



## IONA SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY

### Gospel of John – Juniors & Lay Pr.

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Rev. Dr. Andrew Grayson Benko

#### Class Description

This class will give the student a basic familiarity with the themes, concerns, and distinctive theological perspective of John's gospel, and the Johannine epistles.

#### Class Objectives

In (or after taking) this class, students will:

- Understand John's particularly high *christology*, i.e, theology of Jesus
- Identify the major theological issues in John, and think about their applicability in the life of Christians today—identifying both those which might be helpful in building up disciples, and those which might lead to pitfalls or misunderstandings, especially Anti-semitism
- Consider and discuss how to preach passages in John
- Learn about the probable social context of the Johannine community, and be able to explain the often-polemical rhetoric of the gospel in these terms

To demonstrate meeting these objectives, students will:

- 1) Come to class having read the Gospel, and chapter assigned about John—and having taken notes, underlined while reading, or otherwise having engaged fully in the pre-class preparation.
- 2) Participate fully in class. Ask questions, discuss insights, take part in breakout groups, and otherwise actively engage during class time.
- 3) Take an exam comprised of two short (paragraph-length) answers and one longer essay.

#### Class Schedule

(each hour: 40 min. lecture / 10 min. breakout discussion / 10 min. break)

9:00 – 9:35: Overview & Prologue of John

9:45 – 10:20: The Book of Signs

10:30 – 11:05: Who *is* Jesus, Anyway?

11:15 – 11:50: The Farewell Discourse

[ Lunch Break ]

1:00 – 1:50: The Death & Resurrection of Jesus

VI. 3:00 – 3:50: The Johannine Letters

#### Suggested Resources

\*Brant, Jo-Ann. *John: Paideia Commentaries on the NT*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.  
Brown, Raymond. *The Gospel According to John*. 2 vol. New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970  
Carter, Warren. *John, Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006  
Kysar, Robert. *John, The Maverick Gospel*. 3d ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.  
\*Kittredge, Cynthia Briggs. *Conversations with Scripture: John*. New York: Morehouse, 2007.  
Benko, Andrew. *Race in John's Gospel*. Fortress Academic, 2019.

(I just put this last one on the list for fun. It's probably not going to be that useful for sermon prep.)

**Commentaries:** *New Interpreter's Bible*; *New Testament Library*, *Sacra Pagina*, and *Interpretation* are all quite helpful Biblical commentary series. Buying at least enough of a commentary to encompass the 4 gospels is a **very prudent investment** for a minister.

<p><b><u>Characteristics of Mark</u></b></p> <p>Portrait of Jesus: a man of action, hugely popular, misunderstood, innocent sufferer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jesus frequently misunderstood</li> <li>- disciples unflatteringly portrayed</li> <li>- “messianic secret”</li> <li>- theme of Jesus’ suffering – Jesus resembles the “suffering servant” of 2 Isaiah, or the ‘scapegoat’ of Leviticus</li> <li>- interpolations</li> <li>- frequently more detail in accounts (Matthew and Luke often omit details)</li> <li>- no infancy narrative, no resurrection account</li> <li>- apocalyptic urgency: Jesus’ return immanent</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Characteristics of Matthew</u></b></p> <p>Portrait of Jesus: a teacher, interpreter of Torah, a “Moses” figure,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extremely Jewish: affirms Torah, Jesus is sent only the “lost sheep of Israel,”</li> <li>- Jesus’ genealogy: traced back to Abraham</li> <li>- fulfillment motif: Jesus often does things “so that what was spoken by the prophet” might be fulfilled</li> <li>- Five major blocks of discourse material, resonates with five books of Moses</li> <li>- infancy narrative</li> <li>- some blocks of text deal with the <i>ekklesia</i> (church) and its concerns, from a later time</li> <li>- Simon Peter is the “rock” upon whom Jesus “will build my church”</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Characteristics of Luke</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jesus is very compassionate, particularly solicitous of the poor, downtrodden, underprivileged, and women</li> <li>- women disciples and women in Jesus’ family (Mary and her ‘kinswoman’ Elizabeth) are very important characters</li> <li>- Jesus’ teachings overturn the social order and create an “upside-down” ethic where the last shall be first, and the first shall be last</li> <li>- very pro-Gentile. E.g., Luke’s genealogy of Jesus stretches back to Adam, the common ancestor of all humanity; Simeon prophesies that the infant Jesus will be “a light to the Gentiles”(2:32)...</li> <li>- The gentile-oriented mission and fate of the church, in Acts, foreshadowed in Luke.</li> <li>- Very pro-Roman gospel; <i>apologist</i> or <i>conciliatory</i> in tone. Wants to show Christians that Romans are not evil, and show Romans that Christians are not criminals. Pilate, and a Roman soldier, both stress Jesus’ <i>legal</i> innocence</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Characteristics of John</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jesus is the Word, who was with God in the beginning, and who <i>IS</i> God.</li> <li>- thus, the highest <i>Christology</i> of any gospel – the most clear that Jesus is not only divine as God’s son, but is in some sense <i>himself</i> God.</li> <li>- dualistic language: light/dark, world/heaven, children of God/devil</li> <li>- miracles are “signs”</li> <li>- unlike the synoptics, <i>no exorcisms!</i></li> <li>- symbolic language, and words with double meanings, which those listening to Jesus often misunderstand</li> <li>- Jesus teaches in long, philosophical speeches. It is sometimes hard to tell where Jesus’ speech ends and the narrator begins!</li> <li>- the point of Jesus’ teaching, in John: Jesus’ identity.</li> <li>- emphasizes correctly “seeing” Jesus (symbolically stands for correctly perceiving him as God, and believing in him). The Jewish authorities, by and large, are “blind” in this sense.</li> </ul>