

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	BIBLICAL STUDIES SEMINAR: SACRED SILENCE: THE SILENCE OF GOD AND SILENCE BEFORE GOD IN THE BIBLE BIBL 0718
Date and Time	SEPTEMBER 14 – DECEMBER 7 MONDAYS 2:15 – 5:05 PM
Instructor	DR. JOHN KESSLER Tel: 416-226-6620, ext. 6724 E-mail: jkessler@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed on Mondays 2:15 PM–5:05 PM. Office Hours: by appointment (To book an appointment, please contact me with your preferred day and time, and a possible second choice, and I will confirm with you.)
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.

This draft syllabus will be updated regularly before the beginning of the course and finalized after the first week of the course. However, the course’s basic structure and its requirements will remain substantially the same.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Silence appears in the biblical text at some of its most significant junctures. Zech 2:13 states, “Be silent, all people, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.” Rev 8:1 reads, “When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” Silence is a very elusive concept in the Scriptures, and in human experience. What

exactly is it? Is it the absence of all sound? How is silence perceived by the human person? Only through auditory means? Or are the other senses involved? In the Bible silence can be both commanded and, most surprisingly, described. Furthermore, what is the relationship between the terms “silent” or “silence” and the concepts of stillness, peace and quietness? In the Bible the same words are used for all of these ideas. More importantly, when silence occurs, what is its meaning? Is it a good thing or a terrifying portent?

The course will explore the various aspects of the Biblical concept of silence: what it is; the various Hebrew and Greek terms related to it, various other ways of expressing the concept of silence, and, most especially, the various meanings it carries in its variety of contexts.

The course will involve lectures, weekly student preparation and presentations, including extensive, close analysis of the biblical text, and study of specific Hebrew terms.

Prerequisites:

BIBL 0501 Biblical Interpretation;

OLDT 0511 Old Testament Theology and History;

NEWT 0522 New Testament Theology and History

(This course is also open to ThM students)

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the foundational vocabulary used with reference to the concept of silence.
2. Exegete a series of at least 3 OT or NT texts which employ the concept of silence, and demonstrate an understanding of how the concept of silence is employed within them.
3. Lead one or more class discussions of a given text or theme related to silence in the Bible.
4. Compare and contrast the distinctive uses of the concept of silence in a series of biblical texts.
5. Prepare and submit a major exegetical or topical paper relating to the theme of silence.
6. Demonstrate comprehension of and critical interaction with a series of scholarly articles relating to silence in the Bible.
7. Meaningfully discuss the importance of both divine and human silence in present-day spiritual experience.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

1. Korpel, Marjo C. A., and Johannes C. de Moor. [*The Silent God*](#). Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011.

2. Becking, Bob, ed. [*Reflections on the Silence of God: A Discussion with Marjo Korpel and Johannes De Moor*](#), OtSt 62. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013.

Note: these texts need not be purchased. They are available electronically via the Tyndale Library, and can be taken out by multiple users at the same time (via download) or read online (via ebrary reader). For further details see posting on course page entitled “Welcome and Important Announcement” in news forum on course page.

Numerous other readings will be posted on the course page.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

In addition to the works listed above, the preliminary bibliography (in the Selected Bibliography section at the end of the syllabus) may be of assistance to students.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Major Paper (40 %). The student will prepare a major research paper (23-25 pgs., with a minimum of 20 references) on a selected text or theme related to silence in the Hebrew Bible. Suggested topics and themes will be posted on the course page. Other topics or themes may be undertaken with the approval of the professor. Due date: **11:59 pm, Sat Nov 21.**

2. Discussion Groups (20%). Students will meet for four 40 min discussion groups based on selected readings in the required texts, and specific articles. Additional directions for discussion groups, texts to be read, and questions will be supplied in the folder entitled “Discussion Groups” on the course page. The goal of these discussion groups is to pursue selected issues and topics in greater detail.

Discussion Group Dates: Oct 1 (Week 3); Oct 19 (Week 5) ; Nov 9 (week 8); Nov 30 (week 11).

3. Class Seminar Presentations and Participation (25%). This course will follow a seminar format. As such, specific students will be expected to lead a portion of the class discussion several times during the semester. Many of the presentations will involve an 'agree' or 'disagree' format with reference to a specific reading assignment. That is, one student will be assigned to express agreement with the reading, and engage the class in a response, then a second student will take an opposing position, and lead the class in further discussion. *The student's ability to isolate specific areas of strength or weakness in the assigned readings is crucial to success in this assignment.* Students who are not leading on a specific date will check off whether or not the readings have been done on a list circulated in class.

4. Reading Summary (15%). Students will read a series of articles and chapters from the textbooks and additional readings. On the due date noted below the student will submit: (1) a list of all of the readings which were completed on the form provided on the course page, and (2) a 3-5 page statement of personal reflection describing the student's own journey of learning about silence in the course. These are to be submitted to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Due date: **Dec 12.**

Grading Standards:

1. For General Class Participation:

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Completion of weekly readings and biblical research
- Demonstration of comprehension and critical analysis of readings
- Participation in class discussion

2. For Leading of Class Discussion

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Comprehension of the material to be presented
- Skill in presentation of the material
- Skill in leading of discussion
- Use of hand-outs and Visuals

3. For Discussion Groups

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Completion and comprehension of the readings to be prepared
- Comprehension and interaction of the approaches and statements of others
- Depth of discussion and interactions

4. For Research Papers.

Students will be graded on the following areas:

- Clarity in the expression of the purpose, objective, and methodology for the paper
- Quality of exegesis of the relevant biblical texts
- Evidence of careful bibliographic research
- Comprehension of and interaction with the approaches and positions of experts in the field under study
- Logic and flow of the discussion and argumentation of the paper
- Clarity and quality of written expression
- Careful footnoting of sources
- General accuracy of academic form and style

*Texts and Topics for the Research Paper will be posted on the course main page. Each student must submit the precise **topic and methodology to be used to the professor before writing. These should be sent to jkessler@tyndale.ca***

More specific instructions for textual and topical papers will be posted on the course page.

E. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments: [Sample]

Major Paper	40 %
Discussion Groups	20 %
Class Seminar Presentations and Participation	25 %
Reading Summary	15 %
Total Grade	100 %

G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

All papers must be done in either SBL or Chicago style. APA or MLA may not be used. Papers submitted in MLA format will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted in

proper Chicago/SBL format, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Apart from the corrections of style (MLA to Chicago/SBL), papers must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted from such papers.

For SBL style Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, comps. *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Second Edition. Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014 or the document “SBL Manual of Style” on the course page for this course. Please note especially pages 3-5. For fuller details on correct citation formatting see also <http://libguides.tyndale.ca/citations>. Alternatively, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#). See the fuller examples and discussion in the “Instructions for Essays” folder.

Papers must be submitted using footnotes not endnotes. ***Papers submitted with endnotes as opposed to footnotes, and/or without a bibliography will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted with footnotes and bibliography, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Apart from the correction of endnotes to footnotes, and inclusion of the bibliography, papers must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted from such papers.***

Papers must be submitted in pdf format. ***Papers submitted in non-pdf formats (e.g. .doc or .docx) will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted in proper pdf format, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Pdfs must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted for such initial non-pdf submissions.***

Papers must be submitted to the professor at assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca NOT to jkessler@tyndale.ca.

Assignments will be marked according to the following general principle: papers which satisfactorily meet the professor’s expectations will receive a B/75%.

Grades above or below B will reflect the degree to which the student’s work manifests strengths or deficiencies relative to the satisfactory level.

Students must consult the documents regarding essay writing on the course page. A step-by-step description of the essay-writing process can be found in the document “Tyndale Seminary Research and Writing Manual” in the “Resources for Essay Writing” folder on the course page.

As well, further instructions for essay writing may be found in the document “Essay Writing Essentials for Kessler” on the course page.

It is virtually impossible to write a B-level (or higher) essay without a thorough knowledge of

the material in this syllabus and the supplementary documents provided on the course page.

Excellence or deficiency in the following areas will increase or decrease the mark assigned:

1. form and presentation (Note: correct footnote and bibliographic form *must* be used. Either SBL or Chicago style is acceptable, **but not MLA/APA**). See below.
2. number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited.
3. use of the best commentaries on the relevant biblical texts (the section “Choosing and using the best commentaries in the document “Essay Writing Essentials”).
4. thoroughness of historical, grammatical, syntactical, analysis in exegetical discussions.
5. logical and methodological accuracy and consistency.
6. use of foundational sources and tools including: close analysis of all relevant biblical texts and specialized studies in ANE history, archaeology, culture and sociology; interaction with major commentaries.
7. quality and clarity of written English. It is impossible to receive a grade in the A range if your paper is riddled with typos and poor style.

Paper: Research Methodology, Format and Style

For an introduction to proper citation, see the video presentation on the course page, in the ‘Student Resources’ menu, to the far right at the top of the page.

For SBL style see the *SBL Handbook of Style*, ed. P.H. Alexander, et. al. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.

Please note that the recent, updated [SBL Manual of style](#) is available as an e book through the Tyndale library

Alternatively, have a look at the older version, in the document “SBL Manual of Style” on the course page for this course. *Please note especially pages 3-5.*

For fuller details on correct citation formatting see also <http://libguides.tyndale.ca/citations>.

Plagiarism will be dealt with according to the Tyndale Student Handbook. See further in “Essay writing essentials.”

NOTE; THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH IS NOT APPLICABLE FOR THE MOMENT, DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS. THE LIBRARY MAY RE-OPEN. WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED. ACCOMMODATION IN GRADING STANDARDS WILL BE APPLIED DUE TO THE INACCESSIBILITY OF CERTAIN MATERIALS.]

[Students are strongly encouraged to use the library for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference and periodical collections. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials which NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopedias and Bible Dictionaries and reference copies of commentaries.

These never leave the library].

Similarly, a massive amount of material is available on line in downloadable PDF files via the library's e-resources (especially EBSCO HOST/ATLA and JSTOR).

THERE IS A GIGANTIC DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE LIBRARY'S E RESOURCES EITHER ONLINE OR HARD COPY AND THE INTERNET IN GENERAL. REMEMBER—*ONLY* QUOTE QUALIFIED EXPERTS IN THE SUBJECT YOU ARE STUDYING.

Much more information on the proper preparation of essays for this course will be posted on the course page.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

H. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Class sessions will generally consist of an introduction and comments by the professor, the presentation of selected articles by students, and the discussion of key biblical texts, prepared by all students in advance.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Berkovits, Eliezer. "God's Silence in the Dialogue According to Martin Buber." *Tradition* 11 (1970): 17-24.

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- 39-44. New York, NY: Seabury, 1983.
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