BSSP 1066, 1067, 1068 courses: FAQ's

answered by Barbara Green, O.P., who sponsors these courses from DSPT

1. What are these courses? These are three distinct modules, of 1 ½ units each, designed to provide some background for studying the Bible and/or working with it in terms of biblical spirituality. They consist of (usually) 12 lectures, provided on a cd, with readings to accompany. You manage them independently and meet with me when you are finished to do the completion exercise. So they are not in-the-classroom nor are they online, but closer to independent study, except that what to do is pretty set.

2. What are they about, do they cover? The first one, BSSP 1066 (once called module A), reviews the basic biblical storyline: what happened, when, why important, and so forth. It provides the basic framework into which all Bible events fit. The second, BSSP 1067 (once called B), reviews the basic critical methods appropriate for academic graduate biblical study. It assumes you know the basic storyline events. The third course, BSSP 1068 (once known as C), was designed for Biblical Studies and/or Christian Spirituality students who need background in interpretation; it manages hermeneutics, Jewish and Christian pre-critical interpretation, and some intertextuality. (You need to know these were once called A, B, and C since the syllabus still calls them that, as do the cds refer to them with that nomenclature.)

3. What do I need to do to proceed? Please start with your advisor, asking what s/he knows and thinks about what you need. Consult me as needed, but not first, please. If your advisor thinks you might need one of these, then contact me and we can talk and you can decide how to proceed.

4. Which shall I take? The best thing for almost everyone who has done this is to start at 1066 and take it first and when that is completed, the 1067. Unless you already know a lot about the whole Bible, you need the framework; virtually everyone needs the methods. Unless you know you need the hermeneutics, best to avoid it, since it is significantly harder than the other two. If your school/program require an introduction to OT, the 1066 and 1067 suit that well; they are not at the same level as the Pentateuch, prophets, or wisdom requirements that most schools require in the MDiv program, but more basic.

5. How does it work? Once you and your advisor decide you need to proceed, you tell me, get the PIN, register, and then get the cd (for a charge of $5) and the download of syllabus and reader. You manage on your own, contact me as you need to. When you are ready for the final exam/conference, e-mail me for an appointment time, and we will finish up in an oral session, and then I turn in your grade. (I will not be contacting you; you contact me as needed.)

6. When shall I register? The whole point of these is to make them convenient for you to take at any time, including intersession and summer. But you want to register for them in the semester when you plan to complete the course, so we don’t have to cope with the incomplete process. So you might tell me that you want to do one in the summer, and we can proceed; but you will pre-register for it to take it officially the next fall and complete it for it to be on your fall
transcript. But if you finish in the summer, that’s good; the computer doesn’t have to know. The registrar/computer system has to be obeyed, but there are ways to suit our needs as well, if we are flexible and clear in a way the computer is not able to be.

7. **What if my plans change and I can’t finish when I thought I could, when the computer thinks I will?** This happens. The crucial thing is to communicate with me about it, and to be ready to manage the paperwork needed (either an incomplete or a drop, with the intent to add it back later). Do not assume it will work out or go away if you do nothing, since I will have to turn in grades at least six weeks after the end of the semester. If I have not heard from you, you might get a dispreferred letter of the alphabet. Grades can be changed, but let’s try to minimize all that paperwork by communicating timely.

8. **How do I get ready for the “exit interview,” aka the exam?** The first recorded lecture for each course basically tells you what to expect, but feel free to ask, if you want more information. Often as students get close to completing a course, they want to make an appointment (or have an e-mail exchange) to discuss expectations. The point of the exit interview/exam is simply to verify that you in fact listened carefully and learned, in general, what was on offer. Students have managed it in various ways, so ask if you feel the need to pin it down a bit.

9. **What if my school doesn’t allow courses that are less than 3 units?** Well, for most schools that is not a problem. For one it is, so if you attend that school (located on LeRoy Avenue), the normal thing is to sign for a SRC 9999 and indicate that you will be taking BSSP 1066 and 1067. The registrar is a veteran of this process, and so it will work out. But you can’t quit midway through, have to finish each course before you get your grade and units. What I would like to discourage any from doing is to try the same with BSSP 1068, assuming that I will be the instructor for the other ½ units; let’s not do that, please. If you are in an MA program (rather than an MDiv, you also are not encouraged or permitted to take courses that are not 3 units; so if you need or what these two, again, talk to me about registering for them as a SRC 9999. We just need to be sure we all know what we are doing.

10. **Other????** If you have other questions, ask them: bgreen@dspt.edu (or 510 883-2076)