

RS 180-1
Senior Seminar: Doctrine of Scripture
Westmont College
Spring 2017

General information

Class meets: Monday and Wednesday, 3:15-5:05, in Adams 216

Professors: Holly Beers and Telford Work

Contact details: Porter Center 11 and 5, ext. 7267 and 6199, hbeers@westmont.edu,
work@westmont.edu

Beers office hours: Main campus: Mon and Wed 9:30-10:30 am; Fri 3:15-4:15 *except during faculty meetings 1x/month*; and by appointment. Downtown: Thurs 1-3 pm (email me to schedule a meeting during this time).

Work office hours: Wed 11:30-12:30 in the DC (sign up on my door); Wed 12:40-1:40, Thurs 10:55-11:55, Thurs 1:10-2:10 in my office (sign up on my door); and by appointment.

Course description

Review and integration of skills in exegesis, hermeneutics, theology and historical analysis, toward the goal of an enduring faith and a missional Christianity. Themes and format will vary from year to year. RS 180 fulfills the Integrating the Major Discipline and Speech Intensive requirements of the GE.

Course learning outcomes

Students will:

- apply a range of interpretive methodologies to biblical and theological texts concerned with the Christian uses and doctrine of scripture;
- reason according to the logic of the Christian faith as they wrestle with the topic;
- develop appropriate means of ecclesial engagement around the relevant issues.

Students will also

- make at least three oral presentations totaling at least 30 minutes.

Course reading

Ann Monroe, *The Word: Imagining the Gospel in Modern America*, Westminster John Knox, 2000.

N.T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*, revised and expanded edition, HarperOne, 2013.

E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Paul Behaving Badly: Was the Apostle a Racist, Chauvinist Jerk?* IVP, 2016.

Peter J. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture*, Baylor, 2009.

John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*, Cambridge, 2013.

Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*, Eerdmans, 2016.

Other selections available online.

Tasks and grading

1. Preparing and Participating [15%]

This class will operate primarily as a seminar. To make the class profitable, you should be prepared to participate. This means that you need to complete readings and assignments before class, bring all readings and your Bible with you, and be ready to contribute to class discussions in a meaningful way.

2. Topical analyses and presentations [25%]

RS 180 is the capstone of your Westmont Religious Studies degree. It's a chance for you to pull together what you've learned over the past three and a half years about the Bible and the Church, biblical hermeneutics and theological thinking, Christianity among world religions and cultures,

orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Students will lead discussion of the day's topic with two in-class presentations of whatever format is most appropriate for that topic. Other students will enter into Canvas (in the text box) a question or observation from that day's reading for in-class discussion.

Each student will also present briefly on one chapter from Justin Holcomb, *Christian Theologies of Scripture: A Comparative Approach*. Additional presentations are possible for students so interested.

3. Written assignments [40%]

We will assign brief written assignments periodically, usually after completing our required books. These will usually run 4-5 double-spaced pages, in formats that may vary.

4. Online scripture use log [10%]

How is scripture being used and treated all around you? Keep an online log of noteworthy examples and your own analytical observations that draw on course materials and other sources of understanding from along the way of your education.

5. Preaching [10%]

For four years, you've been working to this point, your last assignment as an RS major. Bringing all your education, your biblical study skills, your theological analysis, your knowledge of the world around us, and your understanding of the Church, you will preach a sermon to the rest of the class. Effectiveness of oral delivery will comprise part of your grade.

Sermons will be presented during the final week of class. Class periods may run a little late those two days, so please plan accordingly (attendance is required).

Class schedule

Day	Topic	Holcomb Reports
1/9	<i>Course Introduction; The Shape of the Canon</i>	
1/11	Brown selections; Monroe preface and ch 1	
1/17	Monroe chs 2-6 and Reconnoitering I	
1/18	Monroe chs 7-9 and Reconnoitering II	
1/23	Monroe chs 10-12 and conclusion	
1/25	<i>Uses and Translations; Work, "Are We Using the Same Bible?"</i> Bible Project videos on biblical themes	
1/30	Wright preface, prologue, and chs 1-4	
2/1	Wright chs 5-7	
2/6	Wright chs 8-9	ch 1
2/8	Wright ch 10; Work, "Servants not Judges"	ch 2
2/13	Richards and O'Brien preface and chs 1-3	ch 3
2/15	Richards and O'Brien chs 4-6; Work, "Interdisciplinary Theology"	
2/22	Richards and O'Brien chs 7-8 and conclusion	ch 4

2/27	Hays selections	ch 5
3/1	Leithart preface and chs 1-2	ch 6
3/6	Leithart chs 3-4	ch 7
3/8	Leithart chs 5-6 and epilogue	ch 8
3/20	Beers selection; Thiselton ch 3	
3/22	Work, "The Confession of Christ"; Webster intro and ch 1	
3/27	Webster chs 2-3	ch 9
3/29	Webster ch 4 and 'conclusion'; Thiselton ch 17; read Brueggemann selection to prepare for sermons	
4/3	Keener intro and chs 1-2	ch 10
4/5	Keener chs 3-7	ch 11
4/10	Keener chs 8-11	ch 12
4/12	Keener chs 12-15	ch 13-17?
4/19	Keener chs 16-18 and conclusion	ch 13-17?
4/24	<i>Student Sermons</i>	
4/26	<i>Student Sermons</i>	
5/1	<i>Final Due</i>	

Class policies

Attendance

Attending class means being present physically and mentally: during class, you should be in your seat on time, with your assigned readings, prepared to contribute to class discussions.

Academic honesty

As reflected in the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism on the registrar's page, Westmont College is committed to the highest standards of academic honesty. Please reflect this commitment in your work: avoid borrowing classmates' work, falsification, and plagiarism of any kind—including using your own work from other classes. Academic dishonesty will be taken very seriously in this class, and any appropriate consequences will be applied. Professors reserve the right to penalize academic dishonesty with failure of the course.

Disability services

Students should be aware of Westmont College's Office of Disability Services, located on the second floor of the library (ext. 6186). The following statement is provided by the director:

Students who have been diagnosed with a disability are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the Office of Disability Services. These accommodations may be necessary to ensure your equal access to this course.

Grade definitions

Westmont has an extensive description of what it means to get an A, B, C, D, or F. If you haven't read it, it may be helpful (www.westmont.edu/_offices/registrar/academic_policies/grades.html).