



McMaster Divinity College

Understanding John *A Biblical Theology/NT Theology Course*

NT 3XJ3
MTS/MDiv/DipMin/Cert

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Fall 2023
In Person + Livestream
Wednesdays 4–5:50 p.m.
Camelford

Course Description

Every MDC student should take a course on at least one of the gospels, because the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is at the very core of our faith, and the gospels are the primary means of how we come to know him. The Gospel of John is distinctive from the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke), in part because the author interprets and explains the meaning of what Jesus said and did more deeply, and therefore has had a major impact on Christology in the early church and throughout church history. This course is devoted to studying the theology of John, delving into the profound way that the story Jesus's life, death and resurrection shaped the theological tradition. While Christology is of central interest, we will look at how the Gospel of John shaped Christian life and thought in a number of areas.

With permission from the Registrar's Office, students may have the option to participate sessions through live-streaming.

Specializations

Biblical Studies (BS)

Students taking the Gospel of John for the Biblical Studies (BS) specialization will find this course supports all of their objectives. They will gain comprehensive general knowledge of the content and theology of one of the key books of the New Testament and with a focus on Jesus. They will be exposed to tools and methods in Gospel studies and will have the opportunity to practice doing biblical theology.

Pastoral Studies (PS)

Students taking the Gospel of John for a Pastoral Studies (PS) specialization will be equipped to answer key questions that are often raised by those who encounter the profound text. There will be significant encounters with Jesus and who he is, as well as the nature of God, the world, discipleship and holiness that challenge the PS specialist to re-envision the theology in contemporary contexts.

As an Elective

As I said above, all students are encouraged to take the Gospel of John as a foundational New Testament text and in the gospel of John, they encounter Jesus with John's profound theological reflection.

Course Objectives

Specific Objectives – Through reading, lectures, discussion, and assignments the student will...

Knowing

- Identify the dominant and distinctive emphases in John's portrayal of Jesus
- Compare the major topics in the theology of the Gospel of John, and specialize in one of them
- Determine the context(s) out of which the theology of John developed

Being

- Be aware of your own worldview/theology in light of John's gospel
- Be impacted in your spiritual formation
- Be transformed by encounters with Jesus in John

Doing

- Research an issue and determine its contribution to John's portrayal of Jesus
- Apply research to a contemporary context/ministry suitable for the student's specialization
- Present your project to the class, serving as a resource to others

Reading

Course Texts

Bauckham, Richard. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Koester, Craig R. *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Course Requirements

Class Participation (10%)

Student participation includes class and group discussions.

Reading (10%)

See the Daily Schedule at the end of the syllabus for dates and pages.

- Read the scheduled material
- Read the Gospel of John 3x

The student will submit the percentage of reading completed on **Friday Dec 8 at 11:59 p.m.**; submit it to A2L under Assignments: Reading.

Written Assignments

In order to pass the course, all assignments must be completed

1. Research an Issue in John's Theology (35%)

Each student will write a research paper on one of the theological issues/topics in John's theology, relating it to John's portrayal of Jesus and its context(s). **It will be due November 3, by 11:59 p.m.** It will be submitted in PDF form to A2L under Assignments: Paper. Late papers will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 5% per day after that.

Length & style: It should be approximately 4,000 words (about fifteen pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. If further information is needed on how to research and write a paper, there are resources on A2L under Content. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide (see Style).

2. Profile Project (35%)

Each student will complete a paper or portfolio project designed to make their research on one of

the issues/topics in John (#1) accessible in a specific contemporary context/ministry emphasizing spiritual formation, and encountering Jesus in John, or as an alternative, write a second paper on a theological issue in John. Submit your project on A2L under Assignment: Project **by 4:00 p.m. December 6**. If you are streaming, and your project is an artifact, submit a video of your project as an attachment under Communication: Discussion on A2L All students will present their profile project in class on **December 6**.

Length & style: If written, it should be approximately 3000 words (about twelve pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide (see Style). If it is a project, it should be somewhat comparable in time and effort to a 15 pg. research paper. A student may choose to write a second research paper as an alternative.

Each student must submit a written **Project Proposal** describing the appropriateness for one's specialization, the specific contemporary target group's profile and context targeted, the theological issue/topic that is being re-presented, the goal of the project, and the approach, **due 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8 on A2L**.

Portfolio projects should largely be determined by your specialization and an appropriate application of your research. Topical sermons, Bible studies and devotionals are always appropriate (and should be submitted in a written form), but creativity is encouraged. You may choose to design an artifact: an art project, poetry or song, but in that case, you must also submit a written detailed description of exactly how your artifact utilizes, interprets, and applies Scripture and principles of biblical interpretation. Marking will be based on:

- How the message and content utilizes and applies the theology of John
- The appropriateness of the project for the identified target group
- The quality and proficient use of the medium
- The estimated effort expended on the project (it should be nearly equal to the effort of a 15 pg. exegetical paper).

3. **Presentation (10 %)**

Each student will give a presentation of their paper/portfolio project during class on **December 6**. Presentations will have specific time limitations which will be announced in class. They will be graded on content, style and the creativity/quality of their presentation.

Grading Summary

➤ Reading	10%
➤ Participation	10%
➤ Research Paper	35%
➤ Profile Project	35%
➤ Presentation	10%

Additional Materials

- Any handouts for lectures and class discussion will be made available before class online in Avenue or the course DropBox.
- Further procedures and guidance for assignments will be given in class and/or online.

Classroom Behavior

Attendance

- Attendance is required to pass the course. Missing more than the equivalent of two weekly classes may result in the reduction of grade or failure.
- Students should be on time to class or notify the professor (preferably in advance).
- Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.

Participation

- Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
- Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic (or online) conversations in class.
- Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up.
- Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

Late Assignments

Lose 2% each day for 7 days, and then 4% a day up to 30%. However, the projects and all assignments must be turned in by December 8 to complete the course.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all 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, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Bookstore

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

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 [MDC Writing Style Guide \(Revised August 2019\)](#)

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Office hours:

Tuesdays 11–1; Wednesday 2–4.

I am available by appointment in my office or for Zoom calls.

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.

Class Schedule

DATE	CLASS SESSION	Koester	Bauckham
Sept 13	Syllabus Issues in Understanding John Read John in one sitting		9–31 Read 73–206 at your own pace during the semester
Sept 20	The Theological Story Framing the theology of John	1–24	
Sept 27	Knowing God	25–52	
Oct 4	The World and Being Human	53–81	
Oct 9–15	Intensive Hybrid/Reading Week		
Oct 18	The Identity of Jesus (Pt 1) Read John in one sitting	82–107	
Oct 25	The Identity of Jesus (Pt 2)		239–69
Nov 1	The Role of the Jews & Judaism Paper on Issue/Topic due 11:59 p.m. Nov 3		207–38 Additional posted readings
Nov 8	Crucifixion and Resurrection Project Proposal due 11:59 p.m. Nov 8	108–132	
Nov 15	The Work of the Spirit Video on A2L (no class) Read John in one sitting	133–60	
Nov 22	Present and Future Faith	161–86	
Nov 29	Discipleship in the Community & World	187–214	
Dec 6	Close & Presentation of Projects Projects due Dec 6, 4 p.m. Projects presented in class		
	Reading Reports due 11:59 p.m., Dec 8		

Select Bibliography

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