HS 2881: DON BOSCO FOUNDER
SYLLABUS
A SURVEY OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO IN HISTORICAL
CONTEST—THE AGE OF EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS

This 14-week long course (September to December) surveys the life and times of John
Melchior Bosco ("Don Bosco," 1815-1888) up to 1861 (1862), with particular attention to
nineteenth-century political, social and religious history. The better part of Don Bosco's life is set
in the turbulent period of the post-Napoleonic Restoration and of the liberal revolutions that
followed—the times of the Italian Risorgimento and national unification. Hence the historical
context, as events affected Don Bosco's life and work as well as Church and society at large,
acquires important biographical significance.

This survey looks at Don Bosco's education, at his spiritual and theological formation
leading to his priestly ordination (1841) in the times of the "Restoration." It discusses his
vocational choices and his work on behalf of poor young people at risk, as well as his subsequent
expanded apostolic commitments, especially in the field of education. It examines the growth of
the work, and the founding and initial development of the Society of St. Francis de Sales created
to continue that work (1859), in the context of the liberal revolution and the unification of Italy.

FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY OF THE COURSE

1. Classroom Instruction
   Classroom instruction is imparted by the composite method of lecture, student
   interaction, and discussion particularly on the basis of readings assigned.

2. Prerequisites for the Course
   (1) Elementary knowledge of the history of Western Europe from the French
       Revolution (1789) through the nineteenth century—highly desirable
   (2) A general knowledge of Don Bosco and his work, such as may be obtained
       through the reading of a current biography

3. Course Requirements
   (1) Attendance at all class sessions
   (2) Participation in discussions
   (3) Completion of reading assignments
   (4) Writing and submitting reflection papers as assigned

4. Reading Requirements
   (1) Basic Text: A. Lenti, Don Bosco: History and Spirit, Volumes 1 (2nd ed.), 2 and 3
       (1) Specific reading, as assigned for each topic
       (2) Instructor's Notes: as made available

BASIC (MOSTLY) ENGLISH-LANGUAGE READING LIST

1. Memoirs of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855. The Autobiography
   of Saint John Bosco, tr. by Daniel Lyons, SDB, with notes and commentary by Eugenio
   Ceria, SDB, Lawrence Castelvecchi, SDB and Michael Mendl, SDB (New Rochelle, NY:
   Don Bosco Publications, 1989). — MO-En
   (a) This is a translation (with introduction and notes) of San Giovanni Bosco,
   Memorie dell'Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales dal 1815 al 1855, a cura di Eugenio
   Ceria (Torino: SEI, 1846). Ceria's edition is carefully, though not critically, based on
   archival manuscripts by Don Bosco. (See separate discussion). — MO-Ce

(c) A definitive critical edition (with extensive introduction and notes) based on Don Bosco’s archival manuscripts has most recently been published: Giovanni Bosco, Memorie dell’Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales dal 1815 al 1855. Saggio introduttivo e note storiche a cura di Aldo Giraudo (Roma: LAS, 2011). — **MO-Gir**


This is a translation of Giovanni Bonetti, *Cinque Lustri di Storia dell’Oratorio Salesiano fondato dal Sac. Don Giovanni Bosco* Torino: [Tipografia Salesiana], 1892 (published after Fr. Bonetti’s death under Fr. G.B. Francesca’s supervision). *Cinque Lustri* in turn is an adaptation of [Giovanni Bonetti], “Storia dell’Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales,” published serially in *Bollettino Salesiano* from 1879 to 1886. — **Bonetti, Storia and S Lustri**

3. Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, Angelo Amadei, and Eugenio Ceria, *Memorie Biografiche di Don (San) Giovanni Bosco*, vol. I-IX (1898-1939), based, but not critically, on archival and other sources: — Vol. 1-9 (1898-1917) are by Lemoyne); vol. 10 (1939) by Amadei; vol. 11-19 (1930-1939) by Ceria. — **IBM**


This is a translation (with additions by David de Burgh) of Morand Wirth, *Don Bosco et les Salésiens: Cent-cinquante ans d’histoire / Don Bosco e i Salesiani. Centocinquant’anni di Storia* (Torino-Leumann: LDC, 1969); published simultaneously in French and Italian.


This is a completely re-written, updated and expanded edition of the above. Highly recommended.