

**Canadian Nazarene College**  
**Jesus of Nazareth BL 376b (UoC Sr Rels)**  
**Winter 1999, Tuesday/Thursday, 1:00-2:15 pm**  
**Professor: Dr. David Neale**  
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## **I. Course Objectives**

In this term we turn to the portrait of Jesus of Nazareth as found in the Gospel of John. Our work this term will focus on exegetical analysis of set texts in John in a seminar setting. Particular attention will be paid to exegetical methods and learning to effectively read, interpret and apply John's message.

## **II. Course Outline**

### **January**

12- Introduction and Method - Read John  
14 - Where, When What.....  
19 - When, Where What, contd. (Beasley-Murray, xxxii-lxvi)  
21- Exegetical Lab (Beasley-Murray, lxvi-xcii)  
26 – Exegetical Lab

### **February**

2 - Exegesis Paper #1, Set Text: John 1.1-18, The Word Becomes Flesh  
9 - Exegesis Paper #2, Set Text: John 2.1-12, Wedding at Cana  
16 - Exegesis Paper #3, Set Text: John 3.1-21, Nicodemus  
23 - Exegesis Paper #4, Set Text: John 4.1-42, Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

### **March**

9 - Exegesis Paper #5, Set Text: John 5.1-29, Jesus Heals on the Sabbath  
16 - Exegesis Paper #6, Set Text: John 6, Feeding of 5000/Bread of Heaven  
23 - Exegesis Paper #7, Set Text: John 9, Man Born Blind  
30 - Exegesis Paper #8, Set Text: John 10, Jesus the Good Shepherd

### **April**

6 - Exegesis Paper #9, Set Text: John 17, Jesus' Prayer  
13 – Summary Session

## **III. Course Requirements**

The grade will be assigned on these criteria:

9 papers in on time:	90%
8	80%
7	70%
6	60%
5 or less	Fail
Participation/attendance	10%

Required minimum length: 4 pages typed dbl spaced, 12 pt type, margins 1". "On time" means at the first of class on the day due. Everyone must do the first four papers.

## **IV. Required Texts**

Beasley-Murray, G.R. *John in Word Biblical Commentary*, (Waco: Word Books, 1987).  
*The New Oxford Annotated Bible.*

## **V. On Reserve (one day)**

Brown, R.E. *The Gospel According to John* (two vol.) in *The Anchor Bible*, (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

Bruce, F.F. *The Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983).

Haenchen, Ernst. *John 1, John 2* in *Hermeneia*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

Lindars, Barnabas. *The Gospel of John* in *New Century Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972). Two copies.

Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971).

Smalley, S.S. *John- Evangelist & Interpreter*, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978). Three copies.

## **Steps in Exegesis** **David Neale, Winter 1999**

The following are the steps to be followed in exegeting our set texts and preparing your exegesis papers.

### **1. The Text and the Reader**

**a. The first step is a "first-time" encounter with the text.** First of all, relax. You are a fully competent reader. Engage in a **sympathetic reading** where you attempt to place yourself in the position of a first time reader. Be aware of your Christian suppositions and try to get a fresh understanding of the text. The first step in exegesis will be the notes your reading will produce. **Write down questions and observations as you read.** These should be your own, not what you think someone else would ask or observe. Honesty is very important, let your doubts as well as convictions have a voice. If you have a question don't suppress it because you think you ought not ask it. This type of reading is the most important step in all exegesis and will serve as a point of reference for all of your other work. Nothing begins until you have read and reread the passage at this level. Incorporate several of your most important textual questions into your paper and why they are relevant.

**b. Communing with the author.** What do you know of the author's concerns, world, presuppositions, heartfelt longing from the text itself? What kind of individual is this? Is the author's knowledge omniscient, bound by time, does he know what people think, does he control distance, have an ideological point of view?

**c. What themes and literary artistry are evident?** Look for repetitive ideas and phrases and words. It will be a matter of accumulating material as we probe deeper into the book. For example, how does the author develop the theme of Jesus' identity. See handout on Rhoades and Michie.

**d. Identify key issues that indicate conflict and tension in the narrative.** It is a well known fact of literature that conflict material is crucial to narrative. Be sensitive to conflict incidents and describe what you think is going on.

**e. Structure and Plot.** In this section I want you to think about the overall movement of the plot. What role does your set text play in the overall structure of John. Your own creativity and analytical skills will be your best aids here.

### **2. Mechanics of the Text**

**a. Focus on select portions.** An exegesis paper cannot be sufficiently thorough if trying to handle too much material. This is where you must develop "exegetical judgment." Pick out what is most important in the passage and focus your time accordingly.

**b. Does the author quote the OT?** If so read the OT text and use what you learn to interpret your author.

**c. Now come back to your first time reading and consolidate your results.** How has your work on the passage so far enhanced or changed your initial reading of the passage? Are you feeling more confident about the author's meaning, or are there still significant questions? Don't attempt to answer your questions just yet, but reflect back on your original reading. You need not show anything here in your paper unless you want to.

**d. Word Studies.** Often a particular word will hold significance that is worth "mining." Example: In the beginning was the *word*... I will show you how to use the many helps available for in depth word studies.

**3. *What Others Have Said and Thought About Your Passage.***

You have now done thorough first hand work on the text yourself. Now it is time to check your work against the findings of other students of the Book of John. Find two commentaries from the reserve shelf that are helpful. Here you will learn how others have interpreted important passages. Commentaries are especially helpful for working with problem passages, so focus your reading on where you need help. You may learn additional historical and social background information that will elucidate a passage. This is all part of the interpretation task. A word of caution. Don't simply surrender your reading of the text to the opinions of the "experts" in the commentaries. Yes, they are "experts" but you have done your own careful study of the text. Keep faith in your own ability to read and interpret competently.

**4. *Answer your own textual questions.***

Now is the time to sort through your initial textual questions. Discard ones that now seem irrelevant or unanswerable. Provide answers where appropriate and satisfy yourself that you understand the text to the best of your ability. Remember, this is the Word of God, it deserves your best effort.

**5. *The Text and Today.***

**a. All of this work is actually groundwork for the exegete's most important task, i.e. relating the passage to the modern world.** What have you learned that could be communicated to someone else that would help them live for Christ? If you have done your other work well there should be a whole fund of ideas that have already come to mind as you worked with the passage. Ironically, the first step, your first-time reading of the passage, may come back as the strongest influence as you seek to apply what you have learned. Steps 2, 3 and 4 have deepened your acquaintance with the content and kept you from making errors in understanding. But finally, bringing the text to life in a modern context is the ultimate goal of the exercise. I would like a thoughtful half page about life application and the implications of this passage for a Christian pilgrim.

**b. Integration of our text into a Christian theology.** Each passage ultimately takes its place within the whole canon. The purpose of this step is to place the theology derived from this particular text in the context of Christian doctrine in general. Working on this scale is "systematic theology" in that we try to reconcile the inevitable tensions that arise between the perspectives of the various authors. For example, how does this portrait of Jesus square with the synoptic portrait? This is known in modern parlance as the tension between "unity" and "diversity" of doctrine in the biblical canon. Your comments here should demonstrate that you understand the implications your passage has for Christian doctrine in general.