NT 2251: The Gospel of John
Dr. Barbara Green, O.P., instructor (DSPT)
Spring 2016; 3 units
Mondays, Thursdays: 12:40-2 DSPT 1

Central Course Question: How can we best approach this deep text both critically and reflectively so as to understand it as fully as possible, with the result that it is helpful to ourselves and others in prayer, spirituality, and ministry?

Course Outcomes: We will progress on this central question by accomplishing the following and demonstrating these achievements in class participation, in official discussions, and in written assignments:

• a practical awareness of the historical and sociological realities of the 1st century (Roman and Jewish) and a capacity to take them into consideration as is feasible;

• a grasp of the shape of the gospel and the significance of the shape;

• a familiarity with the basic themes and claims of the gospel;

• a practical understanding of its literary features, notably the role of the narrator, the aspects of characterization, the particularities of discourse, the role of misunderstanding;

• recognition of some of the many ways in which the gospel resonates with and counts on material in the HB/OT;

• the liturgical claims the gospel makes, drawing on Judaism and going beyond it;

• some demonstrable awareness of how John differs from the synoptic gospels;

• the capacity to find articles relevant to topics of study and to cite them correctly.

Course Requirements:
• regular, prepared, usefully participating presence in (virtually) every class;

• participation in a study group of 2-3, meeting on your own time to process learning;

• appropriate participation in a short oral exam on the whole gospel right after RW;

• competent completion 5 short (2-3 page) responses to questions;

• useful participation in a short oral presentation to the class at the end of the course;

• demonstrated capacity to find, cite correctly and use periodical literature on the gospel.
**Required Materials:** Please find here the basic materials that will most usefully inform our study; have access to them for study (whether you buy them or use them on closed library reserve); for each session, the relevant readings will be specified, and you will choose what will work best for you. The ISBN and cost are provided for the ones you are most likely to purchase. The library exegesis shelf has good materials too, as do the stacks. We will practice on how to find good articles (relatively) easily.


Brown, Raymond E., edited by Moloney, F. *An Introduction to the Gospel of John.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. (this you can read in the library);


Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998; this is the most required one: ISBN is 0-8146-5806-7); $30 at amazon;


Thatcher, Tom and Stephen Moore, ed. *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008. (the most optional)

**Grading:**
- Attendance and participation pre-RW 1/12
- Attendance and participation post-RW 1/12
- the midway through the course/first reading of the gospel oral exam 2/12
- the final oral presentation 2/12
- written question # 1 1/12
- written question # 2 1/12
- written question # 3 1/12
- written question # 4 1/12
- written question # 5 1/12
- bibliography assignment 1/12
**Relevant Policies:** Be advised of several:

- Students are expected to attend every class, prepared and participating helpfully for the whole group; if you need to miss a session, please inform the instructor by e-mail either before or shortly thereafter; no notification will be construed as an un-excused absence. When you miss a session, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and get any handouts that were available; you might have a “buddy” that will do automatically this for you for him or her. You may not “miss what you missed,” but I will notice it in two senses.

- All written work must be presented in conformity with Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) (or if you’ve started here since 2013, use the 8th edition).

- Assignments need to be completed and turned in on time and will be graded down if they are late; assume no revision option. Exceptions to deadlines are sometimes possible but rare and gained ahead of time. Anticipate that I can be helpful to you, but possibly not at the last minute. Schedule early what you might need.

- Be sure you know, understand, and follow the policies on academic honesty that are pertinent to GTU, DSPT and your own school.

- The GTU and DSPT policies relating to disability pertain and are available on websites; communicate with me as needed according to those directions.

**Course Communication:**

- To make an appointment with the instructor, please e-mail: bgreen@dspt.edu or telephone (510 883-2076). Brief matters can be handled after class. There are no standard office hours but your requests for consultation time will be addressed promptly. In general, I am available Mondays through Thursdays but not Fridays. My office is at DSPT, room 208.

- Assume that you will work collaboratively with the instructor (consultation appointments are encouraged), with one or two other students in a study group, with a partner or two on assignments (if you wish); a list of your names and e-mail addresses will be available once you have released that information for us to share.

- The study groups will report to me once a week using a format provided at the end of this syllabus. Please see to this without needing to be prompted more than the one time I will do it.

**Course Schedule:** What follows is generally reliable. But assume, expect, that I will update the material as well by giving you a syllabus supplement. When that happens, the supplement is more recent and reliable than this schedule. But the main things will remain as they are here.
PROLOGUE/INTRODUCTIONS

class # 1: February 1 syllabus and other introductions to the course
read: Gospel text:

secondary material: syllabus; Brown/Moloney ch. 9;
***read Carter as quickly as you can do;
***read Brown/Moloney chs. 1-6 for the main points by end RW;

focus question: what do we need to know to make this course work well?

anticipate: we will go over the syllabus and especially assignments

assignment due: Between now and the start of class # 13, do the following assignment and turn it in when you are ready: for a text of your choice, find three useful articles on a section of the gospel that you choose and submit then in footnote and bibliography form according to Turabian (note that she follows that format in ch. 17 in both editions); you may have two tries at this—since it must be exactly correct; failing that, you fail for this 1/12. Suggestion: get this out of the way (or at least started) in plenty of time, since start of class #13 is the last deadline. At the end of the syllabus is a convenient form to help us all.

PART ONE: OUR FIRST READING OF THE GOSPEL

class # 2: February 4 PROLOGUE

read: Gospel text: 1:1-18
secondary material: Moloney pp. 1-31; Coloe, ch. 2; Carter ch. 1, 2

focus question: what information does the prologue provide, and how?

anticipate: we will discuss this portion of text and pick up any other preliminary questions we have time to cover as well

class # 3: February 8 BOOK OF SIGNS

read: Gospel text: 1:19–2:11
secondary material: Moloney pp. 33-74;

focus question: how does the gospel set up the early days of Jesus’ ministry, notably as signs?

anticipate: we will go over the key issues of the text, lecture/discussion style
class # 4: February 11

read: Gospel text: 2:12-4
secondary material: Moloney pp. 75-164; Carter, ch. 5

focus question: what key points emerge from the discourses between Jesus and key characters?

anticipate: come prepared to work briefly in small groups to generate our starting points

class # 5: February 18

read: Gospel text: 5:10
secondary material: Moloney pp. 165-321; Carter, ch. 4, 7

focus question: with an eye to the structure we have been working with, what are the key purposes we can hypothesize are being accomplished in this diverse set of material?

anticipate: Your first written assignment is on the material of John 6 (due in a week): As you (may) know, John's gospel will not have a Eucharist account at the supper on the night of the arrest; come with one insight you think organizes John 6 and explain how it serves what the other gospels provide at the LS; 3 pages, so be succinct, drawing on what you are learning so far. Please anticipate that I may have changed the question and expect it on a syllabus supplement.

class # 6: February 22

read: Gospel text: 5-10, cont.
secondary material: cont.

focus question: How does John 9 generate various questions, various kinds of questions?

anticipate: lecture/discussion on this crucial text

class # 7: February 25

read: Gospel text: 11-12
secondary material: Moloney pp. 322-369;

focus question: as we come to the end of the book of signs, why is this the greatest? How does it
culminate all the signs?

anticipate: lecture/discussion

assignment due: first short writing assignment on John 6, due hard copy, as class starts

class # 8: February 29 BOOK OF GLORY

read: Gospel text: 13
secondary material: Moloney pp. 370-391;

focus question: Given what you are learning of the evangelist, what does he aim to do with the washing of the feet at this moment, rather than the sharing of bread and wine?

anticipate: short class processing of the question, then discussion; this material provides your second short writing assignment (due in a week): How does the conversation among participants suit the action performed? Have a single point you explicate (not many points you can’t explain [as before, the question may change])

class # 9: March 3

read: Gospel text: 14-15
secondary material: Moloney pp. 391-436; Carter ch. 6, 8

focus question: how is this material organized?

anticipate: we will quickly gather possibilities for organization, then sort and amplify them

class # 10: March 7

read: Gospel text: 16-17
secondary material: Moloney pp. 436-82;

focus question: what imagery does Jesus engage in this set of material, and why?

anticipate: lecture/discussion

assignment due: second short writing assignment on John 13
class # 11: March 10
read: Gospel text: 18-19
secondary material: Moloney pp. 482-515; Carter ch. 3

focus question: what are the specific issues raised in this long scene, and by whom?

anticipate: lecture discussion
assignment due: be sure that your group has scheduled a time to meet with me in the week after RW so we can do your midway through the semester oral exam; start the negotiation early, since it will not be particularly easy to find slots! Initiative is yours here.

class # 12: March 14
read: Gospel text: 20
secondary material: Moloney pp. 515-42;

focus question: how is this signal event of the gospel a culmination of what we have seen?

anticipate: lecture/discussion

class # 13: March 17 EPILOGUE
read: Gospel text: 21
secondary material: Moloney pp. 542-68;

focus question: Brown's suggestion is that this chapter is best seen as the redactor's, as distinct from the evangelist; how does it wrap the gospel? How does it correlate with the prologue?

anticipate:

assignment due: the last shot at the bibliography assignment detailed at class #1 is due today;
PART TWO: SPECIAL TOPICS AS WE RE-READ

class # 14: March 31

read: Gospel text: nothing specific

secondary material: Brown/Moloney, ch. 1, excursus; Schneiders, part one; Culpepper chs.1-3; Bennema ch. Introduction, 1 Thatcher and Moore pp. 1-35

focus question: role of the narrator and its interface with other “authorial” issues

anticipate: we shift from one way of reading (commentary and exegesis) to moves that are more interpretive and methodological

assignment due: The midway-through oral exams are this week (sheet of preparation suggestions will be available; this is big picture, not tiny detail)

class # 15: April 4

read: Gospel text: John 4

secondary material: Culpepper ch.4; Schneiders chs. 8, 15; Bennema chs.9-10; Thatcher and Moore ch.

focus question: plotting at various levels: what is it, how does it work?

anticipate: though lots of the material is “talk,” the plotting is crucial as well; your third short assignment is on plotting will be due at class #17: choose a short passage (from ch. 2 or 3) and see if you can distinguish the implied author plan, the narrator plan, and the character plans

class # 16: April 7

read: Gospel text: John 5, 7

secondary material: Culpepper ch.5, 7; Schneiders ch. 9; Bennema ch. 11; Thatcher and Moore pp. 93-119

focus question: characterization: how are characters presented to us, and what leeway do readers have?

anticipate: some interaction over how we read these minor characters
class # 17: April 11
read: Gospel text: John 9
secondary material: Schneiders ch. 9; Bennema chs. 12, 13, 16;
Thatcher and Moore pp.55-76;

focus question: characterization, cont.

anticipate: some mapping of the various ways to interrogate a text: historical, literary, reader-centered, and how these intersect

assignment due: third short writing assignment on plotting is due today

class # 18: April 14
read: Gospel text: John 11
secondary material: Schneiders ch. 10; Bennema chs. 17, 18, 19;

focus question: character discourse: how do we listen critically to how characters converse?

anticipate: we will work with the speakers here, major and minor; anticipate that your next short assignment will be to choose a passage we have done and work with the literary tool of misunderstanding, where characters offer information that is not accurate so we can open up deeper levels; you will be working with an example we have not done in class

class # 19: April 18
read: Gospel text: John 13
secondary material: Schneiders chs. 8, 12; Bennema chs. 20-25; Culpepper ch. 6

focus question: johannine misunderstanding

anticipate: lecture/discussion to correlate these literary facets

class # 20: April 21
read: Gospel text: John 13, 15

secondary material: Schneiders, ch. 4; Thatcher and Moore pp. 221-35;
focus question: symbolism: what is it? How does it work?

anticipate: lecture/discussion

assignment due: fourth short writing assignment on character discourse
class # 21: April 25

read:     Gospel text: John 2-4
          secondary material: Coloe, chs. 3-5;

focus question: how does the Jewish liturgical calendar function in the gospel?

anticipate: we will begin to set this question up

class # 22: April 28

read:     Gospel text: John 7, 10, 14
          secondary material: Coloe, chs. 6-8;

focus question: the Jewish liturgical calendar, cont.

anticipate: your fifth short writing assignment will center on some aspect of what claim the gospel is making about how the Jesus-community will worship

class # 23: May 2

read:     Gospel text: John 7-8; 18-19
          secondary material: Coloe, chs. 9-10; Bennema chs.3-4;

focus question: anti-semitism/Jewish supersessionism

anticipate: we need to unpack this major question in NT/this gospel

class # 24: May 5

read:     Gospel text: tba
          secondary material: Brown/Moloney ch. 7

focus question: other key questions: we’ll see what they are;
anticipate: lecture/discussion
assignment due: fifth short writing assignment on feasts replaced/enhanced

class # 25: May 9

read:     Gospel text: John 20, 21
          secondary material: Schneiders chs.13-15; Thatcher and Moore ch.

focus question: how does the gospel manage question of eschatology?

anticipate: lecture/discussion
class # 26: May12

read: Gospel text: tba

secondary material:

focus question:

anticipate:

assignment due:

**EPILOGUE/WRAP:** Expect that we will have a set of useful completion questions for short group presentation in these last two sessions; this is your last assignment, and the point is to show not only what but how you have learned to manage the gospel

class # 27: May 16

class # 28: May 19

**Format for study group reporting:** Each group, once assembled and constituted, will have a letter of the alphabet (e.g., “group A,” comprising (names); fill in that you are reporting on a discussion of classes # (e.g., 4 and 5) and in no more than three sentences, indicate what you worked on and the main result (e.g., “we worked on why the prologue is considered so important and came up with three reasons scholars give and added our own.” No more than that, please, but please provide that information. Groups need to be checked in by the end of class # 4.

**Assignment on finding references:** Please indicate what edition of Turabian you are using (it will be 7th or 8th) and then find the page where she provides you each model (e.g., how to cite each article in both a note and as bibliography; indicate exactly where you are looking for each that you provide (e.g., Turabian 8th 17.2.2).

Name: ________________________ Turabian edition ________

1) entry as note, as bibliography; Turabian entry you copied

2) entry as note, as bibliography; Turabian entry you copied

3) entry as note, as bibliography; Turabian entry you copied
**Tracking your grade:** Since there are a lot of factors, this grid will help you keep track and let you know how I will be doing the same. You will have all these grades except the attendance and participation, which you can ask for if you like.

Name_________________________ Final Grade: __________

• Attendance and participation pre-RW 1/12 _____; • A and P post-RW 1/12 _____

• the midway through the course/first reading of the gospel oral exam 2/12 _____ _____

• written question # 1 1/12 _____ • written question # 2 1/12 _____

• written question # 3 1/12 _____ • written question # 4 1/12 _____

• written question # 5 1/12 _____ • bibliography assignment 1/12 _____

• the final oral presentation 2/12 _____ _____