

Biblical and Theological Studies (BTS)

Johnson (chair), McKnight, Nassif, Veeneman, Willits

The mission of the Department of Biblical and Theological studies within the General Education curriculum is to enable students to fashion lives of significance and service by providing them with the opportunity to develop intellectually, spiritually, and socially through their experience of a biblical and theological program. Such an experience occurs in the contexts of (1) an international student body and Faculty, (2) a culturally-diverse urban setting, (3) a vibrant dialogue about Christianity, faith, and culture, and (4) a school committed to a broad evangelical Christian tradition.

The Faculty of the Department of Biblical and Theological studies is committed to providing its majors with an opportunity to develop a life of significance and service by learning about God, the Bible and its interpretive issues, as well as the various historic Christian and religious traditions. In such an experience, the student is engaged to become responsible enough to integrate one's personal faith collegially into the larger scope of a liberal arts education as well as the various opportunities afforded by University ministries. Thus, the Department is committed to students developing abilities in (1) Biblical, historical, and theological interpretation, (2) critical thinking, and (3) the responsibility of knowledge and faith for shaping behavior. The Department is committed to a rigorous assessment of its students and the expected outcomes of its program, through regular observation, evaluation, and feedback.

Major requirements for the B.A. degree in Biblical and Theological Studies

Required semester hours

36 sh

Required core courses

1. Foundations: 2500, 2600
2. Concentration Options:
 - Biblical: Either 2640, 2650, or 2700; 5 courses from the following list with at least one course in each testament: 2110, 2120, 2130, 2210, 2260, 3150, 3240, 3250, 3910
 - Theological: 2640 and 2650; Choose 1 course from the following list: PHIL 2110, 2120, 3110, 3130, 3450, 3590; Choose 2 courses from the following list: BTS 2510, 2520, 2700, 3910, HIST 3150, 3415, 3440, 3540; Choose 1 course from the following list: 2110, 2120, 2130, 2210, 2260, 3150, 3240, 3250, 3910
3. Integrative Seminar: BTS 4010

Notes and restrictions

Up to four hours of coursework in the major may apply to the General Education requirement in Biblical and Theological Studies. BTS 1850 is the prerequisite for each course. Courses marked with a diamond are open to all students for the second GE course. Students may be granted special permission to substitute another BTS course for the second GE course by a written appeal to the Department Chair. A comprehensive exam is required for graduation.

Minor requirements in Biblical and Theological Studies

Required semester hours

Five courses above BTS 1850

Required core courses

Must include at least two biblical studies courses

Notes and restrictions

Up to four hours of coursework in the minor may apply to the General Education requirement in Biblical and Theological Studies.

GE Designates a course that fulfills all or part of a General Education (G.E.) requirement; see the General Education Program section of the catalog for more information.

1850 Introduction to the Bible (4 sh) GE

An introductory survey of the history and theology of the biblical narrative as it informs Christian faith today. Particular emphasis on the theological unity of the Bible's message.

2110 The Pentateuch (4 sh) GE

The focus of this course is the story of biblical Israel as depicted in the first five books of the Bible, or the Pentateuch. The course will follow closely the concern of the Pentateuch for faith, particularly in relation to the covenant at Mount Sinai and the revelation of the law. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2120 Old Testament Prophets (4 sh) GE

A historical study of the Hebrew prophets within the economic, political, and social conditions of their time. The significance of the prophetic message for the Hebrew and Christian faiths. Biblical Emphasis - Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2130 Old Testament Poetry and Wisdom Literature (4 sh) GE

A survey of the third major division of the Hebrew canon of the Bible, the Writings or Kethubim. The Writings are a miscellaneous collection of books important in understanding the history, faith, and practice of ancient Israel and early Judaism. This in turn is important for understanding the New Testament and the early Church. This course examines the different books of the Writings in their final, canonical form, with attention given to the various theological motifs. Different literary genres present in the collection are studied. The canonical role of the Writings as a collection is also examined. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2210 Jesus of Nazareth (4 sh) GE

The life and teachings of Jesus studied with reference to current research. Explores the quest for the historical Jesus, the historicity of the gospels, and the method and message of Jesus' teachings. Biblical Emphasis-New Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2260 Paul (4 sh) GE

A reconstruction of the life and letters of the Apostle Paul with reference to current research. Emphasis on Paul's theology of the church (ethics, mission, spirituality) and its practical importance for today. Biblical Emphasis-New Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2310 The Historical Geography of Biblical Israel (4 sh)

An intensive study of the geography, archeology, and history of ancient Israel as it informs the biblical story. In addition, modern dilemmas of politics, history, and faith in the Middle East will be examined. This course is limited to students who will travel to Israel for further study. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite:

BTS 1850.

2500 Introduction to Theology (4 sh) GE

A study of the major theological doctrines of the Christian faith, with emphasis on their integration into personal belief. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2510 Christian Ethics (4 sh) GE

A study of the moral implications of the Christian faith, with emphasis on their integration into personal belief. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2520 Christian Spirituality (4 sh) GE

An examination of the nature of Christian spirituality with emphasis on spiritual development and maturity. Relevant literature of a variety of approaches to spirituality will be introduced and evaluated. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2530 C.S. Lewis (4 sh)

A study of the life and thought of C.S. Lewis. Emphasis will be given to his religious ideas, his understanding of Christian doctrine, and his methods of commending the Christian faith by reason and imagination. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2600 History of the Church (4 sh) GE

The origin and development of Christianity in the world. Traces the institutional and doctrinal developments within the church from the post-apostolic period to the modern era. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2640 The Western Theological Tradition (4 sh) GE

A survey of the great Christian thinkers of the West from beginnings to post-modernity. Focus will be placed on distinctly Western forms of Christian thought in the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, with some attention to the Anabaptist and Evangelical Covenant communities, as well as to emerging feminist and under-represented theologies.

2650 The Eastern Theological Tradition (4 sh) GE

A survey of the great Christian thinkers of the Eastern (Orthodox) tradition from beginnings to the post-communist era. Focus will be placed on the development of classical Christian faith in the Church Fathers and Ecumenical Councils from the 2nd through 14th centuries, with some attention to contemporary Orthodox thought in the West, including its feminist voices.

2700 World Religions (4 sh) GE

Study of the common features and distinctive motifs that characterize some of the main religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and others. Emphasis on development of a methodology for reading and interpreting the world's scriptures. Discussion of the relation of Christian to non-Christian religions. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

2840 African-American Church History and Religious Thought (4 sh)

Studies the religious thought of African-Americans employing as a frame of reference the Black Christian church from its beginning during slavery to its maturity in the present day. Includes the ideas of a variety of spiritual leaders such as Jupiter Hammon, David Walker, Marcus Garvey, Father Divine, John Perkins, James Cone, and E.V. Hill. Examines the influence of slavery, emancipation, migration, and White racism on the development of African-American

religion. Cross-listed with AS 2840.

3150 The Book of Psalms (4 sh)

This course examines the characteristics of Hebrew poetry in order to study the book of Psalms according to literary types. The Psalter in its final form is studied as a coherent whole in terms of its collection and arrangement, and its varied teachings on faith and practice. Selected individual Psalms are studied in detail through exegesis of the English Bible. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3240 Luke and Acts (4 sh)

A literary and exegetical study of Luke and Acts, with special attention to historical setting, ecclesiastical purpose, and theology. Biblical Emphasis-New Testament Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3250 John (4 sh) GE

A theological and exegetical study of the texts of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of John. Special emphasis on the unique contribution of John to biblical theology (especially Christology, eschatology, and pneumatology). Biblical Emphasis-New Testament Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3410 Women, The Bible, and The Church (4 sh) GE

A study of the Old and New Testament texts that bear on the roles and status of women. This course reflects on a wide range of historical and theological perspectives relevant to the issues of women, the Bible, and the church. Biblical Emphasis-Old and New Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3510 Modern Theologians (4 sh)

Exploration of recent trends in the thinking of biblical and systematic theologians. Relevance of theology to modern issues. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3550 Philosophy of Religion (4 sh)

A seminar course on selected problems and topics in the area of philosophy of religion, e.g., the phenomenology of religious experience, the truth of religious belief, the existence and attributes of God. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3650 Planning for the Arts in Worship (1 sh)

This course offers foundational information in planning for the arts in worship, as well as opportunities to plan and participate in the use of the arts for seminary chapel.

3660 Spiritual Formation I: Journey (1 sh)

These courses serve two purposes: introduction and integration. The student will be introduced to the foundational motifs, terms, and practices of Christian spiritual formation. These and subsequent courses will provide the occasion for deepening and expanding some of these foundational components by reflective interaction with class material and group process. These courses will seek to integrate the individual and communal elements of spiritual formation, the personal and public character of the Christian life, and classical and contemporary formative practices.

3661 Spiritual Formation II: Practices (1 sh)

These courses serve two purposes: introduction and integration. The student will be introduced to the foundational motifs, terms, and practices of Christian spiritual formation. These and subsequent courses will provide the occasion for deepening and expanding

some of these foundational components by reflective interaction with class material and group process. These courses will seek to integrate the individual and communal elements of spiritual formation, the personal and public character of the Christian life, and classical and contemporary formative practices.

3670 Foundations of Christian Worship (3 sh)

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field known as liturgical studies. The course explores the history of Christian worship, liturgical theology, the place of ritual in the life of faith, as well as the application of a praxis-theory-praxis model to the worship concerns of pastoral ministry.

3680 Foundations of Worship Arts (3 sh)

This course will consider the use of the arts in worship using historical examples and liturgical theology paradigms. It will provide a background on each of the worship arts; music, drama, dance, visual arts, media and architecture/environment. Each art form will be reviewed with suggestions for resources, opportunities to plan and use the different art forms and frameworks for working together in teams and supervising the worship arts. Criteria for theological, liturgical, and aesthetic assessment will be included. The relationship between pastors, worship leaders and worship arts coordinators and the pastoral aspects of leading worship arts teams will all be considered. The course also includes a significant worship team planning and worship leading components applied in the context of the seminary chapel.

3690 Advanced Preaching, Worship and Liturgical Music (3 sh)

Students will consider the challenges of preaching and planning worship in a postmodern, multicultural setting and learn to develop liturgies and prepare sermons using a variety of methods that will enhance their effectiveness in the local church.

3910 Topics in Biblical and Theological Studies (4 sh)

An intensive investigation of a selected topic in biblical studies, theology, world religions, or philosophical theology. Extensive reading and research expected. Seminar format. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

3920 Advanced Topics in Biblical and Theological Studies (1-4 sh)

This is a topics course allowing the BTS department to grant credit for selected courses taken at North Park Theological Seminary.

4010 Fourth-Year Seminar in Biblical and Theological Studies (4 sh)

Limited to fourth-year students majoring in biblical and theological studies, this seminar concentrates on critical reading, writing, and discussion skills. Topics of study will change annually but in each case will explore current research and writing in biblical and theological studies.

4910 Independent Study in Biblical and Theological Studies (1-4 sh)

Intensive independent study of a topic chosen in consultation with an instructor in the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies. Student must have consent of instructor and division chairperson.

4970 Internship in Biblical and Theological Studies (1-4 sh)

Please refer to Internship section of the catalog for internship requirements and guidelines.