

“A Christian Response to *The Da Vinci Code*”

Course Coordinator: Dr. Timothy Johnson
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Tuesdays 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Classroom: 2

Purpose:

This interdisciplinary course is designed to integrate several disciplines of theological reflection in response to the many challenging claims offered in the novel *The Da Vinci Code*. The course will emphasize the biblical, historical and systematic challenges to the Christian faith contained in the book, present the traditional Christian teachings in those areas and offer practical ways to engage the culture’s questions with clarity.

Class Format:

Each evening session will consist of two one-hour lectures with a short break between them. Time will be allotted in each class for questions at the lecturers’ discretion. Two seminars are scheduled at the end of the course for students taking the course for credit.

Bibliography:(All books are required for credit, Bock and Brown are recommended for auditors)

Bock, Darrell L. *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

Brown, Dan. *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

McKechnie, Paul. *The First Christian Centuries* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2001).

Requirements:

- 1) Auditors - Students taking the course for audit may attend any or all of the lectures. With the permission of the course coordinator, they may attend the seminar sessions, which are only required for students taking the course for credit.
- 2) Credit - Students taking the course for credit are required to do the following:
 - a. Attend at least nine lectures and all seminar presentations.
 - b. Read all of the assignments and handouts, and submit a form declaring how much of the assignments they read.
 - c. Submit a 4-5 page book review on any work that responds to *The Da Vinci Code* other than Darrell Bock’s *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*. See the select bibliography for examples. These must first be approved by the course coordinator and only one student may review any one book that responds to *The Da Vinci Code*. These reviews must:
 1. Be typed, double-spaced, and contain 1” margins.
 2. Identify the book being reviewed and its thesis.
 3. Review the main contents of the book.
 4. Offer both positive and negative critiques of the work.
 5. Recommend what audience is best for the book.

- d. Submit two 2-3 page reflection papers on lecture material. The first reflection paper must address any lecture topic in the first five lectures, and the second one must address any lecture topic in the second five. Each paper must:
1. Be typed, double-spaced, and contain 1” margins.
 2. Identify the lecture topic in the first paragraph.
 3. Review the lecture topic and explain why this topic was chosen.
 4. Critique the material presented, cite scholars as needed, though none are required.
 5. Identify one way that the material can be used in your own local church setting.
- e. Submit and present a research paper on an issue presented in *The Da Vinci Code*. The research paper should be 10-12 pages in length, the topic must be approved by the course coordinator and the student will prepare a 30-minute oral presentation in the seminar component of the course. The papers must:
1. Be typed, double-spaced, and contain 1” margins.
 2. State the purpose of the paper on the first page and explain why the topic was chosen.
 3. Survey the history of the topic and explain how it informs or impacts 21st Century Christianity.
 4. Interact with at least 3 different scholarly sources from at least two different perspectives that are footnoted, and engage in critical dialogue with them.
 5. Discuss at least one practical way the local church can benefit from your research.
 6. Present your findings to the seminar in a coherent 30-minute oral lesson appropriate for an adult education class at a local church.

Grading

Reading	10%
Two Reflections (5% each)	10%
Book Review	15%
Oral Presentation	25%
Research Paper	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

Nashotah Grading Scale

A+	98-100	B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D+	68-69
A	94-97	B	84-87	C	74-77	D	64-67
A-	90-93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63

Class Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Lecturer/Assignment</u>
1/31	Introduction Identifies the key claims of the novel. ABC News report with Dan Brown. What’s at stake?	Dr. Johnson, Nashotah House <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> Bock, xiii-11.

2/7	Did Jesus write “Q” or live at Qumran? Examines key biblical claims from the novel.	Dr. Johnson, Nashotah House McKechnie, 9-66.
2/14	Who was Mary Magdalene? Offers a biblical Portrait of Mary of Magdala.	Dr. Rappé, Mount Mary College Bock, Codes 1 and 6 McKechnie, 67-108.
2/21	The Gospel Canon: Four-fold or Four-score? Examines how the NT canon emerged.	Dr. Perrin, Wheaton College Bock, Code 5 McKechnie, 109-150.
2/28	Gnosticism: Something Old, Something New? Explores the Nag Hamadi finds and Gnosticism.	Dr. Perrin, Wheaton College Bock, Code 4 McKechnie, 151-190.
3/7	Did Constantine “Rig” the Council of Nicea? Investigates Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicea.	Dr. Barnes, Marquette U. McKechnie, 217-239.
3/14	Was Jesus’ Divinity based on a Vote? Addresses the Early Church’s claim that Jesus was divine.	Dr. Lawrenz, Elmbrook Church
3/21	Could Jesus have been married? Discusses the impact that a married Jesus would have on doctrines such as the Trinity, Creation, Incarnation and Mission	Fr. Holtzen, Nashotah House Bock, Codes 2 and 3. McKechnie, 191-216.
3/28	Leonardo Da Vinci meets Fr Klukas Analyzes claims regarding Da Vinci’s “Last Supper” and offers observations regarding the intersection of Theology and Art.	Fr. Klukas, Nashotah House <i>Book Reviews due!</i>
4/4	Roman Catholicism in the Cross-Hairs Fleshing out Opus Dei and the Vatican	Dr. Wolfe, Marquette U. <i>Seminar Topics Due!</i>
4/11	Parish Ministry and <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> Provides practical ways to address questions raised by the novel in the local church.	Fr. McGlynn, Nashotah House
4/18	No Class – Easter Week	
4/25	Seminar I Required for “credit” students.	Dr. Johnson, Nashotah House
5/2	Seminar II “	Dr. Johnson, Nashotah House Reading Reports due

Select Bibliography

- Ehrman, Bart. The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code: A Historian Explores What We Really Know About Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Constantine. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Garlow, James and Peter Jones. Cracking Da Vinci's Code. Colorado Springs: Victor, 2004.
- Jones, Greg. Beyond Da Vinci. New York: Seabury Press, 2004.
- Lunn, Martin. Da Vinci Code Decoded. New York: The Disinformation Co., 2004.
- Olson, Carl E. and Sandra Miesel. The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in the Da Vinci Code. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004
- Wellborn, Amy. De-coding Da Vinci: The Facts Behind the Fiction of the Da Vinci Code. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2004.
- Witherington, Ben. The Gospel Code. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004.