

Old Testament Psalms and Wisdom Literature

OT 4312—Course Syllabus

Spring 2019

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Office Hours:

Mon., 11:00–12:00 AM, Tues., 10:00–12:00 AM, 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.

Lucas, Ernest. *Exploring the Old Testament, Vol. 3: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003.

Recommended Textbooks:

Bellinger, William. *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.

Kidner, Derek. *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature: The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1985.

Shipp, R. Mark. *Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today, vol. 1: In a Day of Distress, Psalms 1–41*. Abilene: ACU Press, 2009.

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—I Kings 2), and possibly others. Attention will be given to these writings if time allows.

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, or 5an essay on Ecclesiastes or Job. 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 essay on imprecatory psalms, the Christian and lament psalms, the Psalms and worship, or the Psalms and preaching.

Alternatively, a essay on "vanity" in the book of Ecclesiastes or the meaning of God's speeches in Job 38–42 would also be acceptable.

Three tests:	75%
Psalm project:	25%

Schedule:

1/24: *Introduction; the shape of the Psalter.*

Lucas, 1–34.

1/31: *The Psalter as a Collection; Torah, Royal Psalms, and Wisdom Psalms.*

Bellinger, 1-32, 106-134.

Lucas, 34-51.

2/7: *Lament psalms.*

Bellinger, 44-73.

Lucas, 52-78.

2/14 *Thanksgiving psalms.*

Brueggemann, 123-167.

2/21: *Hymns of praise.*

Bellinger, 74-105, 135-145.

2/28: *Exam. #1; Introduction to Wisdom Literature and Proverbs.*

Proverbs.

Lucas, 79-116.

Kidner, 11-55.

3/7: *Proverbs.*

(cont.)

3/14: *Proverbs.*

(cont.)

3/21: *Spring Break—no class.*

3/28: *Ecclesiastes.*

Lucas, 145-174.

Kidner, 90-115.

4/4: *Ecclesiastes.*

(cont.)

4/11: *Exam #2 on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; Introduction to Job.*

Job.

Lucas 117-144.

Kidner, 56-89.

4/18: *Job.*

(cont.)

4/25: *Job.*

(cont.)

5/2: *Job.*

(cont.)

5/9: *Job.*

(cont.)

Class projects due.

5/16: *Final Exam.*