

NT 3XJ3/5XJ5/6XJ6
Jesus through John’s Eyes
The Gospel of John

Online: January–April 2021
Synchronous Meetings:
Mar 8 (1:30pm–5:30pm)
Mar 9 (9am–5:30pm)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Imagine living in an alternate universe where we have only three synoptic gospels in the biblical canon. What would we miss in a world without the Fourth Gospel? The richness of the theology and eschatology in the upper room discourse (John 14–17)? The teaching on true worship in the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4)? The assurance of eternal security of John 3:16? The high Christology of the prologue (1:1–18) and the various “I am” sayings (6:35; 8:12; etc.)? What would you miss the most?

This course offers an in-depth examination of various historical, literary, and theological themes of the Gospel of John. We will explore the unique contribution that John makes to the canonical story of Jesus the Messiah (20:30–31). We will ask how his writing shapes and nurtures our spiritual being and motivates us to become the children of God (1:12–23). We will discover together the unique message of John by comparing John’s story to the synoptics. By focusing on the world behind the text (historical context), the shape of the text (literary context), and the world ‘in front of’ the text (hermeneutical approaches), we will come to better appreciate John’s portrayal of the person and work of Jesus and how his Gospel story continues to speak to the church today.

MODE OF DELIVERY

Synchronous learning is online or distance education that happens in real time, whereas **asynchronous** learning occurs through online channels without real-time interaction. This hybrid course will include a blend of both asynchronous and synchronous online learning. It is structured around online instructions and discussions in both synchronous (live-streaming lectures, video chat, etc.) and asynchronous (pre-recorded lectures, threaded discussions, etc.) methods. The synchronous sessions are established for Monday afternoon (March 8th) and Tuesday all day (March 9th). From time to time we will have synchronous meetings scheduled within the course’s original time period on Mondays @ 6:30 p.m.-8:20 p.m. EST. Other weeks there will be asynchronous activity (we will not meet at a specific time, but there will be an online activity and instruction to participate at some point during the week of that module). Students are also encouraged to meet with the instructor (by appointment through WebEx/Zoom) to discuss any questions raised in the forum and/or the assignments. Professional degree students should expect to commit 4-5 hours/week on the course and Advanced Degree students (MA, DPT, PhD) should expect to commit 10-12 hours/week on the course.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Biblical Studies (BS)

Students taking this as a Biblical Studies course will be encouraged to explore the historical, cultural setting and theological emphasis of John, as well as scholarly debates concerning the interpretation of the contents.

Pastoral Studies (PS)

Students taking this as a Pastoral Studies course will be encouraged to explore how the ideas and exhortations in John are relevant for Christian faith and practice in the contemporary world.

Christian History and Worldview (CW)

Students taking this as a Christian History and Worldview course will be encouraged to explore how John is interpreted and received throughout the history of the church and reflect upon the complexities of various hermeneutical and theological issues.

Church & Culture (CC)

Students taking this as a Church and Culture course will be encouraged to explore the message of the Gospel of John within its historical and culture setting and compare it to the many interpretations of John in the contemporary cultural landscape.

Language Option

Students taking this with the biblical language option will be encouraged to practice the responsible use of their existing Greek language skills and will undertake translation and exegetical assignments accordingly (see below).

Advance Degree Students (MA, DPT, PhD)

Advance degree students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with their primary supervisor and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following goals are set for the student:

Knowing:

- To become familiar with the historical context and the text of the Gospel of John for use in teaching and preaching ministry
- To appreciate the literary and theological characteristics of John
- To discern major themes and issues in the John and to consider their significance for the contemporary church

Being:

- To become competent interpreters of the text

- To become sensitive to the historical and cultural environment of the early church
- To allow the Gospel of John to motivate, form and transform our faith, worship and Christian way of life

Doing:

- To develop skills in interpreting John in terms of their theological, historical and social contexts
- To articulate a detailed outline of John
- To explain key topics and major exegetical issues related to John

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Students are required to possess the following:

1. The English Bible (modern version such as NASB, NRSV or NIV). The Greek New Testament (for those with Greek competence). Students with facility in Greek are encouraged to use their Greek Bible.
2. Edwards, Ruth B. *Discovering John: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
3. Kysar, Robert. *John, The Maverick Gospel*. 3rd ed. Louisville: WJK, 2007.
4. One commentary from the recommended commentary list below (Most of the commentaries can be borrowed from the Digital Theological Library using the MDC subscription).
5. Additional reading materials will be distributed on Avenue to Learn (A2L).

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. You may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3; phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to complete all of the following assignments. All assignments should be uploaded/posted to the designated Avenue to Learn (A2L) submission folder. No unfinished assignments are permitted. See below for late submission policy.

I. MDiv/MTS Students (NT 3XJ3)

Assignment 1: Reading Journal and Weekly Online Activities: 20%
Due by the last day of each month (Jan 31, Feb 28, March 31)

Using an English translation (NIV, NASB or NRSV) or the Greek Bible (for language option students), students are to read the required readings (scripture, textbooks, and other resources) and maintain a reading journal in which they will keep notes on the class readings. Students should produce a page of notes and reflections per week. The journal should be posted to

A2L by the last day of each calendar month (see schedule below). The notes do NOT need to employ a formal essay style but should be written in an easy-to-follow manner and in a style similar to notes for sermon preparation (e.g. bullet point). The notes can be reflectional, devotional, exegetical, or applicational in nature. They should demonstrate that a fair (and substantial) amount of analysis and self-reflection is being done and should not contain extensive quotations from the text. This assignment is intended to help students to prepared for online discussions. The instructor will use it to track student progress. If the notes do not demonstrate that a fair amount of reading was done (e.g. they contain many direct quotations or show insufficient interaction), they will be graded as incomplete.

Student also need to participate in the A2L discussion forum. Our weekly routine involves **two** tasks. The first is an exegetical task. Students have to read the assigned passage (see below) with at least one commentary and identify major exegetical issues and come up with possible solutions. The instructor will post a short video on Monday introducing the passage and the topic(s) of discussion. Exegetical questions will be posted on A2L to guide the discussions, but students are welcome to start a new discussion thread if there are other questions they want to raise. The instructor will post a video towards the end of the week concluding the discussion of the week.

The second task is applicational/integrative in nature. This is the part of the course where we go over specific topics on the Gospel of John. For those weeks that do not have live (WebEx) discussion (see assignment 3 below), students are asked to read a specific portion of the textbooks that covers a particular topic (e.g. symbolism, Christology, etc.). The lecturer will post a short video summarizing the major tenets of the topic at the end of the week. Students need to indicate on A2L that they have read the assigned material and have watched the video.

Assignment 2: Short Essay (1) – Comparing John and Mark (4-5 pages): 20% Due February 28 (11:59pm)
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Students are to read the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John at least once and draw comparison between the two gospels in terms of the following:

1. Content (e.g. number of miracles, the opening, the ending, unique content, etc.)
2. Portrayal of characters (groups and individual characters, e.g. John the Baptist, the disciples, the crowd, the religious authorities, Peter, etc.)
3. Narrative techniques (plot progression, settings, flashbacks, framing devices, sandwich/frame stories, irony, narrator's perspective, etc.)
4. Use of scripture and use of technical/theological terms

Students should produce a 4- or 5-page report summarizing the various findings and offering their own understandings of these differences. Students are strongly encouraged to read Robert Kysar's *John: The Maverick Gospel* (pp. 7–19) before they start working on the assignment. Additional readings and other helpful resources will be provided on A2L.

Assignment 3: Short Essay (2) – Interpretative Issues (4-5 pages) 20%

Due Date: Refer to course schedule below

Students will choose one of the following questions and write a short paper providing an interpretation of one passage from John's Gospel. The instructor will provide a research question to introduce students to the particular exegetical issue. Students should write up a 3-4 page report (1) briefly describing the exegetical issue/problem; (2) outlining the major interpretive options, and finally (3) providing his/her own solution/opinion to the problem. Students must consult at least three commentaries from the list below and five resources in total. The due date for this assignment depends on the chosen topic/text. It is due on the date the particular topic is covered in the online lecture. Student(s) are also expected to lead a breakout group in an online (WebEx) discussion (Monday 6:30-7:30pm). A sign-up sheet will be uploaded on A2L before the first day of class.

1. Describe the role of John the Baptist in John and compare it to his role/function in the synoptic gospels (Due: **Jan 25@9am**)
2. Is there any difference, apart from style, between John 6:1–21 (The feeding of the multitude and walking on the water) and its synoptic parallels? Do you think John is dependent on the Synoptics? If so, how does John rework the tradition and what is the main point of the episode in John? If not, how does the synoptic writers rework the Johannine tradition, if at all? (Due: **Feb 8@9am**)
3. How should we approach the episode of the woman caught in adultery (7:53–8:11)? How do we explain its (mis)placement in the Gospel of John? Should we preach this passage? Why or why not? (Due: **Feb 15@9am**)
4. Describe the ordering of the following events in John and the Synoptics: the anointing of Jesus, the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, and Jesus's Arrest. How do we explain the discrepancies in the chronology of Jesus's final week? How does the Last Supper relate to Passover? (Due: **Mar 22@9am**)

Assignment 4: Thematic Paper (6-8 pages): 25%.

Due: April 9 (11:59pm)

Based on the readings of Robert Kysar's *John: The Maverick Gospel*, Richard Bauckham's *Gospel of Glory* (Optional), notes from class discussions, and additional resources on A2L, students are to write a 6–8-page overview of **three** major themes in the Gospel of John. Topics to consider include (but not limited to) Christology, the Spirit, dualism, glory, eschatology, irony, signs, perception and faith, messianism, anti-Judaism, eyewitness, etc. Student must engage with the required readings and include references to the biblical text. Students should also discuss the relationship between the various elements/themes in John. A grading rubric will be provided on A2L.

Quiz: Outline and Content of John: 15%

Week of April 9 (Time: TBD)

Students are to write a short quiz on the content of John's Gospel. There are two sections in the quiz: (1) students will reproduce, from memory, a chapter-by-chapter outline of the gospel

provided by the instructor in the first day of class and used as the basis of our in-class discussions; and (2) students will state in which chapter of John a given story or quotation might be found (e.g. In which chapter do we find Jesus’s conversation with Nicodemus?). The purpose of this quiz is to help students to gain familiarity with the text and to provide an opportunity to recapitulate what we have learned in class.

Greek Assignment: Translation and Exegetical Note: 40%. Due on Jan 31, Feb 28, Mar 31

Requirements for students taking this course with the language option only:

MDiv or MTS students taking this course with the Greek option need to complete three translation and exegetical exercises on three passages assigned by the instructor **INSTEAD OF** the two short essays. These three translation assignments are due on the last day of the month (Jan–Mar). A template for the assignment will be sent to all students before the first week of class. These assignments are due on or before 11:59pm. A step-by-step procedure for this assignment will be posted on A2L on the first day of the term. **NOTE:** Students who are taking the language option for the **SECOND** time will have alternative requirements (instead of these three translation exercises). **Tutorials** (live WebEx meetings) will be hosted by the instructor to go through the assigned Greek texts/translation with the students. More details will be given on the first day of class.

Grading Summary and Due Date **[NT 3XJ3]:**

Journal and Weekly Activities	20%	Jan 31, Feb 28, Mar 31
Short Essay 1	20%	Mar 7
Short Essay 2	20%	See Schedule Below
Thematic Paper	25%	April 9
<u>Quiz</u>	15%	<u>Week of April 9</u>
Total	100%	

II. Advanced Degree (MA, DPT, PhD) Students (NT 5XJ5/6XJ6)

Assignment 1: Weekly Discussion: 10%

Weekly @ A2L discussion forum

Advance degree students need to participate in the discussion forum. Similar to the requirement for the professional degree students (see assignment 1 for NT 3XJ3 above), students have to read the assigned passage with at least one commentary and identify major exegetical issues and come up with possible solutions. The instructor will post a short video on Monday introducing the passage and the topic(s) of discussion. A few exegetical questions will be posted on A2L to guide the discussions, but students are welcome to start a new discussion thread if there are other questions they want to raise. Advance degree students are expected to take a more active role on the forum, moderating and leading the discussion. They are also expected to provide direction and suggestions for professional degree students. The

instructor will post a video by the end of the week concluding the discussions. Students are also expected to follow the weekly schedule and read all the required materials and watch all the videos on A2L.

Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review: 30%

Due: Feb 22 @ 11:59pm

Students will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (3000–4000 pages) related to the chosen topic of the major research paper and the Gospel of John in general (NOT counting commentary). Students are to write a **100-150 words** annotation for each entry. The require texts for the course are NOT included as part of the book list. In addition to the annotated bibliography, students also need to write a literature review of approximately **2,000 words**, summarizing the key learnings from the annotated bibliography and provides a cogent foundation for the major research paper.

Assignment 3: Presentation and Discussion: 10%

Due: March 9

Students will give a presentation of the preliminary ideas of the major research paper during the synchronous sessions (March 8th or 9th). The presentation can be pre-recorded or real-time. It should be at least 30 minutes long. The presentation should include an overview of the state of scholarship on the chosen topic as well as the major tenets of the research paper. It should also include a summary of the major exegetical issues of the passage(s) and the intended application/implication(s) of the paper. Each presentation is followed by an online (real-time) discussion, which allow professional degree students to ask questions and provide feedbacks. The goal of this presentation is to facilitates a collaborative learning environment in which advance degree students and professional degree students are engaged in active learning together. It also provides a chance for advance degree students to apply their research in a pedagogical context.

Assignment 4: Major Research Paper: 40%

Due: April 9 @ 11:59pm

Write a major research paper of 7,000-8,000 words on one key aspect or theme of the Gospel of John. The paper must be grounded in passages (in John), and it must incorporate the following elements: (1) an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this topic need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?) (2) a discussion of the meaning and significance of the theme/passages in the original (historical) context; (3) a discussion of how the message engaged with the (first-century) readers and how this engagement can provide insights for contemporary engagement with modern ministerial and cultural contexts; and (4) a discussion of the practical applicability of the theme/passages to the contemporary Church and how this idea can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practices. This paper must follow the *MDC Style Guidelines*. The paper should include:

- i. A clear statement of thesis in the introduction
- ii. A clear explication of the theme and its importance
- iii. Analysis of relevant passages that relate to the theme

- iv. Exegesis of any significant or controversial verses
- v. Theological reflections on the theme
- vi. Implications of the theme for a contemporary Christian worldview and ministry practice
- vii. Possible themes: healing, symbolism, dualism, faith, anti-Judaism, Christology, eschatology, or student's choice (in consultation with the instructor).

At least 15 academic secondary sources are required for these papers (which can be the sources in the annotated bibliography), and all must be used and cited in the paper. Sources may include monographs, commentaries, and articles from journals and books. Sources must NOT include web sites (e.g. blog posts), one volume Bible dictionaries, study Bible, Bible translations, and dated devotional commentaries.

Quiz: Outline and Content of John: 10%

Week of April 9 (Time: TBD)

This is the same as the one for professional degree students (refer to the requirement for 3XJ3 above).

Grading Summary and Due Date [NT 5XJ5/6XJ6]:

Weekly Discussion	10%	
Annotated Bibliography	30%	Feb 22
Presentation and Discussion	10%	Mar 9
Major Research Paper	40%	April 9
<u>Quiz</u>	10%	<u>Week of April 9</u>
Total	100%	

SCHEDULE

Dates	Class Topics	Meetings*	Reading
Phase 1: Asynchronous Sessions (Jan 4–Mar 7)			
Jan 4	Course Introduction, Hermeneutical Approach, Introduction to the Gospel of John WebEx Class Meeting at Jan 4 1:00 pm EST*	WebEx Meeting Video Lecture	Edwards, chs. 1, 3, 5
Jan 11	Text: The prologue of John (1:1–18) Topic: John and the Synoptics, Reading Strategies	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Edwards, ch. 2 Kysar, 7–19, 39–46
Jan 18	Text: The prelude to Jesus's ministry (1:19–51) Topic: Symbolism in John	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Resources@A2L

Jan 25	Text: The beginning of Jesus’s ministry (2:1–3:36) Interpretive Issue 1: John the Baptist Reading Journal #1 Due Jan 31 (11:59pm)	Video Lecture WebEx Meeting	Resources@A2L
Feb 1	Text: Jesus in Samaria (4:1–54) Topic: Characters and Characterization in John	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Edwards, ch. 10 Kysar, appendix B
Feb 8	Text: Miracles and discourses (5:1–6:71) Interpretive Issue 2: The Feeding of the Multitude	Video Lecture WebEx Meeting	Resources@A2L
Feb 15	Text: Jesus at the Festival of Booths (7:1–8:59) Interpretive Issue 3: Pericope Adulterae	Video Lecture WebEx Meeting	Edwards, ch. 12 Resources@A2L
Feb 22	Text: Miracles and discourses (9:1–11:57) Topic: John’s Dualism Reading Journal #2 AND Short Essay 1 Due Feb 28 (11:59pm)	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Edwards, ch. 11 Kysar, ch. 2
Mar 1	Mid-Term Break	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	
Phase 2: Synchronous Sessions (Mar 8–9)			
Mar 8 (pm)	Session 1: The Hour of Glory (12:1–13:38) (Lecture and Discussion) Session 2: The Christology of John (Lecture and Discussion)	WebEx Meetings	Edwards, chs. 7–9 Kysar, ch. 1
Mar 9 (am & pm)	Sessions 3–6: Presentations and Discussions Topic 1: John: History, Theology, or Both? Topic 2: Healing and Disability in John Topic 3 & 4: TBA		Edwards, ch.4, excursus 2 Resources@A2L
Phase 3: Asynchronous Sessions (Mar 15–April 9)			
Mar 15	The farewell discourse (14:1–17:26) Topic: The Eschatology of John	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Kysar, ch. 4 Resources@A2L
Mar 22	Jesus’s arrest, trial, and crucifixion (18:1–19:42) Interpretive Issue 4: The Holy Week	Video Lecture WebEx Meeting	Edwards, ch. 8
Mar 29	Jesus’s resurrection and appearance (20:1–21:25) Topic: Faith and Signs in John Reading Journal #3 Due March 31 (11:59pm)	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Edwards, ch. 6 Kysar, ch. 3

Apr 5	Conclusion: Major Themes in John John and the Contemporary Church Thematic Paper Due April 9 (11:59pm)	Video Lecture A2L Discussion	Edwards, ch. 13 Kysar, 149–164
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Details on WebEx/Zoom setup will be provided through email and A2L postings. All students need to attend all online class meetings and discussions.

REFERENCES (* indicates recommendation)

Ashton, John. *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

*Bauckham, Richard. *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

*Barrett, Charles K. *The Gospel According to St. John*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.

*Beasley-Murray, G.R. *John*. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1987.

Bernard, John Henry. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*. 2 vols. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928.

*Brant, Jo-Ann A. *John*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.

*Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel According to John*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966.

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*Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

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*Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.

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*Michaels, J. Ramsey. *The Gospel of John*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

*Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998.

Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1971.

O'Day, Gail R. and Susan E. Hulen. *John*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: WJK, 2006.

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*Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *The Gospel According to St. John*. 3 vols. New York: Seabury, 1982.

Talbert, Charles H. *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

*Thompson, Marianne Meye. *John: A Commentary*. NTL. Louisville: WJK, 2015.

Witherington III, Ben. *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*. Louisville: WJK, 1995.

LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

All assignments must be submitted on or before the date due, unless other arrangements are made in advance. A late penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all assignments submitted after the deadline, unless an extension has been obtained from the instructor prior to the deadline. Assignments cannot be submitted after **April 10, 2021** without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (strickpd@mcmaster.ca).

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 ~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

In this course we will be using a web-based service ([turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com)) for plagiarism detection. Students who do not wish to submit their work to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) can submit an electronic copy of their work via email in PDF format and no penalty will be assigned, but all submitted work is subject to normal verification standards in order to ensure that academic integrity has been upheld (e.g. online search).

GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

STYLE

All 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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

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.