

SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY 5241A

## SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION I

Fall 2024, Thursdays, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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office hours: by appointment, either in person or on Zoom

### 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 October 24
3. a practical exercise consisting of one of (1) a mystagogical homily, (2) a field observation, or (3) a case study, due November 28
4. the final exam, which may be either written or oral.

Grading will be determined as follows:

short paper:	25%
practical exercise:	30%
exam:	35%
class preparation & participation:	10%

## **TEXTS**

### *Required*

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. *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.

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

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. 5	Introduction	
Sept. 12	Baptism in the New Testament	Mark 1; Matthew 3; Matthew 28; Luke 3; John 1; John 3; Romans 6; Titus 3
	Origins of Christian Initiation	Johnson, Chapter 1
Sept. 19	Initiation in the Pre-Nicene East & West	Johnson, Chapters 2–3
Sept. 26	Initiation in the East, 4th & 5th Centuries	Johnson, Chapter 4
Oct. 3	Initiation in the West, 4th & 5th Centuries	Johnson, Chapter 5
	Lent & Baptismal Preparation	Johnson, 201–218
Oct. 10	Initiation in the Christian East & Medieval West	Johnson, Chapter 6–7
(Oct. 17)	<i>Break Week (no class)</i>	
Oct. 24	Initiation in the Reformation	Johnson, Chapter 8
Oct. 31	Tridentine Initiation Rites	Johnson, 362–373
	Vatican II Reforms	Johnson, 375–391
Nov. 7	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>	Johnson, 391–402; <i>RCIA</i>
Nov. 14	Rites for Reception Into Full Communion	Johnson, 409–431; <i>RCIA</i> appendix
Nov. 21	<i>Rite of Baptism for Children</i>	Johnson, 402–409; <i>RBC</i>
	The Question of Infant Baptism	Johnson, 439–444
Nov. 28	<i>Rite of Confirmation</i>	Johnson, 444–450
	The Confirmation Problem	
Dec. 5	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. This 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 24.

- What role, if any, should the catechumenate have 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 as it stands 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 and should this role be maintained in the rite of infant baptism?
- 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 28.

- (1) 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.
- (2) 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.

- (3) 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. Signups for times will be through OWL. 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

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.

Students who are unable to hand in assignments or take examinations for legitimate reasons must consult with the instructor. If the reason is medical, students may be required to provide a note from a doctor. Ordinarily, all assignments and exams will be made up at a later date. In certain circumstances, the final grading scheme may be re-weighted if the missed assignment is of a low weight.

### *Accommodations for Tests/Examinations:*

Students are responsible for seeking accommodation with appropriate documentation, prior to writing tests/examinations, if they are of the view that their performance may be affected by extenuating circumstances.

How to Request Academic Accommodation — King's Students:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/courses-enrolment/exams-and-tests/medical-accommodation/>

UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf)

All students requiring academic accommodations for tests and examinations must use the services offered through King's University College.

### *Scholastic Offences*

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 Web site:

[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 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.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection 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.

Please note also that in this course any use of so-called Artificial Intelligence (such as ChatGPT) in the writing of assignments will be considered plagiarism, and thus an academic offence, until and unless it can be shown to be otherwise.

### *Scholarly Citation*

According to the policy adopted by the faculty of St. Peter's Seminary, all citations, references and bibliographies in written assignments are to follow the formatting prescribed in the Chicago Manual of Style. Footnotes are to be used, rather than author-date references in the body of the text. Please review and consult the summary provided by Kenrick-Glenon Seminary at <https://www.kenrick.edu/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Academic-Papers-and-Citations.pdf> for further information.

### *Copyright of Course Material*

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty Members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a Faculty Member.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member is interested in posting a student's answers or papers on the course web site he/she should ask for the student's written permission.

### *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.

### *Classroom Conduct*

Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for everyone and with professionalism in all classroom activities. Laptops and other electronic devices may be used for classroom academic activities only. The use of such devices must always be in accord with the common good of the whole learning community as specified by the instructor. The instructor may choose at any time to limit their use for instructional purposes or because of the disruptive use of such devices. You are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

### *Support Services*

Information about Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development (formerly Services for Students with Disabilities) at King's is available at <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

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

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

For consultation on writing, students are strongly encouraged to visit the Write Place at King's. <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/the-write-place/>

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to the Wellness Education Centre at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

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: 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*. Chicago: Hillenbrand, 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, 2006.