

## BIBL 7170 SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

### THEME: POLITICS

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Fall, 2021

**Instructor:** Will Andrews

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**Office:** by request

**Course Aim:** The aim is to enable students to explore the theme of politics and to reflect on it critically, theologically, and pastorally.

**Course Description:** This class is held in conjunction with the annual North Park Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture. The class will foster concentrated reflection on the papers presented at the Symposium and allow students to participate more meaningfully in the Symposium event. This year's symposium focuses on politics. The center of the class will be the two-day seminar (**meeting virtually Thursday, September 16 and Friday, September 17**). **Attendance at all sessions is required and reading of all symposium papers is assumed.**

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the class, students will be able to:

1. articulate major biblical, historical, and theological issues in the study of politics;
2. engage the theme of politics in the theological interpretation of Scripture;
3. assess potential implications of the theme for understanding the Christian life and the pastoral practice of the church.

**Style of Learning:** This course is intended to develop your skills as a lifelong learner, equipping you to define issues and formulate projects for yourselves so that you can do this beyond your degree program without the support of a class structure. The role of the instructor is therefore not tightly to define the work you will do for the class, but to help you to define that work for yourself. For this reason, you are encouraged to consult the instructor and it is your responsibility to be in touch and request conversations as necessary. You may contact the instructor and arrange for a conversation prior to the symposium about your choice of books for review if you are uncertain about which books to choose; and you may contact the instructor after the symposium and arrange for a conversation about your research paper proposal (see below under Assessments).

**Class Requirements:** Students will:

1. participate in the initial discussion forum on Canvas
2. read **all** the Symposium papers in advance
3. register for the Symposium here: [Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture - North Park University](#)
4. attend the **entire** Symposium and ask at least one question in a session of their choosing
5. attend and enter discussion in the additional virtual meeting (this might be replaced with an online forum)
6. participate in an online Discussion Board pursuing questions identified by the class as arising from papers presented at the symposium, then write a formal post responding in detail to one of the questions and engage your classmates in discussion.
7. write a book analysis of 2000 words of two books approved by the instructor
8. write a 4000-word research paper choosing from a list of possible projects according to their own interests and vocational goals (see below for details).

### Course Schedule

Symposium	Thursday, September 16, 4:45-8:45pm Friday, September 17, 8:45am- 6:00pm
First Discussion Forum	
First Post Due	Monday, September 20
Second Post Due	Monday, September 27
Second Discussion Forum Due	Monday, October 4
Book Analysis Due	Monday, October 11
Proposal for Research Paper	Monday, October 18
Research Paper Due	Monday, December 6

**Late submission without good reason and clear communication with the instructor will result in reduced grades.**

### Required Class Texts

- Texts selected for book review
- Symposium papers (to be distributed when they are available from the authors)
- Additional personal readings selected by each student for final paper research paper (approved by the instructor)

### Assessment in Brief:

Class Participation	10%
Post-Symposium Discussion Board Posts	20%
Book Analysis (2000 words)	30%
Research Paper (4000 words)	40%

### Assessment in Detail:

**Class Participation (10%):** Students must participate in the following ways:

1. Post in the initial discussion forum on Canvas
2. Attend the entire online symposium
3. Ask at least one question during the discussion period after one of the presentations
4. Participate in the post-symposium discussions on Canvas

**Post-Symposium Discussion Forum Posts (20%):** After the Symposium you will engage in two discussion forums. In the first forum, we will identify some of the papers presented for further discussion and discuss questions we wish to pursue. These questions might be related to the issue or issues you intend to explore in your final paper. By **Monday, September 20**, each student will contribute at least ONCE to discussion of at least TWO of the papers. By **Monday, September 27** each student will respond to two classmates. In the second forum, students will choose ONE of the discussions and write a more formal submission (about 1000 words) detailing their answer to the question. This must be posted by **Monday, October 4**.

**Book Analysis (30%):** Compare and contrast two books that address the relationship between the Bible and politics. You may choose from this list or, if you like, you may suggest other books. If you choose others, please submit those to the instructor for approval at least a week before the due date.

Bauckham, Richard. *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

Berlinerblau, Jacques. *Thumpin' It: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in Today's Presidential Politics*. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

Butler, Jon, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Chancey, Mark, Carol Meyers, and Eric Meyers, editors. *The Bible in the Public Square: Its Enduring Influence in American Life*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Charles, Mark and Soong-Chan Rah. *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*. Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.

De la Torre, Miguel A. *The Politics of Jesús: A Hispanic Political Theology*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.

Douglas, Kelly Brown. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015.

Edwards, Dennis. *Might from the Margins: The Gospel's Power to Turn the Tables on Injustice*. Newburyport: MennoMedia, 2020.

Flannery, Frances, and Rodney A. Werline, editors. *The Bible in Political Debate: What Does It Really Say?* London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.

Giboney, Justin, Michael R. Wear, and Chris Butler. *Compassion (&) Conviction: The AND Campaign's Guide to Faithful Civic Engagement*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Hanson, Paul D. *A Political History of the Bible in America*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Hendricks, Obery M. *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of the Teachings of Jesus and How They Have Been Corrupted*. New York: Three Leaves Press, 2006.

Jennings, Theodore W. *Transforming Atonement: A Political Theology of the Cross*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009.

McCaulley, Esau. *Reading While Black: African-American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.

Noll, Mark. *The Civil War As A Theological Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. *In The Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Sider, Ronald J. *Just Politics: A Guide for Christian Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012.

Zahnd, Brian. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church in American Exile*. Spello Press, 2019.

In dialogue with Symposium content, consider the following in your analysis: *Why did you choose these two texts? What is the primary argument of each text? What kind of approach is being taken to the theme? Is the book primarily biblical, historical, or theological? Who are each author's principal dialog partners? How does each author situate his or her own work in relation to previous work? How do the texts discuss/define the relationship between the Bible and politics? What do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? What are the theological and pastoral implications for the texts' approach?*

This analysis should be about 2,000 words in length and is due by **Monday, October 11**.

**Research Paper (40%):** In dialogue with symposium papers and other readings, students may choose from the following:

- a tracing of politics in a single biblical book, the teachings of Jesus, or the writings of Paul.
- a series of four sermons on the Bible and politics (each sermon must be an exegetically informed proclamation of the Gospel as it is encountered in *one or two* passages of scripture and must be submitted as a full, properly annotated manuscript)
- a comparison of biblical commentary, theological reflection, or sermons on the theme of politics by two major theologians (e.g. Luther and Calvin, Edwards and Wesley, Bonhoeffer and Cone, Barth and McFague, Moltmann and Sobrino, etc.).
- a proposal for a biblically grounded understanding of politics for a specific cultural context

These options are meant to stimulate student imagination rather than limit possibilities. Students are welcome to propose other writing projects for instructor approval. A form on which to submit proposals appears at the end of this syllabus. The form must be submitted by **Monday, October 18**. The paper is due on **Monday, December 6**.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.

3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25–27.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the Center for Student Engagement by email [ada@northpark.edu](mailto:ada@northpark.edu) or phone at 773-244-5737 to schedule an appointment with the Learning Specialist. You can also stop by The Center for Student Engagement, located on the first floor of the Johnson Center.

**TITLE IX:** Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or [TitleIX@northpark.edu](mailto:TitleIX@northpark.edu)) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the

NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
BIBL 7170 SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE 2021: POLITICS  
Proposal for Research Paper (Proposal Due: October 18, 2021)

STUDENT'S NAME: .....

PROPOSED TOPIC/TITLE

PROPOSED BIBLIOGRAPHY (about ten sources):

OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF ESSAY/PAPER:

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENTS:

Signature of Instructor.....

Date.....