

NT 350: Writings of John

Spring 2027

Class Location TBD | Tuesday/Thursday Time TBD

Instructor Information

Name: Zach Porter

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This class will explore the interpretation of the New Testament texts traditionally attributed to the disciple John: the gospel and the three letters. It will identify interpretive strategies and apply these interpretation principles to the texts themselves. The course will explore the content of these texts, their relation to surrounding texts associated with the New Testament, and their influence on religious history and theology.

Required Texts

- Bible (NASB20)

All additional readings will be made available for download. See the bibliography for a list of sources.

Course Objectives

1. Develop and demonstrate skills for effective academic study of the Bible:
 - a. Observation — read passages in light of the surrounding literary context (paragraph, segment, book as a whole), identify the conceptual relationships between different units of text, explain how those relationships contribute to the meaning of the text, and raise interpretive questions based on main themes and the structure of the text.
 - b. Interpretation — collect relevant evidence for answering interpretive questions from the literary context, word usage, historical background, and interpretation of others in order to arrive at conclusions grounded in evidence from the text.
 - c. Integration — connect the interpretation of individual passages with the broader themes and teaching of the entire canon, with historic confessions of the Church, and with traditional discussions and categories in theology.
 - d. Application — explore how the teaching of a passage, situated within its broader biblical and theological context, can be applied to a contemporary situation to provide guidance, encouragement, illumination, or correction.
2. Understand the content of the gospel and letters of John:

- a. General content — be able to describe the contents of the texts studied without reference to a printed text.
- b. Key passages — identify significant passages and interpret them contextually.
- c. Themes — describe the major themes of the gospel and letters of John and how they are developed throughout the texts.
- d. Theology — explain how the themes contribute to the larger theology of the entire canon and historic articulations of Christian theology.

Grading (1000 points)

Class Participation (150 points)

Assignments (600 points)

Final Assignment (250 points)

Course Grade

A	900+
B	800–899
C	700–799
D	600–699
F	0–599

Class Participation (150 points)

Attendance and class participation is essential for success in the course. The lectures will cover the content of the writings of John but they will also introduce and model the methods and practices that students will be expected to use in their assignments. Students will be expected to come to class ready to discuss the results of their work with one another and to collaborate on in-class exercises as a way of helping one another grow in their skills and understanding. Each day that you are absent without an approved excuse, you will lose **5 points** from your class participation grade.

Assignments (600 points)

There will be twelve regular assignments due over the course of the semester each worth 50 points. These assignments will involve direct study of the writings of John and are designed to help students practice the methods and techniques of Bible study discussed in class. Any additional resources required for the assignments such as commentaries, bible dictionary entries, etc. will be provided along with the assignment. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed at least a week in advance of when the assignment is due.

Final Assignment (250 points)

The final assignment will be similar in content to the weekly assignments except that it will be larger in scope and involve all aspects of biblical interpretation covered in the course. This will be an opportunity for students to synthesize all of the skills they have been practicing and knowledge they have gained of the writings of John into a significant exercise in interpretation.

Schedule

Day	Topic	Due
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T Jan. 12	Introductions, Overview, and Intro to Biblical Interpretation	
R Jan. 14	Whole Book Survey, Literary Context	
T Jan. 19	Overview of the Gospel of John	Assignment A
R Jan. 21	Overview (cont.), Segment Survey, Structural Relationships	
T Jan. 26	John 1:1–18, Raising Interpretive Questions	Assignment B
R Jan. 28	John 1:19–2:22, Old Testament Background	
T Feb. 2	John 2:23–4:54, Word Usage	Assignment C
R Feb. 4	John 2:23–4:54, Historical Background	
T Feb. 9	John 5:1–11:54, Interpretation of Others	Assignment D
R Feb. 11	John 5:1–11:54	
T Feb. 16	John 5:1–11:54	Assignment E
R Feb. 18	John 5:1–11:54	
T Feb. 23	John 11:55–12:50	Assignment F
Day	Topic	Due
R Feb. 25	John 13:1–14:31	
T Mar. 2	John 15:1–16:33	Assignment G
R Mar. 4	John 17:1–26	
T Mar. 9	John 18:1–19:42	Assignment H
R Mar. 11	John 18:1–19:42	
T Mar. 16	Spring Break (No Class)	
R Mar. 18	Spring Break (No Class)	
T Mar. 23	John 20:1–31	Assignment I
R Mar. 25	John 21:1–25	
T Mar. 30	Overview of 1 John	Assignment J
R Apr. 1	1 John 1:1–4	
T Apr. 6	1 John 1:5–2:29	Assignment K

R Apr. 8	1 John 3:1–5:21	
T Apr. 13	1 John 3:1–5:21	Assignment L
R Apr. 15	2 John, 3 John	
T Apr. 20	Theology of John	
R Apr. 22	Theology of John	
T Apr. 27	Theology of John	Final Assignment

Classroom Policies

Screens. I do not wish to see any laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices being used in the class. If there are extenuating circumstances that require you to need such a device in class, then let me know and I can make an accommodation. Otherwise, screens will only distract you and the people around you. If you need to make a quick call or text, please step out of the class, take care of it, and quietly come back in. This is ultimately in your best interest and will help you and your classmates get more out of the lectures and discussions.

Attendance. The expectation for this course is that you attend all of the lectures and participate in the discussions. If you have a valid excuse for missing a lecture make sure to email the instructor and let them know, otherwise, five points will be deducted from your attendance grade for each class period that you miss.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism and any form of cheating will not be tolerated. The use of generative AI to complete assignments or portions of assignments is a form of cheating and will also likely involve plagiarism. You must cite any source that you use in order to give appropriate credit and recognition to the author.

Class Recordings. Video and audio recordings are not permitted during the class unless the student has received prior permission.

Bibliography

Selections will be assigned and provided from the following works to be read as part of the weekly assignments.

Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*.

Second edition. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017.

Bauer, David R., and Robert Angelo Traina. *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*. Baker Academic, 2011.

Beasley-Murray, George Raymond. *John*. Word Biblical Commentary 36. Word Books, Publ, 1987.

Green, Joel B., ed. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Second Edition. IVP Academic, 2013.

Keener, Craig S. and InterVarsity Press, eds. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Second Edition. InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Marshall, Ian Howard. *The Epistles of John*. Nachdr. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Eerdmans, 2009.

Michaels, J. Ramsey. *The Gospel of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2010.

Smalley, Stephen S. *1,2,3 John*. Rev. ed. Word Biblical Commentary 51. Nelson, 2007.