religion* 76:233-249.
- Donahue, John R.
1996 "The Literary Turn and New Testament Theology: Detour or New Direction?" *Journal of Religion* 76:250-275.
- Long, B. O.
1996 "Ambitions of Dissent. Biblical Theology in a Postmodern Future," *Journal of Religion* 76:276-289.
- Newsom, Carol A.
1996 "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth." *Journal of Religion* 76:290-306.
- Perkins, Pheme
1996 "Spirit and Letter: Poking Holes in the Canon." *Journal of Religion* 76:307-327.
- Rendtorff, Rolf
1996 "Recent German Old Testament Theologies." *Journal of Religion* 76:328-337.
- Lefebure, Leo D.
1996 "The Wisdom Tradition in Recent Christian Theology." *Journal of Religion* 76:338-348.

***Biblical Interpretation* 6 (1998): 131-257**

- Brett, M. G.
1998 "Biblical Studies and Theology. Negotiating the Intersections," *Biblical Interpretation* 6:131-141.
- Sweeney, M. A.
1998 "Reconceiving the Paradigms of Old Testament Theology in the Post-Shoah Period. [inaugural lecture, School of Theology, Claremont, Ja 23 1996]," *Biblical Interpretation* 6:142-161.
- Olson, D. T.
1998 "Biblical Theology as Provisional Monologization. A Dialogue with Childs, Brueggemann and Bakhtin," *Biblical Interpretation* 6:162-180.
- Boer, Roland T.
1998 "Deutero-Isaiah: Historical Materialism and Biblical Theology." *Biblical Interpretation* 6:181-204.
- Riches, John
1998 "Text, Church and World: In Search of a Theological Hermeneutic." *Biblical Interpretation* 6:205-234.
- Watson, Francis
1998 "A Response to John Riches." *Biblical Interpretation* 6:235-242.
- Jeanrond, W. G.
1998 "The Significance of Revelation for Biblical Theology," *Biblical Interpretation* 6:243-257.

Assorted Articles on Biblical Theology and the Disciplines

- Hasel, G. F.
1984 "The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology," *TrinJ* ns5:113-127.
- Ollenburger, B. C.
1985 "Biblical Theology: Situating the Discipline," *Understanding the Word: Essays in honor of Bernhard W Anderson* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements), J. T. Butler, E. W. Conrad and B. C. Ollenburger, eds., pp. 37-62 Sheffield: JSOT Press.
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1995 "Markus Barth and Biblical Theology: A Personal Re-view," *HBT* 17:96-116.
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1999 "Johann Philipp Gabler and the Delineation of Biblical Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52:139-155.
- Carson, D.
2000 "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner, eds., pp. 89-104 Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
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- Pannenberg, W.
1997 "Problems in a Theology of (Only) the Old Testament," *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim*, H. T. C. Sun and K. L. Eades, eds., pp. 275-280 Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans.
- Porter, Stanley E.
2004 "Hermeneutics, Biblical Interpretation, and Theology: Hunch, Holy Spirit or Hard Work?" Pages 97-127 in *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Edited by I. Howard Mashall. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J.
2004 "Into the Great "Beyond": A Theological Response to the Marshall Plan." Pages 81-96 in *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Edited by I. Howard Marshall. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Debate Between Riches and Watson (also part of Biblical Interpretation)

- Watson, F.
1997 *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans (Introduction).
- Riches, J.
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- Watson, F.
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Debate Between Gnuse, Brueggemann and Barr

- Brueggemann, W.
2000 "James Barr on Old Testament Theology: A Review of *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*," *HBT* 22:58-74.
- Gnuse, R.
2001 "The Critic of Biblical Theologians: A Review of James Barr's *The Concept of Biblical Theology*," *BTB* 31:44-52.
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The Character of Old Testament Theology

- Anderson, B. W.
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 1987 "Old Testament Theology--A Non-existent Beast?" Pages 168-180 in *Scripture: Meaning and Method. Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrell Hanson*. Edited by B. P. Thompson. North Yorkshire: Pickering, 1987.
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 1989 "Biblical Theology and the History of Israelite Religion." in *Back to the Sources: Biblical and Near Eastern Studies*. Edited by Kevin J. Rathcart and John J. Healey. Dublin: Glendale, 1989.
 1990 "Is a Critical Biblical Theology Possible?" in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*. Edited by William H. Propp, Baruch Halpern and David Noel Freedman. Vol. 1 of Biblical and Judaic studies from the University of California, San Diego. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Please Note: 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.