

Biblical and Theological Studies Major Course Description Changes for the 2026–27 Academic Year and Onward

Course Descriptions from 2026–27 Onward

BTS Courses

GE Designates a course that fulfills all or part of a Core Curriculum requirement; see the Core Curriculum Program section of the catalog for more information.

BTS 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.

BTS 2110 Narratives and Ethics for the Nations: 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 closely follow the Pentateuch's concern for faith, particularly in relation to the covenant at Mount Sinai and the revelation of the law. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2120 Voices of the Disenfranchised Communities: 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.

BTS 2130 Sages and Human Flourishing: Old Testament Poets (4 sh) GE

A survey of the third major division of the Hebrew canon of the Bible, the Writings or Kethubim. The Writings is a miscellaneous collection of books that are important for 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. The different literary genres in the collection are studied. The canonical role of the Writings as a collection is also examined. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2400: Christian Origins in the City (4 sh) GE

A study tour that will introduce students to the diverse cultural, historical, and geographical settings of earliest Christianity in the Greco-Roman world through a firsthand encounter with the material evidence in the ancient cities of Rome, Pompeii, and Herculaneum in Italy. The on-site exposure will provide the context for investigating the early development of the beliefs and practices that became Christianity in the diverse urban social settings of the Roman Empire. The travel portion of the course is required. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2210 Jesus and the Marginalized: Jesus and the Gospels (4 sh) GE

An investigation of the life, teachings, and passion of Jesus in their Jewish and Roman contexts, with special attention to his moral vision, the politics of the kingdom of God, and his solidarity with the oppressed. The course engages contemporary voices to assess the continuing significance of Jesus for faith and justice today. New Testament. Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2260 Saint Paul and Christian Interculturalism: Life and Letters of Paul (4 sh) GE

A study of the life and letters of Paul in their Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts, with special attention to his vision of the congregation as a multi-ethnic, intercultural body in Christ. The course examines Paul's theology, mission, and continuing significance for global Christianity today. New Testament Emphasis. Prerequisite: 1850.

BTS 3250 The Apocalypse and Empire (4 sh) GE

An exploration of the writings of John, especially the Gospel and Revelation, in their Jewish and Roman contexts. Reading Revelation as a Jewish apocalypse, we explore its vision as a framework for John's witness to Jesus, exhorting Christians to resist imperial power and offering enduring resources for reflection on power, justice, and faith today. New Testament Emphasis. Prerequisite: 1850.

BTS 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 examines a wide range of historical and theological perspectives relevant to issues of women, the Bible, and the church. Biblical Emphasis-Old and New Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850

BTS 2600 Saints, Radicals, and Heretics: Church History (4 sh) GE

An exploration of one or multiple figures in the history of Christianity, through engagement with primary and secondary sources, with an emphasis on social movements and change. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2640 – Faith, Politics, and Power Across Christian History: Historical Theology (4 sh) GE

A survey of the great Christian thinkers and doctrinal developments of the West from the beginnings to the 20th century, with an emphasis on the relationship between Christian churches and ruling authorities. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2700 World Religions in Christian Perspective (4 sh) GE

An investigation of religion from a Christian perspective by examining major world traditions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, and Islam—in their historical and cultural contexts. Emphasis is placed on each tradition’s view of the human problem and its proposed solution, with some attention to new religious movements and their relation to older traditions. Theological Emphasis. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2520 Christian Spirituality (4 sh) GE

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

BTS 3910 Topics in Biblical and Theological Studies (4 sh)

An intensive examination of a selected topic in fields related to Biblical and Theological Studies in Global Context (e.g., biblical studies, theology, Christian history, etc.). Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 4930 Directed Research (2 or 4 sh)

Students will work under the direction of a faculty mentor on a novel research project. Permission of the faculty mentor is required before enrollment in this course. This course may be repeated, though the department may limit the number of credit hours it counts toward the major. Please see the departmental degree requirements for details.

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

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

Course Descriptions Pre-2026–27

BTS Courses

GE Designates a course that fulfills all or part of a Core Curriculum requirement; see the Core Curriculum Program section of the catalog for more information.

BTS 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.

BTS 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 closely follow the Pentateuch’s concern for faith, particularly in relation to the covenant at Mount Sinai and the revelation of the law. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 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.

BTS 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 is a miscellaneous collection of books that are important for 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. The different literary genres in the collection are studied. The canonical role of the Writings as a collection is also examined. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2210 Jesus of Nazareth (4 sh) GE

The life and teachings of Jesus are 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.

BTS 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.

BTS 2310 The Land of Israel in the Biblical and Post-Biblical Periods (4 sh)

A study of the Land of Israel in biblical and early post-biblical periods from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Roman Period (13th c. BCE through 4th c. CE). The course will focus on the history of the Holy Land, emphasizing Israelite, early Jewish, and Christian material presence through the use of historical and archaeological sources. The study will employ multimedia resources to enhance students' classroom experience of the Land. Biblical Emphasis-Old and New Testaments. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 2400 Christian Origins from the City-Center (4 sh) GE

A study tour that will introduce students to the diverse cultural, historical, and geographical settings of the earliest Christianity of the Greco-Roman world through a firsthand encounter with the material evidence in the ancient cities of Rome, Pompeii, and Herculaneum in Italy. The on-site exposure will provide the context for investigating the early development of the beliefs and practices that became Christianity in the diverse urban social settings of the Roman Empire. The travel portion of the course is required.

BTS 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.

BTS 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.

BTS 2520 Christian Spirituality (4 sh) GE

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

BTS 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.

BTS 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.

BTS 2640 The Western Theological Tradition (4 sh) GE

A survey of the great Christian thinkers of the West from the 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 underrepresented theologies.

BTS 2650 The Eastern Orthodox Theological Tradition (4 sh) GE

A survey of the great Christian thinkers of the Eastern (Orthodox) tradition from the 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.

BTS 2660 Eastern Orthodox Christianities (4 sh) GE

An introduction to ancient Christian communities belonging to the cultural heritage of the Middle East, and their legacies in Russia and Eastern Europe. Emphasis will be placed on the unity and diversity of their theological views, liturgical cultures, and missionary histories that have shaped their present identities. The course will include guest lecturers from these communities and excursions to local Chicago-area churches.

BTS 2700 World Religions (4 sh) GE

Study of the common features and distinctive motifs that characterize some of the main religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and others. Emphasis on the 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.

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

Studies the religious thought of African Americans, employing the Black Christian church as a frame of reference from its beginnings during slavery to its maturity in the present day. Includes the ideas of a variety of spiritual leaders, including 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.

BTS 3150 The Book of Psalms (4 sh)

This course examines the characteristics of Hebrew poetry 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 examined in detail through exegesis of the English Bible. Biblical Emphasis-Old Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 3240 Luke and Acts (4 sh) GE

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.

BTS 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.

BTS 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 examines a wide range of historical and theological perspectives relevant to issues of women, the Bible, and the church. Biblical Emphasis-Old and New Testament. Prerequisite: BTS 1850.

BTS 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.

BTS 3550 Philosophy of Religion (4 sh)

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

BTS 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.

BTS 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.

BTS 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.

BTS 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. The student must have the consent of the instructor and the division chairperson.

BTS 4930 Directed Research (2 or 4 sh)

Students will work under the direction of a faculty mentor on a novel research project. Permission of the faculty mentor is required before enrollment in this course. This course may be repeated, though the department may limit the number of credit hours it counts toward the major. Please see the departmental degree requirements for details.

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

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