

St. Peter's Seminary/King's University College  
at *the* University of Western Ontario

SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY 5241A

## SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION I

Fall 2016, Thursdays, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Aquinas House Lounge

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office hours: Mondays, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A biblical, historical, and systematic study of baptism and confirmation. Special emphasis is given to reflecting on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in light of the Catholic tradition.

### GOALS

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes:

#### *Knowledge*

1. familiarity with the textual sources of the history of baptism & confirmation
2. an understanding of the deeper theological meaning of the symbols and actions of the rites
3. a critical, well-informed approach to ongoing questions and issues in the practice of Christian initiation
4. a sense of the dignity of all the baptized, and its implications for other areas of theology, such as ecclesiology, ecumenism and theology of orders

#### *Skills*

1. an understanding of how to celebrate the rites well, and to make pastoral-liturgical decisions in an informed and intelligent manner
2. the ability to articulate, express, and evaluate distinct theologies of the rites in the life of the Church
3. the ability to interpret the rites mystagogically, both creatively and critically

### *Attitudes*

1. awareness of the central place of baptism in Christian identity and spirituality
2. care for those seeking Christian initiation, with sensitivity to their pastoral needs
3. concern for the value of rich, well-celebrated liturgical rites
4. a commitment to deepening understanding of one's own baptismal identity, and its importance as a foundation in ministry

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The above goals will be met by:

1. well-prepared and vigorous "full, conscious, and active participation" in class discussions and exercises, including brief class preparation exercises
2. short paper of 5 pages, due Oct. 20
3. a practical exercise consisting of one of (1) a mystagogical homily, (2) a field observation, or (3) a case study, due Nov. 24
4. the final exam, which may be either written or oral.

Grading will be determined as follows:

short paper:	25%
practical exercise:	30%
exam:	30%
class preparation & participation:	15%

## TEXTS

### *Required*

Catholic Church. *Rite of Baptism of Children*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987.

Catholic Church. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987.

Johnson, Maxwell E. *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*. Revised ed. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007.

Whitaker, E. C. *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*. Revised and expanded by Maxwell E. Johnson. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

## Recommended

Catholic Church. *Order of Confirmation*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016.

Johnson, Maxwell E., ed. *Living Water, Sealing Spirit*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995.

Yarnold, Edward. *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Christian Initiation*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994.

## TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Sept. 8	Introduction Baptism in the New Testament	Mark 1; Matthew 3; Matthew 28; Luke 3; John 1; John 3; Romans 6; Titus 3
Sept. 15	Origins of Christian Initiation Initiation in the Pre-Nicene East & West	Johnson, Chapter 1 Johnson, Chapters 2–3
Sept. 22	Initiation in the East, 4th & 5th Centuries	Johnson, Chapter 4
Sept. 29	Initiation in the West, 4th & 5th Centuries Lent & Baptismal Preparation	Johnson, Chapter 5 Johnson, 201–218
Oct. 6	Initiation in the Christian East & Medieval West	Johnson, Chapter 6–7
Oct. 13	Initiation in the Reformation	Johnson, Chapter 8
Oct. 20	Tridentine Initiation Rites Vatican II Reforms	Johnson, 362–373 Johnson, 375–391
Oct. 27	<i>Break Week</i> (no class)	
Nov. 3	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>	Johnson, 391–402; <i>RCIA</i>
Nov. 10	Rites for Reception	Johnson, 409–431; <i>RCIA</i> appendix
Nov. 17	<i>Rite of Baptism for Children</i> The Question of Infant Baptism	Johnson, 402–409; <i>RBC</i> Johnson, 439–444
Nov. 24	<i>Rite of Confirmation</i> The Confirmation Problem	Johnson, 444–450
Dec. 1	Baptismal Spirituality	Johnson, Chapter 10

## ASSIGNMENTS

### *Short Papers*

The subject of this paper will be chosen to answer one question from the list below. Based on the material covered in the course and in the course reading, each essay should not be more than 5 pages and should deal with the historical, theological and pastoral dimensions of the topic. Each essay will require some research and critical thought. Students are welcome to consider other issues, but should consult with the instructor if they would like to consider a question not on the list. The paper is due **October 20**.

- What is the importance of the catechumenate in the process of Christian initiation?
- What role does (or should) the fifty days of the Easter season have in the process of Christian initiation?
- Is there any justification for the Rite of Confirmation today?
- Why should we (or should we not) withhold communion from baptized infants today?
- When is the Holy Spirit “given” in Christian initiation?
- When and how should children born of believing, active members of the church be initiated? What about children of believing, non-active members?
- What is the meaning of the role of godparents?
- What is the role of the baptismal name in the rites of initiation?

### *Practical Exercise*

Students may choose to write one of the following: (1) a mystagogical homily, (2) a field observation report, or (3) a case study response. This assignment will be due **November 24**.

For the mystagogical homily option, write a 10- to 12-minute homily to open up the meaning of one liturgical unit (symbol, gesture, text or combination of these) in the RCIA process. The target audience would primarily be the newly baptized, and secondarily a whole parish community. Taking the mystagogical homilies in Yarnold’s *Awe-Inspiring Rites* as an inspiration and rough model, correlate the liturgical symbol itself with both biblical narratives and human experience. Reveal to your audience the depth of what the rite communicates and effects in those who have celebrated it.

For the field observation, observe a celebration of Christian initiation, whether adult initiation at the Easter vigil, infant baptism, or confirmation. Materials will be provided to guide the process of doing participant observation of ritual. Observe and participate in the event, and then immediately afterward, take note of everything that you observed, and make initial guesses as to

what it communicated (both intentionally and unintentionally!). Distill your observation and interpretation into a report of 5 to 8 pages.

For the case study response, reflect on one instance in your own pastoral experience being involved in the preparation, planning, or celebration of any rite of Christian initiation. Reflect on the decisions that were made, the issues that emerged, and the operative theology that was held by those involved (both explicitly and implicitly). Describe the circumstances, discussions, and events that took place, and relate the underlying issues and questions to a critical, evaluative understanding of Christian initiation, informed by its history and theology, as appropriate. This paper should be no more than 8 pages.

### *Final Exam*

The final examination will be an oral or written examination, as each student prefers. Written exams will be on the regular examination schedule, and oral exams will be scheduled during Examination Week, at a mutually agreeable time. Students will be responsible for all of the material covered in class. A study guide will be provided ahead of time.

## UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS & SUPPORT SERVICES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

### *Submission of Assignments*

It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

### *Plagiarism*

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense.

Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for textual similarity review with the software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for

the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### *Selection and Registration of Courses*

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

### *Support Services*

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan): <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Services for Students with Disabilities at King's, is available at <http://tinyurl.com/nln6kpb>.

For emotional/mental health assistance see specifically: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>.

The web site for Academic Support Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>.

These services are not meant to replace those offered at the Seminary, but may be beneficial to our students after consultation with the appropriate instructors, administrators, and formators.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Austin, Gerard. *Anointing with the Spirit: The Rite of Confirmation*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985.

Beasley-Murray, George Raymond. *Baptism in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1973.

Cramer, Peter. *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages, c.200–c.1150*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Denysenko, Nicholas E. *Chrismation: A Primer for Catholics*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014.

Ferguson, Everett. *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009.

- Fisher, J. D. C. *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*. Liturgy Training Publications, 2004.
- Gabrielli, Timothy R. *Confirmation: How a Sacrament of God's Grace Became All about Us*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013.
- Johnson, Maxwell E. *Images of Baptism*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001.
- Joncas, Michael. *Preaching the Rites of Christian Initiation*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994.
- Kavanagh, Aidan. *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1978.
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- McDonnell, Kilian. *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Radcliffe, Timothy. *Take the Plunge: Living Baptism and Confirmation*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Spinks, Bryan D. *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006.
- Tufano, Victoria M. *Celebrating the Rites of Adult Initiation: Pastoral Reflections*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992.
- Turner, Paul. *Ages of Initiation: The First Two Christian Millennia*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Confirmation: The Baby in Solomon's Court*. Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2006.