

# MPTh 506—THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE

St. Ambrose University, Fall 2011

Professor: Dr. Micah Kiel

Office Hours: by appt.

Lower Chapel 110 (phone: 563-333-6121)

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*"To see what is in front of one's nose needs a constant struggle."*

- George Orwell

## I. Introduction and Course Goals

After completing this course, a student will be able to:

- Summarize the unique theological aspects of the Johannine corpus
- Describe how the Apocalypse is rooted in a specific historical time period.
- Evaluate the interpretation of a Johannine text in relationship to a specific ethical scenario or modern situation
- Discuss the special challenges involved in preaching on Johannine texts

## II. Textbooks

The primary text for the course is the Bible. Any reputable translation such as the NRSV, NJPS, NAB or NIV is acceptable (but no paraphrases!); students are encouraged to compare translations from time to time. You are also welcome (but not required) to use a critical study Bible, such as the Harper Collins Study Bible, the New Interpreters' Study Bible, the New Oxford Annotated Bible, or the Catholic Study Bible. The critical notes in these editions of the Bible often explain important or difficult features of the text. Two additional books will be required:

- Required:
  - Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Doubleday)
  - Excerpts from *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* by J. Louis Martyn
- Suggested:
  - "Feminist Hermeneutics" by Sandra M. Schneiders (pdf document)
  - "Wreaking Weakness" by Brian K. Blount (pdf document)

## III. Evaluation

You will be evaluated in the following three areas:

- Discussion/participation/preparation/Reading—30%
  - Given the intensive nature of the format of this course, it is important to have completed the reading assignments ahead of time. Take time to read the biblical texts closely and carefully, paying attention to details, and keeping record of any questions that arise from your reading. Asking good questions is the first step in good exegesis and interpretation.

- Exegesis Report and homily—40%
  - You should complete one exegesis report and one homily on a text of your choosing from the Gospel of John
- Bible Study Outline or Critical Reaction Papers—30%
  - You may either:
    - Prepare an outline for a two-week bible study on the Book of Revelation. (see details below)
    - Or, write two critical reaction papers to the articles by Schneiders and Blount. (see details below)

#### IV. Assignments and Course Calendar

##### To be completed before our first meeting:

- Reading from Raymond Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*
  - Refer to and read Brown's chapter on John, as necessary. Pages 364-379 are strongly suggested.
  - Also note Brown on Revelation, especially pp. 773-780 and 802-811
- Read chapters 1 and 2 of *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* by J. Louis Martyn
- Reading from NT
  - Read all of John's Gospel and the Johannine epistles (1, 2, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John)
  - Read as much of Revelation as possible, focusing on 1:1-3:22; 7:1-17; 13:11-18; 17:1-18

##### Saturday November 12

9:00 – 12:00

- Intro to John:
  - John vs. the Synoptics; Authorship; Structure, Literary Sources; Theological resources; John in the history of Scholarship
  - Focus on Prologue
  - Johannine Themes in selected texts:
    - 2:1-12; 3:1-21

1:00 – 3:00

- Focus on John 9 and the History of the community
  - Here we will focus particularly on chs. 1-2 (Part One) of J. L. Martyn's book, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*

7:15 – 9:15

- Symbolism and Sacraments
  - 6:1-59; 13:1-20
- Passion Narrative

- Chs. 18-19

### **Sunday November 13**

9:00 – 12:00

- John's resurrection accounts (chs. 20-21)
- Johannine Epistles

1:00 – 3:00

- Revelation
  - Focus on 1:1-3:22; 7:1-17; 13:11-18; 17:1-18

### **Final Assignments for Class \*Due Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>\***

Your Assignments Consist of Three Things:

One:

- One Exegesis Report on a text from John of your choosing (do not make it too long, but set your text in its literary context within the letter) 2 pages

Two:

- One Homily on your chosen text

Three: (Choose one of the two options)

- Write a critical response to each of the articles by Schneiders on feminist criticism and Blount on Revelation. These should NOT be longer than two pages and should include the following
  - First, a concise summary of the argument of the author
  - Second, an evaluation of the argument based on your own assessment of the textual evidence
  - Third, a reaction to the author's argument

—Or—

- Prepare a two-week Bible study on Revelation:
  - Prepare an outline for a two-week bible study on the Book of Revelation. Your planning should include (1) a two-page introduction to Revelation that will orient parishioners to the book and how to study it (2) an outline and discussion questions for leading an exploration of two selected texts in Revelation and (3) an outline and discussion questions for leading an exploration of how Revelation can and should be read today.
- **These assignments are due to the instructor by email on Thursday Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**
  - [kielmicahd@sau.edu](mailto:kielmicahd@sau.edu)