Old Testament Psalms and Wisdom Literature
OT 4312—Course Syllabus
Spring 2015

Dr. Mark Shipp
11912 Rosethorn Dr.
Austin, TX 78758
(512) 476–2772
shipp@austingrad.edu

Office Hours:
Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., 1:00–3:00 PM.

Course Goals:
The goals of this course are to 1) cultivate the ability to interpret the Psalms and Wisdom Literature theologically; 2) to relate these interpretive skills to the life of the Church and discipleship today; and 3) through the lens of theological interpretation of the text, demonstrate the connection between these texts and the practice of ministry.

Course Objectives:
Through this course, the student will gain an appreciation for the theology, poetry, and text of the Psalms and wisdom books of the Old Testament. Second, the student should be able to relate Old Testament poetry to modern creative or poetic modes of expression which can benefit the Church today. Finally, the student will be able to relate the themes of Old Testament wisdom and poetry to the life of faith and practical ministry today.

Required Textbooks:
Annotated study Bible, such as the New Oxford Annotated Study Bible of the NRSV, the Harper Collins Study Bible, etc.

Recommended Textbooks:

Scope of the Course:
The course will primarily deal with the book of Psalms and the three major books of wisdom in the Old Testament: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Besides these books, there are several other passages in the Old Testament which fall under the category of lyric poetry or wisdom writings. Relative to lyric poetry, these include the books of Lamentations, Song of Songs, and many
songs scattered throughout the Old Testament. Relative to wisdom, these include several wisdom psalms and possibly the Joseph story, the throne succession narrative (2 Samuel 7—1 Kings 2), and possibly others.

Course Requirements:

Tests: There will be three tests, one each on Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and Job.

Project: A term project will be completed on some aspect of the Psalms. This project may take many forms. The following are some suggestions:

- Compose a metrical psalm based on one of the psalms in the Psalter.
- Prepare a special Sunday service using mainly readings from the Psalms and metrical psalm hymns.
- Write a three page theological discussion on the Psalms and worship or the Psalms and preaching.
- Write a three page book review.

Three exams: 75%
Psalm project or book review: 25%

Schedule:

1/21: Introduction to Psalms; the shape of the Psalter; intro. to Torah and Royal Psalms.

1/26 and 28: Torah, Royal Psalms, and Wisdom Psalms; intro. to lament psalms.
Bellinger, 1-32, 106-134.
Shipp, 1-36, 149-161, 256-271.

2/2 and 11: Lament psalms (no class 2/4 and 2/9).
Bellinger, 44-73.
Brueggemann, 123-167.

2/16 and 18: Thanksgiving psalms and hymns of praise.
Bellinger, 74-105, 135-145.
Shipp, 225-230, 70-73, 231-239.

2/23 and 25: Exam. #1; Introduction to Wisdom Literature and Proverbs.
Proverbs.
Kidner, 11-55.

3/2 and 4: Proverbs.
(cont.)

3/9 and 11: Proverbs.
(cont.)

3/16 and 18: Spring Break—no class.

Kidner, 90-115.

3/30 and 4/1: Ecclesiastes.
(cont.)

4/6 and 4/8: Exam #2 on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; Introduction to Job.
Job.
Kidner, 56-89.

4/13 and 15: Job.
(cont.)

4/20 and 22: Job.
(cont.)

4/27 and 29: Job
(cont.)

5/4 and 6: Job
(cont.)

5/11: *Final Exam.* Psalm projects or book reports due.