Course Outline

1. Course code: THEO2215/5315

2. English title: The Johannine Literature

3. Chinese title: 約翰文學

4. Course overview
   This is an exegetical and theological study of the Johannine Literature in the New Testament, seeking to understand what the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine Epistles, and the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) convey to and how they affect their readers then and now. To facilitate a sound exegetical inquiry, literary-rhetorical features of these writings (e.g. symbols, diatribes, visions) and social-historical contexts of their communities (e.g. Jewish hostility, doctrinal debate, political persecution) will be analyzed. To enable a vigorous theological investigation, major theological themes (e.g. Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology) and significant pastoral issues (e.g. polemical language, community formation, social relations) will be examined. To assess their consequential effects on Christian doctrines (e.g. Incarnation, theodicy) and world culture (e.g. heavenly court, final judgment), their history of interpretation as presented in theology and arts will be critically examined. Important hermeneutical issues discussed in critical scholarship will also be explored to help readers contextualize Johannine messages for the faith and practice of the church today.

   To help students hone their expository skills and enhance their preaching and teaching abilities, selected passages from the Johannine corpus will be assigned for research and be presented for discussion. Class activities will include lectures, presentations and discussions. Since this course is designed as a semi-seminar, students' careful research and active participation are essential and crucial for its success.

5. Learning outcomes
   At the end of the course, students are expected to become:
   - Familiar with the contents and contexts of Johannine literature in the NT,
   - Well-informed of various interpretations and consequences of these writings,
   - Able to interpret their messages/meanings in literary, historical, and theological terms,
   - Able to use them as resources for theological and pastoral reflections, and
   - Able to properly teach and faithfully preach them to the church and in the society today.

6. List of topics
   - Issues in Critical Studies of the Johannine Literature in the NT
   - The Gospel of John (Literary Features, Christology, Social Historical Contexts, Jewish-Christian Hostility, Theological Views, Faith and Community, Resurrection and Mission)
• The Johannine Epistles (1 John: Tradition and Schism, 2 John: Leadership and Conflict, 3 John: Hospitality and Isolation)
• The Book of Revelation (Literary Genre and Visionary Rhetoric, Social Historical Contexts, Visions in Heaven, Visions on Earth, Visions of New Haven, New Earth and New City)
• Legacy of the Johannine Literature (Gnosticism, Community, Hope, How to Interpret it today)

7. Learning activities
• Lectures (1.5 hours/week), presentations and discussions in class (1.5 hours/week)
• Reading (3 hours/week), research and writing outside of class (3 hours/week)
• Lab, field trip, and web-based teaching are not applicable.

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8. Assessment scheme
1. Keep up weekly reading, full attendance, and active participation (10%).

2. Three writing assignments (double spaced, due on the date for discussion by 11:00pm, 90%)
   • One critical review paper (3 pages; roughly 750 words in English or 1125 words in Chinese; 30%). A good review should include (1) an accurate summary of the assigned readings (1.5 pages), (2) a fair engagement with their presuppositions, arguments, and conclusions (agree and/or disagree, why; 1 page) and (3) a critical assessment of their contribution or challenges to the faith and life of the church today (0.5 page). To facilitate discussion, please prepare a ppt for presentation in class. Please submit your paper in digital form (Word doc.) to jyieh@vts.edu, with the file name as “your family name.review.book author” [e.g. Johnson.review.Brown].
   • One exegesis-research paper (5 pages; roughly 1250 words in English or 1875 words in Chinese, 50%). A good exegesis should (1) clarify and explain the theological concepts and pastoral purposes of the authors in their literary-rhetorical integrity and social-historical settings (consult critical commentaries recommended in the select bibliography, 2 pages), (2) examine and assess the history of interpretation and influence (Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther/Calvin/Wesley, modern interpreters; 2 pages), and (3) discuss its implications for preaching and teaching today (1 page). To facilitate discussion,
please prepare a ppt for presentation in class. Please submit your paper in digital form (Word doc.) to jyieh@vts.edu, with the file name as “your family name.exegesis.NTtext” [e.g. Johnson.exegesis.John4].

- One short response paper to a colleague’s exegesis papers (1 page; roughly 250 words in English or 375 words in Chinese, 10%). A good response paper should be accurate and fair in summarizing the exegesis paper and appreciative and critical in its assessment of the merit of the exegesis paper. Please submit your paper in digital form (Word doc.) to jyieh@vts.edu, with the file name as “your family name.response.colleague” [e.g. Johnson.response.Lin].

9. Recommended learning resources

Textbooks:

Other readings:
Weekly required readings are listed in the syllabus and the a select bibliography is provided for further research as follows:

A Select Bibliography for the Johannine Literature (-2020)

**The Gospel of John: Critical Commentaries**
* Christian Classics on Internet: [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org); [www.newadvent.com](http://www.newadvent.com)


**Major Studies**


**The Johannine Epistles: Critical Commentaries**


**Major Studies**


2017  彭國偉主編，《研讀本（新標點和合本）系列 – 約翰一二三書》（台灣聖經公會，2017）。

**The Book of Revelation: Critical Commentaries**

**Major Studies**

10. Feedback for evaluation
• Students are encouraged to share their learning experience throughout the course.
• Student’s weekly oral presentations of critical reviews and exegesis-research in class provide concrete and early feedback for the progress of the course and for the adjustment of its pedagogy before the course is finished.

11. Course schedule

Jan 7  Prolegomena
• Introduction to THE2215/5315
• Issues in Critical Studies of the Johannine Literature

The Gospel of John

Literary Features
• The Text: Sources, Composition and Editions
• Narrative Criticism: Plot and Characters
• Rhetorical Devices: Symbols and Ironies

Jan 14 Christology: Who is Jesus?
• Logos, Son of God, even God
• Revealer and Redeemer
• Descent-Ascent of the Son

John 1:1-18 The Logos Hymn
• “In the beginning was the Word”
• “The Word became flesh”
• “It is God the only Son … who has made him known”

John 2:1-12 The Wedding at Cana
• Jesus’ First “Sign” Story
• To Reveal His “Glory”

Jan 21 Social-Historical Contexts
• John’s Community: History and Crises
• Ephesus in Roman Empire: “The world that hates you”

➢ Critical Review (1) on Brown

+ John 4:7-30 The Samaritan Woman Exegesis-Research (1)

Jan 28 Lunar New Year: No Class

Feb 4 Jewish-Christian Hostility
• “The Jews” in the Gospel of John
• Anti-Semitism and Religious Violence

+ John 9:1-41 "The Man Born Blind” Exegesis Research (2)

➢ Critical Review (2) on Anderson

Feb 11 Theological Views
• Glory of the Cross
• Eschatology: Now and Forever
• Eternal Life

➢ Critical Review (3) on Kysar

+ John 14:15-31 “The Promise of the Holy Spirit” Exegesis Research (3)
Feb 18 Faith and Community
- Faith as Understanding (Truth) and Commitment (Love)
- Community Divine and Human
- Sectarianism and Social Relation


+ John 17:1-26 "The Final Prayer" *Exegesis Research* (4)

➢ *Critical Review (4): on Bauckham*

Feb 25 Resurrection and Mission
- Post-Easter Appearances to Mary Magdalene, Thomas
- Special Commission to Peter and the Beloved Disciple

+ John 21:1-19 “Jesus and Peter by the Sea of Galilee” *Exegesis Research* (5)

The Johannine Epistles

Mar 3 1 John
- Tradition and Spirit
- Schism and Love One Another
- Anti-Christ and Testing the Spirit
- Jesus is Christ, Fully Divine and Fully Human
彭國偉主編，《研讀本（新標點和合本）系列 – 約翰一二三書》（台灣聖經公會，2017）。

2 & 3 John
- Leadership and Conflict
- Hospitality and Isolation

➢ *Critical Review (5): on Malherbe*
The Book of Revelation

Mar 10 Literary Genre and Visionary Rhetoric
- Issues in Critical Studies
- "Apocalypse" as Literary Genre
  - Critical Review (6): on Gorman

Mar 17 Social-Historical Contexts
- John as a Christian Prophet
- Roman Rule & Imperial Cult in Asia Minor

Rev. Ch. 1-3: “The Seven Churches”

Mar 24 Visions in Heaven: God and Christ in Throne
- The Slaughtered Lamb
- Enthroned as the Lord

  + Rev. 4:1-5:14: “Heavenly Worship, the Scroll and the Lamb” *Exegesis Research* (6)

Mar 31 Visions on Earth: Evil, Suffering and Theodicy

  + Rev. 12:1-17: “The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon” *Exegesis Research* (7)

  - Critical Review (7): on Gorman

Apr 7 Visions of New Haven, New Earth and New City


➢ Critical Review (8): on Gorman

Apr 14 Legacy of Johannine Literature
  • Gospel of John and Gnosticism
  • Letters of John and Community
  • Revelation as Visions of Hope
  • Teaching Faith, Building Community and Preaching Hope


12. Contact details for teacher
   Prof. John Yieh; Email: jyieh@vts.edu

13. Course website: n/a

14. Academic honesty and plagiarism
   Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

   With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

   For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.