

Psalms and Wisdom Literature: Job
OT 6305ib Course Syllabus
Austin Graduate School of Theology
Spring 2017

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VI. Required Texts:

- A. A good study Bible, such as the New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV) or the Harper-Collins Study Bible (NRSV).
- B. Janzen, J. Gerald. *Job*. Interpretation Commentary. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.
- C. Wharton, James. *Job*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: W/JKP, 1999.

VII. Recommended Texts:

- A. Seow, C. L. *Job 1–21: Interpretation and Commentary*. Illuminations Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
- B. Thomason, Bill. *God on Trial: The Book of Job and Human Suffering*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997.
- C. In addition, there may be some handouts, especially the first few weeks of class, which students will be expected to read.

VIII. Course Focus and Objectives:

- IX. This course will focus primarily on the theology and text of the book of Job. Other matters of secondary concern in the class will be such issues as the nature of Israelite wisdom literature, its relationship to “international wisdom,” the wisdom of Job compared with the “conventional wisdom” of Proverbs, and the relationship of the prose introduction and conclusion of the book of Job with the poetic speeches which comprise the bulk of it. We will conduct an in-depth, verse by verse study of the introduction (chaps. 1–3) and the first cycle of speeches (chaps. 4–14). The second and third cycle of speeches, found in chaps. 15–27, carry the arguments of the four protagonists along, but largely repeat the arguments of the first cycle, so we will spend less time on these. Job’s final speeches in chaps. 28–31, Elihu’s speeches in chaps. 32–37, God’s speech “from the whirlwind” in chaps. 38–42, and the conclusion in chap. 42, will be given an average of one week per section. How much we are

able to cover of the book from chapter 15 on will be dependent upon the time we have and how much discussion the class wishes to engage in on a weekly basis.

X. Little attention will be given to matters of date of writing, authorship, setting, and Near Eastern backgrounds. While these are potentially important issues, the book of Job gives us little, if any, indication of the answer to these questions. The focus of the course will be on the problem of “theodicy,” that is, if God is all good and sovereign, how can evil persist in the world? Job raises serious questions about the righteousness of God and human suffering. We cannot lightly dismiss Job’s questions, nor the attempts of the three friends to answer them. It is only after wrestling with these issues as Job wrestled that we, too, may say at the end, “I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee.”

XI. By the end of the semester, the student should have detailed knowledge of the contents and theology of the book of Job, be acquainted with a variety of scholarly positions taken on controversial passages, produce an exegetical paper on a passage from the book, and go from text to application by means of a semester project.

XII. Course Requirements:

XIII. Students are expected to read relevant portions from the commentaries in preparation for each week’s discussion. There will be several handouts the first few weeks of class, dealing with introductory and critical issues, which should be read as soon as possible.

XIV. There will be a mid-term in this course and a final exam, which will not be comprehensive. The mid-term and final will consist entirely of essay questions, in which you will attempt to impress me with your erudition and wisdom. Two papers are required. The first will be a 7 page exegesis of one passage in the poetic sections of the book of Job. The second will be a sermon or series of Bible studies.

XV. Two Exams: 50%

XVI. Exegesis Paper: 25%

XVII. Sermon: 25%

XVIII. Schedule of Classes:

XIX. 1/19: Introductory matters. Syllabus, assignments, readings distributed, Introduction to Job.

XX. 1/26: Job 1–3. _____

XXI. 1st dialogue:

XXII. 2/2: Job 4–5. _____

- XXIII. 2/9: Job 6–7. _____
- XXIV. 2/16: Job 8. _____
- XXV. 2/23: Job 9–10. _____
- XXVI. 3/2: Job 11–12. _____
- XXVII. 3/9: Job 13–14. _____
- XXVIII. 3/16: *Spring Break, no class.*
- XXIX. *2nd dialogue:*
- XXX. 3/23: Job 15–17. _____
- XXXI. 3/30: Job 18–21. _____
- XXXII. *3rd dialogue:*
- XXXIII. 4/6: Job 22–27. _____
- XXXIV. *Hymn to Wisdom and Job’s Protestation of Innocence:*
- XXXV. 4/13: Job 28–31. _____
- XXXVI. *The Speeches of Elihu:*
- XXXVII. 4/20: Job 32–37. _____
- XXXVIII. *The Speeches of God and Job’s Restoration:*
- XXXIX. 4/27: Job 38–42. _____
- XL. *Job 38–42 continued, or catch up.*
- XLI. 5/4: Job 38–42. _____
- XLII. 5/11: *Final Exam.*
- XLIII. A bibliography of standard works on the book of Job will be forthcoming.