

Mondays 9:30-12:30, St. Peter's Seminary, Room 102

Instructor: Andrea Di Giovanni

Email: [adigiov2@uwo.ca](mailto:adigiov2@uwo.ca)

Office hours: Room 328. Mondays 1-3pm or by appointment.

### A. Course Description

A careful examination of key theological themes addressed in selected Scriptural books: the role of the Psalms in the Church's prayer and praise; the question of theodicy in the Book of Job; the importance of the letter to the Hebrews in discussing Christology and New Testament priesthood; and the eschatological-prophetic value of the book of Revelation.

Overall, the goal of this course is to initiate students into the process of examining key themes or topics in the Bible in a methodical, balanced and thorough manner. The primary way in which this will be accomplished is through directed and self-directed research and reading.

### B. Goals

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

#### Knowledge

- An understanding of the genre, general historical background, key literary forms, theological emphases and symbolism of the books presented
- Personal familiarity with some good contemporary commentaries on the books studied.
- A familiarity with, and understanding of, the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

#### Skills

- The ability to discuss the nature, contents, and specific character of the books studied in class
- The ability to explain clearly and concisely how a particular Biblical book presents a major theme, and how to relate this theme to the rest of Scripture, to provide an accurate and "holistic" presentation of the message of the Bible concerning a particular topic (e.g. covenant, Law, mercy, marriage, etc.)

#### Attitudes

- An active participation in class discussions, a willingness to ask questions and to contribute one's own learning and insights.
- A deepened awareness of the fundamental continuity and compatibility of the Old and New Testaments;
- A desire to learn more about Scripture, and to present the knowledge acquired in relevant and pastorally-useful ways; a "pastoral sense" for the importance of the bible.
- An acknowledgement of the foundational importance of historical-critical study for Catholic Biblical interpretation, but also an awareness of its limitations and presuppositions vis-à-vis Christian faith

- An awareness of the value of Biblical theology as a complementary form of Biblical study, and of its usefulness, both in pastoral settings (e.g. Bible study groups) and in preaching and teaching the Scriptures;
- A deep sense of the importance of the Church community as the natural home of the Bible, and as the major place in which it is meant to be interpreted.

### C. Assessment

1. **Participation: 10%.** Weekly attendance is mandatory. Preparation for, and active and informed participation in, class discussion is also a major aspect of this component of your grade. Since students interact with material in different ways, various kinds of participation will be noted towards your grade. For example, listening attentively to the instructor and to fellow classmates, asking questions (even by email), and making comments are all good ways to demonstrate that you are thinking critically about the material. Participation marks are lost when it is clear that a student has not done the readings, and, though perhaps physically present, is not engaged with the material or class discussion. Bibles must be brought to each class; failure to do so will detract from your participation grade.
2. **Reading Log: 15%.** In addition to the assigned weekly readings, students will find at *least one* additional reading on the same subject, thereby generating a Reading Log. The Reading Log should contain a bibliographic citation (according to the *SBL Handbook of Style*), as well as a brief (1-2 sentence) annotation, for each resource found. Reading Logs will be submitted weekly via the OWL dropbox. Please submit it before the start of class for that week. It is very important that the Reading Log be completed each week, as your own research and thinking into each topic will form the basis of part of class discussion.

These contributions (the citations only) will be posted to an Information Commons on OWL, so that all students in the class can benefit from the collaborative endeavor of research. The secondary material discovered through the Reading Log will contribute to an expanding bibliography that will be used for the Critical Response Papers (see below).

3. **Critical Response Papers: 3 at 25% each.** The Critical Response Papers are intended to help students develop their own working "biblical theology". For each of the major units (Psalms & Job, Hebrews, Revelation) in the course, students will submit a Critical Response Paper in which they develop a critical application of some of the biblical theological concepts covered in that section. Students will select a passage from the biblical book addressed in each unit from which to base their discussion. The critical application entails 1) providing a solid exegesis for the passage in question and 2) engaging the secondary material in a judicious, nuanced, and critical manner

(what are its strengths? What are some questions it generates? Are there some areas that could be strengthened, and why?), and pointing to at least one direction in which the biblical material at hand (Psalms, Job, Hebrews, Revelation) can be actualized responsibly in the contemporary life of the Church. Critical response papers should be 5-7 pages in written length, with a complete bibliography added at the end (i.e., the bibliography is not included in the page count).

#### D. Readings or Textbooks

1. A copy of the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, posted as a pdf on OWL.
2. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984, 2004. (BS 1430.3 B78 SPS)
3. Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001. (BS2825 .53 K64 2001 SPS).
4. Selected essays for Job and Hebrews will be put on reserve in the A. P. Mahoney Library.

#### E. Structure of the Course

Below is a tentative schedule of topics and readings. For the units on the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation, students are expected to reach each book in its entirety in addition to the assigned material.

Students are encouraged to visit the course website via the OWL/SAKAI portal frequently: <http://owl.uwo.ca>

Date	Topic	Readings to Prepare
Jan. 5	Introduction to Biblical Theology	Optional: G. F. Hasel, "The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology," <i>Trinity Journal</i> (1984) 113-127 Posted on OWL
Jan. 12	Interpretation of the Bible in the Church: Exegesis and Beyond	PBC, "Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" (Posted as a pdf on OWL; please use this version so that we are all working from the same translation and pagination)
Jan. 19	Psalms: Part I: Introduction	Brueggeman, Chapter 1

Jan. 26	Psalms: Part II: Psalms of Orientation	Brueggemann, Chapter 2  NB. Be sure to read all of the individual psalms that he treats within this chapter.
Feb. 2	Psalms: Part III: Psalms of Disorientation  The Book of Job	Brueggemann, Chapter 3  Job 1-3, 16, 21, 38-42  Selections from: Gustavo Gutierrez, <i>On Job: God Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent</i>
Feb. 9	Psalms: Part IV: Psalms of New Orientation	Brueggemann, Chapter 4
Feb. 23  (CRP #1 due)	Hebrews: Part I: Background information & Structure  Hebrews as an exegetical work of Biblical Theology	Letter to the Hebrews (all of it!)  David Moffitt, "The Interpretation of Scripture in the letter to the Hebrews"
March 2	Hebrews: Part II: The Priesthood of Jesus	Frank Matera, "The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews"
Mar. 9	Hebrews: Part III: Perfection in the Letter to the Hebrews	Kevin B. McCrudden, "The Concept of Perfection in the Letter to the Hebrews"
Mar. 16  (CRP #2 due)	Revelation: Part I: Introduction	Revelation Koester, Chapter 1-2
Mar. 23	Revelation: Part II:	Koester, Chapters 5-6
Mar. 30	Revelation: Part III: Eschatology	Koester, Chapter 7
April 6	Course Wrap up	<i>No readings</i>
April 13  (CRR #3 due)	<i>No class</i>	

### F. University Regulations

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. These can all be found at the University's website

([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html)). 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. Students who have a legitimate reason (e.g. significant illness) for not submitting work on time must fill in a request for an extension, which will be approved by the Dean of Students.

**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 and will result in a grade of zero on the assignment.

**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.