The Gospel According to John (NT628; 3 credit hours)  
Trinity School for Ministry, spring 2021

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Course Description
The purpose of this course is to become better equipped to read the Gospel according to St. John, often called “the Fourth Gospel” in scholarly literature, as Christian Scripture. We will focus on many themes and various historical and theological particularities along the way as we “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” this Gospel, but the overarching aim is to learn to engage with the Gospel of John as a prime canonical witness to the living reality of Jesus Christ and thereby deepen our grasp of the gospel. (Pre-requisite: BI500.)

The general set of outcomes Trinity desires for each of our graduates includes the following:

1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology. Students of other traditions, especially those in the Lutheran and Presbyterian programs, should be able to articulate the theological perspective of their own tradition.
3. M.Div.: The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.  
M.A.R.: The student will be able to effectively teach the Christian faith.  
S.T.M.: The student will demonstrate the ability to carry out research from original sources.  
4. M.Div.: The student will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.  
M.A.R.: The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.  
S.T.M.: The student will be equipped to successfully pursue further independent research and post-graduate study in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course is one of the core courses in the curriculum that provide an understanding of Scripture and biblical theology, thereby grounding this curriculum as a whole (outcome 1). Such attention to biblical theology is at the heart of a classic Anglican approach to Scripture (outcome 2; see Article XX of The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion), and an understanding of the Bible is a pre-requisite for both effectively communicating the Christian message and offering effective leadership (Outcomes 3 and
4). So this course contributes to each of these general outcomes, doing so through the following specific objectives:

1. Increased understanding of the historical issues related to the composition of the Gospel of John, as well as the Gospel’s literary and theological structure and contents.
2. Increased skill in interpreting individual passages in the Gospel of John in the light of the entire Gospel, the context of four canonical Gospels, and the canon as a whole (biblical theology).
3. Introductory knowledge of some of the major trends in early, modern, and specifically Anglican study of the Gospel of John.

For discussion of how I will assess whether these outcomes have been met, see the discussion below of the course requirements.

Required Texts

1. A “standard” Bible translation (e.g., RSV, NRSV, ESV, etc.).

Recommended Texts


Course Requirements

Attending lectures and class participation. This is the basic minimum requirement. According to the TSM Student Handbook, “Students who miss more than three classes in one term may forfeit credit for the class and may be in danger of failing the course. As a matter of courtesy, students who must miss any classes should notify their professors, ahead of class if possible.” (A word about taking an “Incomplete”: Incompletes are given only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to unfinished work. In order to request an incomplete, you must obtain the necessary form online and bring it to me so that I can list the specific assignments to be completed along with due dates. The revised due date will not extend beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will then be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval and will only be granted in the most serious of cases.)
Hermeneutical/exegetical assignments. There will be three assignments that will cover some of the fundamental aspects of historical-critical study of John (e.g., authorship, relationship to the Synoptics, chronology, etc.). Following those, there will be one assignment that will involve your study of Anglican approaches to John. More information about these assignments will be provided at the beginning of the course.

Homily. Students will submit a written manuscript of a “Christmas homily” on the Johannine Prologue (1:1-18). More information will be provided at the beginning of the semester on this assignment.

Final paper. The final assignment will be an exegetical paper of 4,000 words on one of the following passages or themes in John (your choice): a) the bread of life discourse (6:22-59); b) the healing of the man born blind (ch. 9); c) the foot-washing (13:1-20); d) the “I am” sayings in John; or d) the identity and function of “the Jews” in John. Again, more detailed guidelines will be provided once the semester is underway.

Course Evaluation
Final grades for the course will be calculated as follows: Six homework assignments = 35% of final grade; review/reflection paper = 35%; and the final exam = 30% of final grade.

Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clarity and charity of thought and expression, accuracy of information, and breadth and depth of discussion. I will use letter grades or their equivalent to mean the following:

B (80-89): The thought and expression are clear and the information is accurate. The discussion is broad and deep enough to indicate a solid understanding of the issue. By “broad” I mean that sufficient aspects of the topic are covered, and by “depth” I mean that enough supporting and illustrating material is offered to flesh out the basic thought.

C (70-79): The material shows an adequate grasp of the topic, but at points the discussion is unclear, inaccurate, narrow or shallow.

D (60-69): The material shows something close to an adequate grasp of the topic but is notably defective according to one or more of the criteria.

F (below 60): The material does not indicate that the student has an adequate grasp of the topic, or it is severely defective according to the criteria.

A (90-100): The material is exceptional. Usually this means that it is not only clear and accurate but also develops the topic in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. Such material is often, though not always, marked also by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or relatively extensive research.

The school’s grade scale is as follows: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below 60. As per The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) requirements, several samples of student work
may be randomly selected and used as a class artifact as part of an on-going assessment of courses and degree programs. Students’ names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.

**Computer Policy**
Use of computers or other electronic devices such as mobile phones or tablets is not permitted during class.

For information about how note taking on laptops can hinder rather than help your retention of what you hear in the classroom, see Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking,” *Psychological Science* (April 23, 2014). As Ruth Graham summarizes, “Note-taking is a two-part action: creating the notes (‘encoding’) and reviewing them later (‘storage’), both of which confer learning benefits. When the encoding becomes too easy, that first opportunity to learn is wasted, particularly when it comes to absorbing concepts rather than rote facts…. Taking notes by hand, by contrast, forces students to grapple with the material enough to summarize it, since they aren’t physically capable of writing down every word. The constraints enforced by the rudimentary technology of pen and paper force a deeper engagement with the material, the paper concludes” (“Taking Notes? Bring a Pen, Skip the Computer,” *Boston Globe* [May 25, 2014]).

**Course and School Policies**

*Plagiarism*: Plagiarism is a violation of an author’s/artist’s intellectual property rights and is a serious offense. Please see the Academic Catalog for a full explanation of Trinity’s plagiarism guidelines and note, as stated there, that every student is expected to be fully aware of the guidelines. A student who plagiarizes will automatically receive a failing grade on the assignment and risks failing the course. If a student does not know whether or not they may be engaging in plagiarism, they are encouraged to speak to Leslie Thyberg, our Learning Skills Coordinator.

*Late Assignments*: Work turned in late (quizzes, exams, etc.) for any reason, barring documented medical emergency, will be accepted up to 3 days after it was due, with a grade level reduction (an A becomes a B, etc.). Any work turned in 3 days after the due date cannot be counted for credit.

*Missed Class Policy*: Being absent from a course for three weeks (consecutive or not) is grounds for administrative withdrawal, which will be noted on the student’s transcript.

*Incompletes*: Incompletes are not normally given and are granted only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to incomplete work. In order to request an incomplete, the student must obtain the necessary form online and bring it to the professor who will list the specific assignments to be completed with due dates. The date for submission of all materials cannot be beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval.

*ATS Review of Student Work*: Samples of student work may be used as part of an on-going assessment of courses and degree programs by Trinity School for Ministry/North American Lutheran Seminary and the Association of Theological Schools. Students’ names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.
Learning Materials: All learning materials (handouts, study guides, etc.) are the property of the instructor. All materials produced in the Trinity Media Center (video and audio lectures) are the property of Trinity School for Ministry. Please contact the appropriate owner for reproduction guidelines, as well as usage outside Trinity School for Ministry.

Course Schedule
TBA.