

## **BST 400i Introduction to Sacred Scripture and their Interpretation**

**Fall Semester – Academic Year 2016-17**

### **Preliminary Course Outline**

#### **Class Start Date & End Date**

September 07<sup>th</sup> – December 07<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

#### **Class Meeting Time & Room & Location if Off-site**

This course is delivered online through the Moodle platform - registered students will be provided with a course access key by the Office of the Registrar at the start of the Fall term.

**Instructors Name:** Stéphane Saulnier  
**Phone#:** 780.392.2450 ext. 2210  
**Email address:** [stephane.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:stephane.saulnier@newman.edu)  
**Skype :** stephsaulnier1

#### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the sacred scriptures of the Christian faith, their academic study and their interpretation. The various books of the Old and New Testaments of the Catholic Bible are introduced in relation to their historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds, with timely references to geographical and archaeological data. Concurrently, students are introduced to the concepts of biblical inspiration, biblical inerrancy, and the formation of the canon.

This course also includes a seminar that explores the question of the interpretation of scripture with the mind of the Church, during which key Church documents will be analyzed while some major contributions from the world of academia to the field of biblical interpretation will be considered. The aim is to equip students with the exegetical tools and building blocks that will be necessary in subsequent scripture courses in their chosen program, and indeed in their various ministries as exegetes of Sacred Scripture.

#### **Course Objectives**

This introductory required graduate level course aims at introducing students to the study of Sacred Scriptures and their interpretation with the Mind of the Church.

##### Academic Learning Outcomes:

In terms of intended learning outcomes, by the end of the course each student should be able to demonstrate:

- An acquaintance with the Sacred Scripture of Christianity and the methods and tools pertaining to their interpretation with the mind of the Church.
- An initial understanding of the Old and New Testaments and their interpretation, through study of selected themes (theological, historical).
- An ability to engage critically and analytically with textual, historical and theological issues raised by the material.
- An ability to communicate in a sophisticated manner, both orally and in writing, the result of their research and enquiries.
- An ability to use the skills developed to apply their knowledge and understanding of these ancient texts to the Church today.

##### Human and spiritual outcomes:

By the end of the course each student should be able to identify areas and articulate ways in which the course has contributed to their overall human and spiritual development, possibly including but not limited to the following:



**ats**

The Association of Theological Schools  
The Commission on Accrediting

- A contemplative, spiritual, liturgical formation that will gain an additional dimension resulting from a greater acquaintance with Sacred Scripture.
- A greater awareness of their human maturing in light of their self-immersion in the text of Scripture.
- An ability to identify ways in which the course has contributed to equip them to embrace the pastoral role that will be theirs as lay people or ordained ministers.
- An ability to identify ways in which the course content has nurtured a self-awareness of their role in the social aspect of their chosen ministries.

## Course Assignments and Evaluation

This course introduces students to Sacred Scripture and their study and interpretation in the Church. As such, the course presents essential material that will be considered assimilated in subsequent scripture courses in the undergraduate (CTh; DipTh; BTh) and graduate (M.T.S., M.Div., M.R.E.) programs. With this in mind, there will be **no research paper** in this course. Rather, the emphasis will be on developing basic skills such as writing chapter synopses, articulating informed and concise answers to a set of seminar questions, and developing hermeneutical and exegetical skills through practice, using various tools/approaches considered in the course. The written material will amount to roughly **6,250 words** [excluding the final exam]

STUDENTS MUST PROVIDE IN THE FOOTER OF THE PAPER AN ACCURATE WORD COUNT FOR EACH PIECE OF WRITTEN ASSESSMENT.

- **Two chapter-summaries** [CS] each chapter summary will be 350 words in length, for a total of **700 words**. Each chapter summary is due on the Saturday evening (11.00 pm Edmonton time) of the week it is scheduled for. Please send electronic copy (Word doc OR PDF) as email attachment to [Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu). Students must take great care to summarize *in their own words* that which they consider to be the main points/arguments of the chapter. This is an important skill which must be mastered as soon as possible at the start of your programme of studies. The average of the two chapter summaries will weight **10% of the final grade**.

- **Three seminar papers** [SP] for a total of **3,200 words**. Each seminar paper is due on the Saturday evening (11.00 pm) of the week it is scheduled for. Please send electronic copy (Word doc OR PDF) as email attachment to [Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu).

Students must take great care to address the seminar question specifically. The exercise is quite different from writing a chapter summary. Instead of presenting in your own words someone else's work (like in a chapter summary), you are asked to articulate your own answer to a given question, making sure arguments are supported. This answer must be informed by the reading done, but it remains your own 'take' on the issue. See Course Schedule below for details. **30% of final grade**.

- S1: 900 words
- S2: 1100 words
- S3: 1200 words

- **One paper on aspects of biblical theology**: students will submit one **2000-words** paper on a chosen aspect of biblical theology. See schedule below for due date (session 8). It is due on the Saturday evening (11.00 pm) of the week it is scheduled for. Please send electronic copy (Word doc OR PDF) as email attachment to [Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu). **25 % of final grade**

- **Ongoing contributions to forum discussions**: There are five graded forum discussions scheduled through the course. Their combined grade will weigh **10% of the final grade**. Assessment will be based on whether the entries by students demonstrate **both** knowledge and understanding of the reading material **and** pertinence as to the discussion topic/question. 'Entries' mean both your own answer to the forum discussion topic/question (up to 100 words on average per forum discussion) AND your contributions to discussions with others. **10% of final grade**
  - Entries to at least six forum discussions, that *consistently* demonstrate these two aspects, will be graded 85%;
  - Entries to at least six forum discussions, that *occasionally* demonstrate these two aspects, will be graded 80%
  - Entries to between four and five forum discussions will be assessed 70% if they demonstrate consistently these two aspects; 60 % if only occasionally.

- Entries to between one and three forum discussions will be graded 50%.
- No entries to forum discussions will be graded 'zero'

- **One 'Take Home' exam:**

Students will submit a **2000-words** 'take home' exam, in which they will apply to a selected text from the New Testament the exegetical principles learnt during the course from Gorman's book and Schneider's book. The 'Take Home' exam paper should be submitted no later than Monday 12 December (11.00 pm). Please send electronic copy (Word doc OR PDF) as email attachment to [Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:Stephan.saulnier@newman.edu) **25% of final grade.**

**Your final grade will be:**

**Chapter synopses (10%) + Seminar papers (30%) + biblical theology paper (25%) + forum discussion entries (10%) + 'Take Home' exam (25%)**

## Required Textbooks

Students registered on the **Master of Divinity (M.Div.)** program or the **Master of Theological Studies (M.T.S.)** program – or Unclassified students aiming to complete the M.Div. or M.T.S. program at some stage:

- D. Béchard, *The Scripture Documents – an anthology of Official Catholic Teaching* (The Liturgical Press: 2002)
- M. Duggan, *The Consuming Fire – A Christian Guide to the Old Testament* (Our Sunday Visitor: 2010)
- M. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis – a basic guide for students and ministers* (Hendrickson: 2009 rev. ed.)
- S. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text – interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (Liturgical Press: 1999 sec. ed.)

Students registered on the **Master of Religious Education (M.R.E.)** program

- D. Béchard, *The Scripture Documents – an anthology of Official Catholic Teaching* (The Liturgical Press: 2002)
- M. Duggan, *The Consuming Fire – A Christian Guide to the Old Testament* (Our Sunday Visitor: 2010)

## Recommended Reading

R.E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Doubleday; 1997) – this book is part of the M.Div. required reading list

Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture* (Liturgical Press: 2014)

Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana; 2002).

Benedict XVI – Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana; 2010).

International Theological Commission – *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2011).<sup>1</sup>

Pope Francis, "Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World" (Pauline Books and Media: 2013).<sup>2</sup>

X. Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (The Word Among Us: 2000 updated second edition)

## Course Requirements

As per the *NTC 2016-17 Academic Calendar*.<sup>3</sup>

All graduate courses, including Intercession and Summer Session courses shall require the following:

- One 15-20 page research paper or the equivalent in the form of Student presentations, book reports and/or short reflection papers. The total amount of written work including exams cannot exceed 35 pages.<sup>4</sup>
- One final examination OR two term-examinations. Exams may be oral, written in class or "take-home". Oral exams should be 15-20 minutes in length.

<sup>1</sup> Available online at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_doc\\_20111129\\_teologia-oggi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_teologia-oggi_en.html)

<sup>2</sup> Available online at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

<sup>3</sup> Available online at [www.newman.edu](http://www.newman.edu).

<sup>4</sup> Based on 350 words per page, 15 to 20 pages amount to 5,250 to 7,000 words. The very maximum that could be required would amount to 12,250 words.



Written material submitted for assessment **in this course** will amount to **6,250 words** PLUS a final examination, which will be in the form of a ‘take home’ exam (due date is December 12, noon – hard copy at NTC Reception)

In addition, the following are required:

- **Participation** to ALL sessions. College policy as expounded in the *NTC Student Handbook* will be implemented.<sup>5</sup>
- **Class Preparation:** this must be done thoroughly and carefully.
- **Online individual tutorials:** students will attend **three** individual online tutorials in weeks 4, 8 and 12 (see outline below). Each tutorial will take place through Skype and will last a minimum of 30 minutes. Students who are not already signed up with Skype can open a free account by visiting <https://login.skype.com/account/signup-form>.

## General Academic Information

### Academic misconduct policy

Plagiarism is a serious offence and will simply not be tolerated. See *NTC Student Handbook* 2016-2017, for details of the College policy dealing with academic misconduct.

### Acceptable writing style Manuals:

- American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual.<sup>6</sup>
- A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations – Kate Turabian (Chicago: University of Chicago).
- MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
- Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Style Guide.<sup>7</sup>

### Late Submission Policy:

Please do not ask for extensions. Late submissions *are accepted*. There is, however, a hefty PENALTY for this service: 10% off the grade per day late, up to a maximum of three days. Any assignment submitted more than three days late will be graded 60% if deemed of a quality that is ‘adequate’ or higher. Assignments submitted more than three days late that do not meet a ‘pass’ standard will be graded 40%. This is non-negotiable. There is, of course, room for manoeuvre in case of genuine emergency.

For Incomplete courses regulations, see *NTC Student Handbook* 2016-2017.<sup>8</sup>

### Grading policy:

“The generally accepted class average for the C.Th., the Dip.Th., the B.Th., M.T.S., M.Div., G.C.C.S.A. and the M.R.E., all of which are basic Degrees, diplomas and certificates, is a ‘B’” (*NTC Academic Calendar* 2016-2017, available online).

NTC has adopted the Alberta Alpha Four Point Grading System. This is set out in the *NTC Academic Calendar* 2016-17, available online, and is here reproduced for your convenience. Please note that an ‘A’ grade is reserved for work which demonstrates **excellence**.

### GRADUATE

Grade meaning	Mark	Grade	Grade Point
<b>Excellent</b>	90% - 100%	A+	4.0
	85 – 89%	A	4.0
	80%-84%	A-	3.7
<b>Good</b>	77%-79%	B+	3.3
	73%-76%	B	3.0
	70%-72%	B-	2.7
<b>Adequate</b>	67%-69%	C+	2.3
	63%-66%	C	2.0
	60%-62%	C-	1.7

### UNDERGRADUATE

Grade Meaning	Mark	Grade	Grade Point
<b>Excellent</b>	90% - 100%	A+	4.0
	85 – 89%	A	4.0
	80%-84%	A-	3.7
<b>Good</b>	77%-79%	B+	3.3
	73%-76%	B	3.0
	70%-72%	B-	2.7
<b>Adequate</b>	67%-69%	C+	2.3
	63%-66%	C	2.0
	60%-62%	C-	1.7

<sup>5</sup> Available online.

<sup>6</sup> APA’s style rules are set out in *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* fifth edition.

<sup>7</sup> The SBL Style Guide for Students is available online at <http://sbl-site.org/publications/publishingwithsbl.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> [http://newman.edu/portals/newman/documents/2015\\_08\\_20\\_NTCStudentHandbook\\_WEBFINAL.pdf](http://newman.edu/portals/newman/documents/2015_08_20_NTCStudentHandbook_WEBFINAL.pdf)

Fail	57%-59%	D+	1.3	Marginal	57%-59%	D+	1.3
	53%-56%	D	1.0		53%-56%	D	1.0
	50%-52%	D-	0.0	Fail	0%-52%	F	0.0

For Grade Appeal Procedure, see the *NTC Student Handbook* 2016-17.<sup>9</sup>

#### TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:<sup>10</sup>

### PART I: FORMATION AND INTERPRETATION OF SACRED SCRIPTURE – Defining our terms

#### Week 1 [07-10 Sept] Introduction to Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics

**Seminar:** Hermeneutics and biblical hermeneutics

#### Week 2 [11-17 Sept] The Pentateuch: Biblical geography and Archaeology

Required reading – from Duggan's book, *The Consuming Fire* – tba

**Chapter-summary #1** (350 words) – due at start of class.

**Seminar:** Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 1.

Required reading – from Béchar'd's book.

### PART II: UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### Week 3 [18-24 Sept] The Pentateuch: Biblical anthropology and Patriarchal history

Required reading – from Duggan - tba

**Seminar:** Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 2.

Required reading – from Béchar'd

**Seminar paper 1** (900 words) – due at start of class.

#### Week 4 [25 Sept – 1 Oct.] The Law and the Land in Biblical Israel

Required reading – from Duggan - tba

**Seminar:** Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 3

Required reading – from Béchar'd – tba..

#### Skype tutorial #1

#### Week 5 [02-08 Oct.] Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History (Joshua; Judges; 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings)

Required reading – from Duggan - tbd

**Seminar:** Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 4.

Required reading – from Béchar'd – tba.

**Seminar paper 2** (1100 words) – due at start of class.

#### Week 6 [09-15 Oct.] The Chronicler's History (1 and 2 Chronicles; Ezra; Nehemiah)

Required reading – from Duggan - tbd

**Seminar:** Biblical Interpretation – an academic task – Part 1.

Required reading – from M. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* - tbd

<sup>9</sup> Available online at [www.newman.edu](http://www.newman.edu).

<sup>10</sup> A finalized Course Schedule will be circulated at the start of the course. The professor reserves the right to amend the present Tentative Course Schedule.

---

**Week 7 [16-22 Oct.]                      The biblical Prophets**

Required reading – from Duggan - tbd

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 2**

Required reading - from Gorman - tbd

---

**Week 8: [23-29 Oct.]                      Wisdom and Poetry in Biblical Israel**

Required reading – from Duggan - tbd

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 3.**

Required reading - from Gorman – tbd

**Biblical Theology paper (2000 words)** due at start of class

**Skype tutorial #2**

---

**PART III: UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**Week 9: [30 Oct – 05 Nov.]                      Introduction to the New Testament**

Required reading – from S. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text* - tbd

**Chapter-summary #2** (350 words)

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an academic task – Part 4.**

Required reading - from Gorman - tbd

---

**READING BREAK [06-12 Nov.]   Reading Week**

---

**Week 10: [13-19 Nov.]                      The Synoptic Gospels**

Required reading – from Schneiders - tbd

Recommended reading – From R.E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 5.**

Required reading - from Gorman - tbd

---

**Week 11 [20-26 Nov.]                      The Johannine Literature**

Required reading – from Schneiders – tbd

Recommended reading – From Brown - tbd

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 6.**

Required reading - from Gorman - tbd

---

**Week 12: [27 Nov. – 03 Dec.]                      The Pauline Letters**

Required reading – from Schneiders - tbd

Recommended reading – From Brown - tbd

**Seminar:**                      **Biblical interpretation – an ecclesial task AND an academic task**

**Seminar paper 3** (1200 words) - due at start of class

**Skype tutorial #3**

---

**Week 13: [04 - 10 Dec.]                      The Catholic Epistles**

Required reading – from Schneiders – tbd

Recommended reading – From Brown - tbd

Course evaluations

---

**Take-Home exam** – due on Monday December 12 (11.00 pm) – electronic copy to [stephane.saulnier@newman.edu](mailto:stephane.saulnier@newman.edu).  
There will be no late submission allowed to the Take-Home.