



## 06ON6221 — Theological Interpretation of Scripture

2 Credits | July 11–14, 2023 | Tuesday through Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM | West Room

Instructor: R. B. Jamieson, PhD

“You have to learn to speak sky with an earth tongue.”

– Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*

### I. Introduction

#### A. Purpose and Description

In the wake of the so-called Enlightenment, the secular academy has set the tasks of exegesis and dogmatics against each other. What God joined together, unbelieving reason divided and divorced. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, much evangelical theology and exegesis has been decisively shaped by this divorce, often subtly, and with harmful results. To respond to this state of affairs in the prayerful hope of reformation and renewal, this course develops a framework for properly reordering and reuniting the disciplines of exegetical and dogmatic reasoning.

We will draw partly, though not exclusively, on resources provided by what Michael Allen has called the “emergency measure” movement known as Theological Interpretation of Scripture. More foundationally, we will consider how Scripture itself teaches us to read itself theologically.

This course will be more like a graduate seminar than an introductory or overview class. We will read works that both theorize and exemplify the theological interpretation of Scripture, and will develop a toolkit of properly theological tools to bring to the exegesis of Scripture. The course will culminate in an exegetical assignment in which students put theological tools to work in closely reading a passage of their choice.

## **B. Dates and Times**

Class will be held in the West Room from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, July 11 to 14, 2023.

All graded materials are due six weeks after final day of class: Friday, August 25 at 11:59pm.

## **C. Instructor**

R. B. Jamieson (“Bobby” if you please)

Email: [bobby.jamieson@capbap.org](mailto:bobby.jamieson@capbap.org)

Office Phone: (202) 543-6111

## **D. Course Website**

Online via Canvas you can find all course documents and readings that are not included in the three textbooks listed below. All announcements will be made through that site and all assignments should be submitted there. There will also be opportunities to discuss via the forums. Make sure you have access to Canvas before the first day of class.

However, Canvas is fairly limited in its conversational abilities, so if you have a question or comment, please make contact by following these guidelines:

- If your question is in any way suited for a public environment—i.e., it might be helpful to others—please use the “student-to-professor” section of the discussion module in Canvas to ask it.
- If your question is more mundane or private, please email me.
- Do not use the Canvas email system, since it is not suited for lengthy conversations.

## **E. Textbooks to Purchase**

Students are required to purchase the following three textbooks:

Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation*. London: T&T Clark, 2011.

J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010. (Though see II.3 below.)

R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2022.

## II. Required Reading, Reflection Papers, and Book Reviews

### II.1 Before the course begins:

Jamieson and Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning*, whole book.

### II.2 After each day of class:

- The reading and reflection papers assigned to each day of class are due at the beginning of the next day of class, the paper in hard copy. So, the work listed under Day 1 is due in class at 8:30am on Wednesday, July 12. The work assigned to Friday, July 14 will be due via canvas at 8:30am on Saturday, July 15.
- Feel free to read ahead. However, keep in mind that our time in class each day should aid your engagement with and understanding of the reading assignments for the next day. If you struggle with an assignment on first read, I recommend re-reading it the day before we will discuss it.
- Please complete the readings in the order listed, and write the reflection paper (below) on the singled-out reading only after reading the others as well.
- For each reading marked with an asterisk (\*), write a **two- to three-page reflection paper**. In the first paragraph, briefly summarize the main argument of the reading. In the remainder of the paper, reflect critically on it. This can involve raising questions and doing your best to answer them, criticizing aspects of the argument and offering scripturally based alternatives, considering how the reading's arguments can be applied theologically and exegetically, or considering the possible pastoral payoff, in preaching and counseling, of the reading. Please use a size-12 font, double spaced, with your name, the date, and the reading report (see below) listed in the top right. You will hand in these papers at the beginning of class on their assigned date.
- **Reading reports on each reflection paper:** In the top right corner of the first page of each reflection paper, list the pages you read for each reading assignment, which should be all of them, word-for-word (no skimming), including footnotes or endnotes. So, July 11 should look like this:

Allen, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology—Part Two," 344–57

Yeago, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma," 371–84.

\*Webster, "Biblical Reasoning," 733–51.

### Day 1 || July 11 || Introducing Theological Interpretation

R. Michael Allen, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology—Part Two," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 14 (2020): 344–57

David S. Yeago, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *Sewanee Theological Review* 45 (2002): 371–84.

\*John Webster, "Biblical Reasoning," *Anglican Theological Review* 90 (2008): 733–51.

**Day 2 || July 12 || The Creator-Creator Distinction, God-fitting Speech, and Divine Names**  
Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 97–110.

\*Scott R. Swain, “The Radiance of the Father’s Glory: Eternal Generation, the Divine Names, and Biblical Interpretation,” in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, ed. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 29–43.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Ia.13.1–12, in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. I: Ia QQ. 1–119, Ia IIae QQ 1–4 (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1948), 59–72.

**Day 3 || July 13 || Christ the Paradox: Scripture’s Twofold Discourse about Christ**

\*Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 29: On the Son*, in *Gregory of Nazianzus, On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel R. Wickham, Popular Patristics 23 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 69–92.

Cyril of Alexandria, *Second Letter to Nestorius, Third Letter to Nestorius, First Letter to Succensus, Second Letter to Succensus*, in John Anthony McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 262–75, 352–63.

R. B. Jamieson, “1 Corinthians 15.28 and the Grammar of Paul’s Christology,” *NTS* 66 (2020): 187–207.

**Day 4 || July 14 || God’s Triune Scriptural Self-Naming: Missions, Processions, and Relations**

\*C. Kavin Rowe, “Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics,” *Pro Ecclesia* 11 (2002): 295–312.

Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1991) V.1–17, pp. 189–204.

Scott R. Swain, “John,” in *The Trinity in the Canon: A Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Practical Proposal* (Nashville: B&H, forthcoming 2023), 177–217.

II.3 *After the course ends:*

Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), whole book.

J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), whole book.

In addition to reading the books by Swain and Billings, students are required to write a 3–5 page book review (double spaced, 12-point font) on each, due on Friday, August 25 at 11:59pm. The

first half-page to page (but no more) should consist of summary; the rest should be critical engagement.

Students who would like to substitute an book that offers exegetical or theological case study in place of Billings' (which is a more overview, introductory work) may do so, provided they obtain permission from the instructor and confirm their choice of book ahead of time. Acceptable substitutions for Billings include:

Augustine. *The Trinity*. Edited by John E. Rotelle. Translated by Edmund Hill. Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1991.

Duby, Steven J. *Jesus and the God of Classical Theism: Biblical Christology in Light of the Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022.

Jamieson, R. B. *The Paradox of Sonship: Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. SCDS. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021.

McGuckin, John Anthony. *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004.

Sanders, Fred. *The Triune God*. NSD. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Soulen, R. Kendall. *The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity: Volume One; Distinguishing the Voices*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011.

### III. Exegetical Paper

As a capstone assignment for the class, students are required to write a 10–12 page (double-spaced, 12 point font) exegetical paper on any biblical passage of your choosing. You may, but are not required to, draw on commentaries and other exegetical and theological literature. You must draw explicitly on the toolkit assembled in *Biblical Reasoning*, as well as on other concepts and resources discussed in class and in the course readings, to demonstrate how such theological resources provide deeper insight into the class.

By the end of class on Friday, July 14, you must obtain the instructor's approval of the passage you intend to write on. Further details of this assignment will be discussed in class. See also the handout on Canvas from Dr. Keene on how to write an exegetical paper.

The paper will be due on Friday, August 25 at 11:59pm.

## IV. Grading

Grades will be calculated on the following basis and scale:

- Attendance and Participation (20%)
- Reading (20%)
- Reflection Papers (20%)
- Book Reviews (20%)
- Exegetical Paper (20%)

A	94–100	C	74–76
A–	90–93	C–	70–73
B+	87–89	D+	67–69
B	84–86	D	64–66
B–	80–82	D–	60–63
C+	77–79	F	0–59

## V. The Fine Print

*1. Technology Policy.* All computing devices are prohibited in the classroom (laptops, tablets, phones of any sort, recording devices, etc).<sup>1</sup> Some (perhaps all) of you might consider this rule draconian and perverse, but I assure you that it exists for your benefit. Though you may feel that your use of technology makes you a better, more efficient student, the best research says that [it does not](#). In fact, studies show that it significantly impairs your learning and [the learning of others around you](#). Besides, taking notes by hand improves your recall and apprehension of the material we discuss, as does reading on paper and not on screens. It follows that the classroom will also be a phone-free space. During class, your phone will be either powered off or in airplane mode– not simply out of sight while nevertheless receiving all those important notifications. Even then, if you are dependent on your smartphone, its mere presence—even if powered off—has been proven to diminish your cognitive capacities. Please be mindful that since computing devices will not be used, you will need to bring hard copies of the relevant materials to class (notes, books, assignments, etc.), as well as any tools necessary for note-taking. You are required to have physical copies of the course texts; e-books are not allowed.

### *2. Disabled Students*

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor at the beginning of the course.

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<sup>1</sup> I have adapted most of this material from Alan Jacobs of Baylor University.

### *3. Course and Syllabus Modification (Disclaimer)*

This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the learning objectives, instructional format, readings, activities, evaluation criteria, policies and procedures, and other information necessary for students to complete this course. The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the learning experience as a result of events and circumstances that occur during the course.

### *4. Classroom Etiquette*

Cell phones and pagers must be set on silent notification during the class session. Accepting phone calls inside the classroom is not allowed.

### *5. Recording of Lectures*

Audio recording of the lectures in any format is prohibited except in the case of need based on physical disability. In such a case, the student should first request permission from the professor.