



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

WINTER 2019

BIBLICAL STUDIES SEMINAR

SACRED SILENCE: THE SILENCE OF GOD AND SILENCE BEFORE GOD IN THE BIBLE

BIBL 0718

JANUARY 17 – APRIL 11

THURSDAYS, 2:15 – 5:05 PM

Note: There is no class on FEB 21 (Reading Day).

INSTRUCTOR: DR. JOHN KESSLER

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Office hours:

Wednesdays 3:00-4:00; Thursdays 11:00-12:00

I am usually available at these hours, but not always. If I have no appointments booked, I may not be in my office during these hours. Appointments may be arranged at other hours if need be. To book an appointment, please leave me your preferred day and time, and a possible second choice, and I will confirm with you. Please contact me via e-mail: jkessler@tyndale.ca. If e-mail is unavailable, please call 416-226-6620, ext. 6724.

Access course material at <http://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.](#)

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.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

General Course Description and Objective

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 lexical stock related to it, how it is communicated to the reader, 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:

Biblical Interpretation BIBL 0501;

Old Testament Theology and History OLD T 0511;

New Testament Theology and History NEW T 0522

(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. TEXTBOOKS

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, this preliminary bibliography may be of assistance to students.

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

Bond, Ronald. "God's "Back Parts": Silence and the Accommodating Word." In *Silence, the Word and the Sacred*, 169-187. Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989.

Brierley, Michael. "The Silent God." *Implicit Religion* 16 (2013): 367-369.

Burnett, Joel S. "The Silent God." *Interpretation* 68 (2014): 87-88.

Chung, Ha-Eun. "The Silence of God: A Theological View." *Japan Christian Quarterly* 54 (1988): 142-149.

Duquoc, Christian, and Casiano Floristán. *Job and the Silence of God*, Concilium. New York, NY: Seabury, 1983.

Duquoc, Christian, Casiano Floristan Samanes, and Marcus Lefèbure. *Job and the Silence of God*. Edinburgh; New York: T. & T. Clark; Seabury Press, 1983.

Firth, David G. "The Silent God." *JSOT* 36 (2012): 150-150.

Gutridge, Coralie A. "The Sacrifice of Fools and the Wisdom of Silence: Qoheleth, Job and the Presence of God." In *Biblical Hebrews, Biblical Texts*, 83-99. London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

Hall, Eric E. "The Silent God." *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 137 (2012).

Hartley, Susan Wesley. "Listening for God: A Minister's Journey through Silence and Doubt." *Christian Century* 116 (1999): 870-871.

Hauerwas, Stanley. *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

Ji, Won Yong. "The Silence of God: The Answer of the Buddha." *ConJ* 17 (1991): 93-95.

Kinet, Dirk. "The Ambiguity of the Concepts of God and Satan in the Book of Job." In *Job and the Silence of God*, 30-35. New York, NY: Seabury, 1983.

Knohl, Israel. "Between Voice and Silence: The Relationship between Prayer and Temple Cult." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 17-30.

_____. *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007.

Lévêque, Jean. "Tradition and Betrayal in the Speeches of the Friends." In *Job and the Silence of God*, 39-44. New York, NY: Seabury, 1983.

Muck, Terry C. "God's Silence: Psalm 28." *Asbury Journal* 67 (2012): 4-7.

Murphy-O'Connor, J. "Why Doesn't God Answer Prayers? How the First Christians Dealt with Divine Silence." *BR* 20 (2004): 14-19.

Neher, Andre. *L'exil de la parole: du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970.

_____. "Silence and the Hidden God in Prophecy." In *Proceedings of the 5th World Congress of Jewish Studies, V 3*, 259-262. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1972.

Neher, André. *The Exile of the Word, from the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981.

Partlow, Jonathan A. "Tough Decisions in the Silence of God: Esther 4:13-14." *Restoration Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1993): 240-244.

Peacocke, Arthur R. "The Sound of Sheer Silence: How Does God Communicate with Humanity?" In *Philosophy, Science and Divine Action*, 53-95. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009.

- Peels, H. G. L. "The Silent God." *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 66 (2012): 158-159.
- Pyne, Robert A. "Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering." (A Review) *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150, (1993): 368-369.
- Sanders, Theresa. "Remarking the Silence: Prayer after the Death of God." *Hor* 25 (1998): 203-216.
- Schart, A. 2010. 'Deathly Silence and Apocalyptic Noise: Observations on the Soundscape of the Book of the Twelve', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31, Article #383
- Schwarzschild, Stephen S. "Speech and Silence before God." *Judaism* 10 (1961): 195-204.
- Tam, Ekman P. C. "Silence of God and God of Silence." *Asia Journal of Theology* 16 (2002): 152-163.
- Thielicke, Helmut. *The Silence of God*. Translated by Geoffrey William Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962.
- Weems, Renita J. *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey through Silence and Doubt*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- Westermann, Claus. "The Two Faces of Job." In *Job and the Silence of God*, 15-22. New York, NY: Seabury, 1983.
- Wink, Walter. "The Silence of God." *Sojourners Magazine* 30 (2001): 28-28.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "The Silence of the God Who Speaks." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, 215-228. New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Major Paper (40 %). The student will prepare a major research paper (23-25 pgs., with a minimum of 25 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 March 29, 2019.**

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: Jan 31; Feb 28; Mar 14; Apr 4.

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. The student leader's mark will be based upon clarity and comprehensiveness of presentation, and the use hand-outs and visuals. 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. Weekly topics, texts, and readings will be assigned for each 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, (in hard copy, on the form provided), and (2) a 3-5 page statement of personal reflection describing the student's own journey of learning about silence in the course. 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 discuss the precise **topic and methodology with the professor before writing.***

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

*All papers must be done in either SBL or Chicago style. **APA or MLA may not be used.***

Papers submitted in APA or MLA style will receive a maximal grade of C.

Papers must be submitted using footnotes not endnotes. **Papers submitted with endnotes will receive a maximal grade of C.**

Papers must be submitted in pdf format. Papers submitted as word documents will be returned to the students for re-submission. Late penalties will be applied.

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, via the following link

<http://tyndale.worldcat.org/oclc/915535955>

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>.

For proper citation style, 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](#).

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

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 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.

D. 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.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

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

F. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

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 College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [writing resources](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies 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 approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; aau@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

G. 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 OUTLINE (posted on the course page)

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 and e-books](#). See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

See preliminary bibliography above.