

HB 600.02³ Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible: Psalms (online) Fall 2017

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Prerequisites: PC 500 Interpretation Matters or its equivalent

Course Description: This course is intended to help students in all Master's programs "act as responsible biblical interpreters critically informed by current historical, literary and theological scholarship in the field of biblical studies." As an exegetical course in the area of Biblical Studies, the course is designed to help students "be fluent in biblical interpretation . . . pay attention to interpretive concerns (e.g., historical context, literary character, etc.) . . . [and] use the Bible with an awareness of scholarly understandings as a resource for thinking about the issues and concerns of everyday life." To this end, the course will include an introduction to exegesis and the variety of methods utilized in interpreting a biblical text (e.g., form criticism, rhetorical criticism, ideological criticism, etc.), along with opportunities to practice these methods on a variety of texts from the Hebrew Bible. Special attention will be given to the Book of Psalms and how these ancient prayers inform our understandings of the Divine and faith. By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. *Employ* different exegetical methods when working with texts of the Hebrew Bible.
2. *Name* and briefly identify the different forms of psalms found in the Psalter.
3. *Identify* the socio-historical contexts and literary characteristics of the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible.
4. *Articulate* a theology of prayer that is informed by the theological perspectives represented in the Psalms.
5. *Write* an exegesis of a psalm utilizing at 3 different exegetical methods.
6. *Demonstrate* how the fruits from their exegesis of a biblical text can be applied to different ministerial contexts.

Approach: This is an upper level seminar course; therefore, a foundational knowledge of the Hebrew Bible will be assumed (i.e., historical/cultural background, literary genres, etc.). The class "sessions" will entail both content (provided by the professor) and class discussion. Class discussions will be open, honest, and respectful; all opinions will be respected and derogatory language toward another person will not be tolerated. [Behavior or attitudes that are disrespectful of another person, professor or student, will result in significant lowering of the offender's grade.] All participants will covenant together to agree to disagree without hostility.

Required Texts: In addition to these books, readings from other sources will be assigned and made available to the students on Moodle {M}. [The reading assignments are indicated in the course schedule using the abbreviations provided for each text.]

Berlin, Adele & Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. NYC: Oxford, 2004. (ISBN-10: 0195297547) [*JSB*]

Brueggemann, Walter. *From Whom No Secrets are Hid: Introducing the Psalms*. Louisville, KY, 2014. [*Secrets*]

deClaire-Walford, Nancy. *Introduction to the Psalms*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press: 2004. (ISBN-10: 0827216238) [*Intro*]

Hayes, John & Carl Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook, 3rd Edition*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2007. (ISBN-10: 0-664 22775-9) [*H&H*]

Hopkins, Denise D. *Journey Through the Psalms*. Revised & Expanded Edition. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002. (ISBN-10: 0827217145) [*JTP*]

Assignments: The requirements of the course are listed below, along with their respective values for the final course grade and (where appropriate) the dates on which the assignment is due. *All students are expected to turn in assignments on (or before) the provided dates. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless prior permission has been granted by the professor. Such extensions will only be approved for emergency situations.*

1. **Class Participation** [35% of final grade]: Participation requires that students complete all reading assignments (including lectures/PowerPoint presentations) and all written work for each week's class. As an online class, participation will be measured primarily by students' engagement with the weekly Forum topics. By 10 am (Central) on each Thursday, the professor will post a question (or questions) related to the weekly reading assignments and topic(s). The Forum will be active from 10 am (Central) on Thursday until 4:30 pm (Central) on the following Tuesday. Every student is required

to post a minimum of 3 times on each week's Forum. The first post should respond to that week's question/s (post must be 150-200 words); the second post should be a question from the assigned readings [either something with which a student is wrestling or something that the student found particularly interesting] and the reasons for asking this question (post must be 100-125 words). The third post should respond to a post made by another student (post must be 75-100 words). Students may post more than 3 times in a week, but that will not increase their participation grades. A student is allowed a maximum of 6 posts for any given week.

A valid contribution demonstrates critical reflection on assigned readings, lectures, and course topics for that week (including references to these materials as appropriate and required). Contributions made just for the sake of fulfilling the assignment (e.g., "I like it." or "I agree/disagree.") will not count toward the satisfaction of each week's requirement. Comments must provide support for whatever claims are made (simply saying "I don't like this/I do like this" is insufficient). Disrespectful or derogatory comments will not be tolerated. [See "Professional Behavior & Netiquette" policy on course Moodle site. The professor reserves the right to remove any post that violates this policy.] Participation will be evaluated based on the level of engagement (with assigned readings and the broader conversations) reflected in a student's posts; posts should specifically reference a reading/lecture. Posts will also be evaluated for grammar/writing style (students should carefully compose their posts in Word, or another word processor, and then copy/paste them into the forum). Students are reminded to proofread all comments before posting. In other words, quality not quantity is the guiding principle. Students who develop a habit of posting at the last minute will lose points from their participation grade.

2. Exegesis Pre-Assignments [10% of final grade]: There will be three separate assignments to help students in developing, researching, and writing their exegesis papers. These will include: (1) choosing a psalm text for exegesis **[12 noon (Central) on 9/28/17]**; (2) identifying the 3 exegetical methods to be utilized for the exegesis **[12 noon (Central) on 10/12/17]**; and (3) submission of a working bibliography for the exegesis **[12 noon (Central) on 10/30/17]**. The due dates for these assignments are noted in the syllabus.
3. Exegesis Paper [35% of final grade]: Students will choose a psalm (or portion of a psalm) and write a 12-15 page exegesis paper on that text. Further instructions will be provided online by the professor. Papers are due to the professor no later than **12:00 noon [Central] on Nov 23, 2017**. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

4. Contemporary Application [20%]: Every student will choose one from the following options to compose: a Sermon based on a Psalm; a Worship Service utilizing/focusing upon a psalm or psalms; an account of a Pastoral Care Situation utilizing a psalm or psalms; or an Educational Experience/Lecture based on one or more psalms. Instructions for this assignment can be found on the Moodle site, under "Assignments" in the document entitled "Contemporary Application Instructions". Applications are due to the professor no later than **12 noon [Central] on December 7, 2017. Late applications will not be accepted.**



Please let me know right away if you are having difficulties of any sort (academic or otherwise) that are interfering with your work in class. It is much easier to work out difficulties early on than it is to deal with weeks of fuzzy understanding, accumulated missed assignments, missed classes, etc.

Grading: Letter grades will be determined based on the following scale. Students should also consult their *Student Handbook* for information on what constitutes "A work"; "B work"; "C work"; "D work"; and "F work".

"A" range = 90-100	A+ = 98-100	A = 94-97	A- = 90-93
"B" range = 80-89	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83
"C" range = 70-79	C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76	C- = 70-73
"D" range = 60-69	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	D- = 60-63
F = 59 and below			

Helpful Hints: Extra credit does not exist in the course. Make use of the credit available. "Trying hard" is usually necessary, but not sufficient, to create good work. In short, the professor cannot base a grade on "effort"; the grade is based on the submitted product.


Academic Honesty: Integrity is a basic principle of academic work. All students are required to be familiar with the PTS policies regarding "Academic Misconduct". Dishonesty in student work (including, but not limited to: cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated in this course. Students who are found guilty of academic misconduct will receive at least a grade of "F" on the assignment in question and have a letter sent to the Dean explaining the situation. Other, more serious consequences are possible as described in the Student Handbook (www.ptstulsa.edu).

Attendance: "At PTS, class attendance and engaged participation are very important. Every member of the faculty and student community is, in fact, both teacher and learner. Therefore, a class absence means more than merely a missed delivery of educational content. It also means the irrecoverable loss of a unique dialogical

'learning-through-teaching' opportunity for oneself and others. In view of this understanding, PTS has an established **Attendance Policy** that states: Any student who misses 20% or more of the class contact hours for a course, for any reason, cannot pass or successfully audit that course. The intention of the policy is not to be punitive, but to recognize that students should retake courses for credit if they miss a significant number of the class contact hours" (PTS Student Handbook). For this class, **not fulfilling the Forum requirements for more than 2 weeks will exceed the acceptable number of absences and will result in a grade of "F" for the course.**

Other Policies: All written work should follow Turabian formatting. Assignments may NOT be faxed to the seminary. Unless previously arranged with the professor, all assignments (except online work) may be submitted either as a hardcopy or electronically to the professor, on or before the deadline. Students are required to use "Just Language" (as covered in class) for all written work. See other important policies in the Moodle course page in the folder "Syllabus & Other Important Documents."

Course Schedule: The professor reserves the right to alter this schedule if pedagogical concerns necessitate such a change. This includes, but is not limited to: adding/deleting assignments, rearranging topics, and changing due dates for assignments (only if it is to the students' benefit).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
8/31	Introductions: To Each Other To Class To Subject	<i>Intro</i> , "Intro" & Chs 1-4; <i>Secrets</i> , Ch 1
9/7	An Overview of the Psalms	<i>JSB</i> , "Psalms: Introduction" (pp 1280-1284); <i>JTP</i> , Chs1-2; <i>Secrets</i> , Ch 2 & "Appendix"
9/14	What is exegesis?	H&H, Ch 1; <i>JSB</i> , pp 1827-1928 & 2000-2047; "Am I Able to Say Just Anything?" {M}
9/21	Establishing the Text History In/Behind the Text Sociological Backdrop for the Text	H&H, Chs 2-3; <i>JSB</i> , pp 2021-2071; Pss 13, 24, 29, 37, 46, 108, 110, 116, 117  <i>Secrets</i> , Ch 3

9/28 Oral Stages of the Text H&H, Ch 6; *Intro*, Ch 2;
Secrets, Chs 4-5, 11, & 13



Psalm Text for Exegesis Due

10/5 Sources Behind the Text H&H, Ch 6 & 8; *Intro*, Chs 3-4;
Editing of the Text "The Elohist Psalter" {M};
"The Use of Royal Psalms at the
'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter"
{M}

10/12 The Text as Literature H&H, Chs 4-5 & 10-11;
Hebrew Poetry *Intro*, Chs 1 & 5-9; *JSB*, pp 2077-
Ideology in the Text 2104; "Tuning Hebrew Psalms to
The Text as Canon Reggae Rhythms" {M}



Exegetical Methods Selection Due


10/19 & 26 CONCENTRATED COURSE WEEKS
NO CLASSES



10/30 **Working Exegesis Bibliography Due**

11/2 Putting It All Together H&H, Chs 12-13; *Secrets*, Ch 12
Reading & Interpreting the Psalms

11/9 Who is God for the psalmists? Pss 7, 8, 11, 14, 49, 50, 58, 60,
Anthropology of the Psalms 65, 80, 83, 90, 94, 104, 106, 109,
136, 137, 139, & 144; "Images of
YHWH the Warrior in the Psalms"
{M}; *Secrets*, Ch 6

 Whenever specific psalms are listed under "Assignments", students are to read those psalms in the *Jewish Study Bible* and the accompanying commentary.

11/16 Key Concepts/Themes of the Psalms *JTP*, Chs 3-4, & 7; "Body Images
in the Psalms" {M};
Secrets, Chs 7 & 15

