

BST 400i Introduction to Sacred Scriptures and Their Interpretation

Fall Semester 2020-21

Course Outline

Class Start Date & End Date

<u>Online hyper-flex:</u>
Course starts: Wednesday 9 th September 2020
Course ends: Friday 18 th December 2020
Final exam: date tbd

Class Meeting Time, Location, and Room

<u>Online hyper-flex:</u>
Moodle platform + Zoom platform:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asynchronous: all time Moodle Synchronous lectures: Zoom on Mondays (1:15 – 2:35 pm)¹

Instructors Name: Stéphane Saulnier, Ph.D.
Office: 2-05 (NTC campus)
Office Hours: Mondays 2:45 – 4.00 pm or by appointment
Telephone: 780 392 2450 ext. 2210
Email: stephane.saulnier@newman.edu
Skype: Stepsaulnier1

Course Description

This hyper-flex 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

¹ These will also be video recorded and made available on Moodle for access from Monday evening for students who are not able to join the live lecture through Zoom.

Course Objectives

This graduate level core course aims to introduce the critical and analytical skills necessary for the study of Scripture within the framework of a hermeneutic of faith. The course will focus in particular on historical issues, literary genres and major theological themes encountered in this material. The course is text-based, and therefore a *significant* amount of time should be spent reading and digesting the primary sources. The instructor will adopt a student-centred, constructivist approach which favours the major principles of andragogy. With this in mind the course focuses on academic learning outcomes that target primarily the cognitive domain of learning.² Within this cognitive domain, learning outcomes are designed to address the following six categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. By the end of the course you will have engaged with a variety of tasks and assignments that will allow you to develop critical thinking skills foundational for the study of Sacred Scripture with the Mind of the Church.

Course objectives are differentiated per program in order to match Program Goals. Students are required to identify the learning outcomes that pertain to their particular program.

Master of Divinity Students:

M.Div. Program Goals (a,b,c,d below) M.T.S. Program Goal (a below)	BST 400i Learning Outcomes: In this course ...
<p>a) Intellectual Formation - The program shall foster sound knowledge of the revelation of God in creation, in Israel, and in the person of Jesus Christ as witnessed to by Scripture and the Church's Tradition.</p> <p>b) Cultural Context - The program shall foster an evangelical discernment of the 'signs of the times' to engage with the reality of cultural diversity in the Church and world.</p> <p>c) Personal and Spiritual Formation - The program shall foster growth in terms of human and Christian maturity, as a personal response to being a disciple of Jesus Christ and as a dimension of public witness.</p> <p>d) Capacity for Ministerial Leadership - The program shall foster theological reflection on and education for the practice of ministerial leadership in the Church and world.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. you will engage critically with contemporary scholarly debates surrounding a number of historical and theological issues raised by the material. [IF; PSF; CML] 2. you will analyse and address, both diachronically and synchronically, the official teaching of the Catholic Church on the interpretation of Scripture.³ [IF; CC; PSF; CML] 3. you will analyse one text in depth, summarizing the pertinent history of interpretation of the text and formulating an informed interpretation based on the application of the Catholic principles of biblical interpretation. [IF; PSF; CML] 4. you will identify and explain a number of implicit connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament. [IF; CC; PSF; CML] 5. by the end of the course you will be able to articulate an informed understanding of the concepts of Divine Revelation, biblical inspiration, biblical inerrancy, and formation of the biblical canon, as they pertain to your ecclesial membership. [IF; CC; PSF; CML]

² This is based on Bloom's 1956 taxonomy of educational objectives, the other two domains of learning being 'affective' and 'psychomotor'.

³ Students are expected to apply those principles that pertain to their ecclesial membership.

Instructional activity	Learning Outcomes
Online hyper-flex instruction	#1; #2; #4; #5
Self-directed study / written assignments	#1; #2; #3; #4; #5

Master of Religious Education Students:

M.R.E. Program Goals	BST 400i Learning Outcomes: In this course ...
<p>a) Theological Instruction - The program shall offer students instruction in the major areas of Catholic theology.</p> <p>b) Religious Education Instruction - The program shall offer instruction in the discipline of Religious education in the competency of a teaching or administrative concentration.</p> <p>c) Cultural Context - The program shall foster a capacity to discern and engage the cultural context as it impacts Catholic education.</p> <p>d) Personal and Spiritual Formation - The program shall offer students with opportunities to grow in their spiritual life and in their vocation as Catholic educators and witnesses to the Gospel.</p> <p>e) Integrating Theory and Praxis - The program shall offer integration of theological knowledge and religious education formation in the professional work of Catholic education.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. you will engage critically with contemporary scholarly debates surrounding a number of historical and theological issues raised by the Christian Scriptures. [TI; REI; CC; PSF; ITP] 2. you will analyse and address, both diachronically and synchronically, the official teaching of the Catholic Church on the interpretation of Scripture.⁴ [TI; CC; PSF] 3. you will analyse one biblical text in depth, summarizing the pertinent history of interpretation of the text and formulating an informed interpretation based on the application of the Catholic principles of biblical interpretation. [TI; CC; PSF] 4. you will identify and explain a number of implicit connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament. [TI; PSF] 5. by the end of the course you will be able to articulate an informed understanding of the concepts of Divine Revelation, biblical inspiration, biblical inerrancy, and formation of the biblical canon, as they pertain to your professional context as an educator in a Roman Catholic School/District. [TI; ITP]

Instructional activity	Learning Outcomes
Online instruction	#1; #2; #4; #5
Self-directed study / written assignments	#1; #2; #3; #4; #5

⁴ Students are expected to apply those principles that pertain to their ecclesial membership.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

As per the *NTC 2020-2021 Academic Calendar*:⁵

All undergraduate courses, including Intersession 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.
- 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.

This course introduces students to sacred scripture, their study and interpretation in the Church. As such, the course presents and explores essential material that will be considered assimilated in subsequent scripture courses in the program. The emphasis will be on acquiring 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.

Written material submitted for assessment *in this course* will amount to 20 pages. A detailed breakdown of course assignments is given below. It applies the principle of Differentiation so students can expect assignments that align with the overall *objectives* and *learning outcomes* of their particular program of study.

Please provide a word count in the footer of each of the written assignments. As a rule of thumb, a variation of +/- 10% of the required word count is acceptable.

	Assignments Online students	Due date	% final grade
MDiv / MTS	Seminar paper 1 (4 pages)	Tbd	20
	Seminar paper 2 (4 pages)	-	20
	Forum Discussions (7 pages)	-	20
	Exegetical paper (5 pages)	-	20
	Oral exam (15 minutes)	-	20
MRE	Seminar paper 1 (4 pages)	Tbd	20
	Seminar paper 2 (4 pages)	-	20
	Forum Discussions (7 pages)	-	20
	Thematic study (5 pages)	-	20
	Oral exam (15 minutes)	-	20

- **Exegetical Paper [EP]: [Theology students]**
On a Scripture text negotiated with the instructor. The aim of the exegetical paper is to develop and practice exegetical and hermeneutical skills identified in the Scripture documents as consistent with the Mind of the Church. Students will use the book by M. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (2009 rev. ed.).

⁵ Available at <http://www.newman.edu/Admissions/AcademicRegulations.aspx#CourseWork>

- Seminar papers [SP]: [All students]**
 These will explore the major Scripture documents promulgated by the Catholic Church between the Council of Trent and Pope Benedict XVI's *Verbum Domini*. The aim of the seminar papers is for students to develop a working understanding of the Church's teaching on the topic of interpretation of the bible in the Church. Topics will be identified at the start of the course.
- Thematic study [TS]: [Religious Ed. students]**
 Students will submit a thematic study – theme to be agreed with the professor. The aim of the Thematic study are twofold: *first*, students explore the presentation of a particular theme in a given section of the bible [typically the Pentateuch, or the Prophets, or the books of Wisdom, or the Gospels, etc.]; *second*, students explore the integration in their professional milieu (e.g. Catholic School District/School) of the conclusions drawn from the exploration of the biblical theme in the first part.
- Forum discussions [FD] – [all students]**
 There are ten weekly graded forum discussions scheduled through the course; students must contribute to all discussions.
 Assessment will be based on whether contributions demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the reading material **as well as** pertinence as to the discussion topic/question. Each weekly Forum Discussion will identify a set of two questions designed to address at least one of the Program Goals.
- Oral Exam: [all students]**
 All students will take a 15-minute oral exam during exam week – details will be circulated two weeks prior to the final exam date.

Assessment	Learning Objectives
Forum discussions	#1
Seminar papers	#1
Exegetical paper	#1; #2; #3; #4; #5
Thematic study	#1; #2; #3; #4; #5
Oral exam	#5

Textbooks

** A Catholic Study Bible (latest edition of the RSV or NRSV or NAB)⁶

Theology students:

D. Béchar, *The Scripture Documents – an Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings* (The Liturgical Press: 2002)

Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* - Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 2010)⁷

J. Bergsma and B. Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible – the Old Testament* (Ignatius Press: 2018)

⁶ Students who belong to another Christian denomination are of course free to use the version commonly in use for the liturgy or worship in their church.

⁷ This is accessible full text on the Vatican website.

D. Farkasfalvy, *A Theology of the Christian Bible* (Catholic University of America: 2018)
 M. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* (Hendrickson; 2010 rev. exp. Ed.)

Religious Education Students:

Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 2010)
 Bergsma/Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible – the Old Testament* (Ignatius Press: 2018)
 Kelly, *An Introduction to the New Testament for Catholics* (M. Glazier: 2006)

Recommended Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 1994)
Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church - Christ Our Pascha (Synod of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church: 2016)
 International Theological Commission – *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2011).⁸
 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana; 2002).
 Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture* (The Liturgical Press: 2014)

Course Requirements

<u>Online hyper-flex:</u>
Weekly contributions to Forum Discussions – as per schedule. Careful reading of the materials in preparation for class. Optional synchronous lecture (Zoom) Each student is to attend two individual tutorials (online through Zoom - 30 minute each)

Important Lecture topics delivered in class will be video recorded and uploaded on Moodle by the Tuesday morning following the lecture. Online students unable to attend the synchronous lecture are encouraged to watch these instructional videos

Late Submission Policy.

Late submissions are accepted for a fee: 10% off the grade per day late, up to a maximum of THREE days. Beyond this delay an automatic Fail grade is allocated (49% for completed assignments; 0% for non-completed assignments). In case of attenuating circumstances, the submission of supporting evidence (doctor’s note and the like) automatically suspends the application of this policy. PLEASE avail yourselves of the Incomplete Grade Policy

⁸ Full text available on the Vatican website.

Course Schedule

Week 0 [] Course orientation

Read from Bergsma/Pitre *Catholic Introduction to the Bible – The Old Testament*
Ch. 1 ‘The Vision for this Book’

PART I: FORMATION AND INTERPRETATION OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

Week 1 [09/14] Introduction to the Bible – defining our terms

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre *Catholic Introduction to the Bible – The Old Testament*
Ch. 2 ‘Introducing the Old Testament’

Moodle Forum discussion #1

PART II: UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT

Week 2 [09/21] The Pentateuch – biblical geography and archaeology

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre *Catholic Introduction to the Bible – The Old Testament*
Ch. 3 “What is the Pentateuch” OR Ch. 4 “The Origins of the Pentateuch”

Developing skills for Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 1.

Magisterium: Read in D. Béchard, *The Scripture Documents*, the following:
“Council of Trent, Session IV, decrees 1 and 2; Session V, decree 2”;
“Leo XIII: Encyclical Letter *Providentissimus Deus*”

Moodle Forum discussion #2

Week 3 [09/28] The Pentateuch – biblical anthropology and Patriarchal history

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre: Ch. 5 ‘Genesis 1-11’

Developing skills for Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 2.

Magisterium: in Béchard book
“Benedict XV: Encyclical Letter *Spiritus Paracletus*”
“Pius XII: Encyclical Letter *Divino Afflante Spiritu*”

Application: Seminar paper 1 (700 words)

Topic:

‘Assess the contribution of the scripture documents promulgated up to the eve of the Second Vatican Council to the subject of the interpretation of scripture with the mind of the church and the role of catholic exegetes’.

Moodle Forum discussion #3

Week 4 [10/05] The Law and the Land in Biblical Israel

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre: Ch. 7 ‘Exodus’

Developing skills for Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 3

Magisterium: in Béchard book

“Pontifical Biblical Commission: Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*

“Vatican II: Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*”

Application: discussion

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

Treatise on God, Question 1; art. 10. “Whether in Holy Scripture a word may have several senses”⁹

Moodle Forum discussion #4

Thanksgiving week [10/12]

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre: Ch. 8 ‘Leviticus’ **OR** Ch. 10 ‘Deuteronomy’

Tutorial #1

Each student is to book, for this week, a tutorial with the instructor. We will discuss the content of the readings from Bergsma/Pitre

Week 5 [10/19] Historical Books I: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel; 1-2 Kings

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre:

ONE OF: Ch. 11 ‘Joshua’; Ch. 12 ‘Judges’; Ch. 14 ‘The Books of Samuel’; Ch. 15 ‘The Books of Kings’

Developing skills for Biblical Interpretation – an ecclesial task – Part 4.

Magisterium: in Béchard book

“John-Paul II: Apostolic Constitution *Scriptorum Thesaurus*

“John-Paul II: Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on the Biblical Sciences and the Teaching Office of the Church”

“John-Paul II: Address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on the Nature of Catholic Interpretation of the Bible”

Interdicasterial Commission for the Catechism of the Catholic Church

“John-Paul II: Address on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”

Application: Seminar paper 2 (700 words)

Topic:

‘Assess the contribution of the scripture documents promulgated since the start of the Second Vatican Council until Pope St John Paul II’s ‘Address on the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church’ to the subject of the interpretation of scripture with the mind of the church and the role of catholic exegetes’.

Week 6 [10/26] Historical Books II – 1-2 Chronicles; Ezra-Nehemiah; 1-2 Maccabees

Acquiring knowledge:

⁹ accessible at <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1001.htm#article10>

Read from Bergsma/Pitre:

ONE OF: Ch. 16 'The Books of Chronicles'; Ch. 17 'Ezra and Nehemiah'; Ch. 21 'The Books of Maccabees'

Developing skills for Biblical Interpretation – an academic task - Part 1.

Read:

Bécharde: PBC - 'On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', 'Preface' and 'Introduction',

Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*: 'The Task', 9-33.

Application: constructing your exegetical paper

Select a biblical text for your exegetical paper.

Please check with instructor that the chosen text is adequate for the purpose of the exegetical paper in this course [due December 09].

Moodle Forum discussion #5

Week 7 [11/02] The Prophets and the Prophetic Books

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre:

ONE OF: Ch. 31 'Jeremiah'; Ch. 34 'Ezekiel'; Ch. 35 'Daniel'

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 2

Read:

Bécharde: PBC - 'On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', 'Methods and approaches for interpretation', 249-260

Gorman: *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 'Survey', 63-68; 'Contextual analysis', 69-81

Application: constructing your exegetical paper

Compose a first draft of the survey of your chosen text;

Compose a first draft of the contextual analysis of your chosen text.

Moodle Forum discussion #6

Reading Week [11/09]

Week 8: [11/16] Wisdom Literature in Biblical Israel

Acquiring knowledge:

Read from Bergsma/Pitre:

Ch. 22 'The Place of the Wisdom Literature in the Canon',

Plus ONE of: Ch. 24 'Psalms'; Ch. 25 'Proverbs'

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 3.

Read:

PBC - 'On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', 'Methods and approaches for interpretation', 260-275.

Elements of Biblical Exegesis, 'Formal Analysis', 83-100.

Application: constructing your exegetical paper

Develop a first draft of the formal analysis of your chosen text.

Tutorial #2

Each student is to book a tutorial with the instructor.

PART III: UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT

Week 9: [11/23] Introduction to the New Testament

Acquiring knowledge:

Reading will be circulated in class

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an academic task – Part 4.

Read:

PBC - 'On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', 'Hermeneutical Questions', 275-284.

Elements of Biblical Exegesis: 'Detailed Analysis of the Text', 101-125.

Application: constructing your exegetical paper:

Develop the detailed analysis of your chosen text.

Moodle Forum discussion #7

Week 10: [11/30] Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts

Acquiring knowledge:

Reading will be circulated in class

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an academic task - Part 5.

Read:

PBC - 'On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', 'Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation', 284-302.

Elements of Biblical Exegesis, 'Synthesis', 127-138.

Application: constructing your exegetical paper:

Develop your synthesis of the results of your exegetical work so far.

Moodle Forum discussion #8

Week 11 [12/07] Johannine Literature

Acquiring knowledge:

Reading will be circulated in class

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an ecclesial task AND an academic task

Read:

PBC - 'Interpretation of the Bible in the Life of the Church', 303-315.

Elements of Biblical Exegesis, 'Reflection: Theological Interpretation', 139-166

Application: constructing your exegetical paper:

Compose a short theological reflection drawn from your interpretation of the passage

Expand and refine your exegesis

Moodle Forum discussion #9

Week 12: [12/09] Pauline Literature and the Catholic Epistles

Acquiring knowledge:

Reading will be circulated in class

Developing skills for Biblical interpretation – an ecclesial task AND an academic task

Read:

Elements of Biblical Exegesis, ‘Expansion and Refinement of the Exegesis’, 177-172.

Application: Completing and submitting your exegetical paper (1,500 words)

Expand and refine your exegesis

Compose final draft of exegetical paper

Moodle Forum discussion #10

Final Oral Examination – This will be scheduled during exam week, as defined by the Registrar’s Office (projected date is December 14)

General Academic Information

Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade “F” may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the **Student Handbook** in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the **Student Handbook** in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.

Grading System

Graduate Studies		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Fail	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Fail	F	0.0

Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

Regulations

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5" x 11" paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:

1. Kate Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Ahters, eds., "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers" (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the **Academic Calendar** for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work

- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the **Academic Calendar** for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the **Student Handbook** for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Services, contact Sr. Zoe Bernatsky at 780-392-2450 ext. 2213; email zoe.bernatsky@newman.edu

Bibliography (May be distributed in class.)