

SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary
3535 Commerce Road
Orchard Lake, MI 48324

Course Syllabus

SS 723 Wisdom Literature and Psalms

“The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)

Fall 2017 Thursdays, 9:00am – 11:50am CAC 109 Three Credits

Rev. Leonard Obloy S.S.L. S.S.D. (cand.)

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Office and Hours: Office hours by appointment. I am available almost every day of the week and throughout most of the day. Please email, call or simply see me in class to arrange a mutually convenient time. My office is on the first floor of the Seminary administration building at the southwest corner.

Course description:

An introduction to the part of the Hebrew Bible called “The Writings”, i.e., an examination of Proverbs, the Book of Job, Qoheleth, Ben Sirach, the Book of Wisdom, and the Song of Songs, among others. Exegesis of selected passages will be presented. The course will also include an overview of the theology and spirituality of the Book of Psalms. Theories of Hebrew poetry will be discussed.

Course SLOs (Student Learning Outcomes):

In accord with the SLOs of the degree programs offered at SSCMS, at the completion of the course, students should be able:

To understand what is meant by “wisdom” in Israel;

To have received a general introduction to each of the “Writings” in the Bible;

To appreciate the profoundness of the Writings and how they can be utilized in pastoral ministry;

To have proper conception of the personification of Wisdom and understand how it is used improperly;

To appreciate the Psalms as the prayer book of the Church.

Required Texts

The only required text is the Bible itself. Any modern English language translation may be used. Different translations are encouraged and will sometimes be examined to in class to show how certain passages may be interpreted due to how they are translated. Recommended books will be mentioned in class.

Optional Texts

Brown, Raymond E., ed. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. 1990.

Jensen, Joseph. *God's Word to Israel*. Rev. Ed. Wilmington: Glazier Press. 1984.

Church Documents

It is presumed that the student is familiar with the following Church documents:

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church
2. *Providentissimus Deus*
3. *Divino Afflante Spiritu*
4. *Dei Verbum*
5. *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

Course Delivery Method(s)

The course will be presented on-ground in the traditional lecture format. Questions and discussions are encouraged. Materials will be available on the Populi platform. Additional discussion topics will also be posted on this platform. In addition, audio recordings of all lectures will be posted on the Populi platform for review.

Assignments

An exegesis paper will also be assigned. Details will be given in the first class. The paper may be in outline form. The passage for exegesis must be within the books under consideration in the course. The paper must follow the outline given in the Writing Guide available on the Seminary Web site. Nonnative English speakers must consult the Writing Center and follow its procedures. Each student must choose a different passage. No extensions will be given.

Topics will be presented online for student interaction (exposition, discussion, comment).

Attendance and Participation

In accord with the formation and academic norms of the seminary program attendance at all classes is expected of seminarians. Exceptions for serious reasons will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Lay students have the option of attending lectures in person, by Skype technology or by asynchronous online delivery.

All students, seminarians and lay, residential or online are required to keep up with and participate in online discussions. A schedule of lectures is below. Topics will be given throughout the semester. The Populi software will be the forum for these discussions. Access to the program will be given at registration. Detailed instructions on how to use this program will be given in the first class.

Audio recordings of all lectures will be available on the online forum for purposes of review and study.

Examinations

Four written essay style exams will be given throughout the course. Examinations take place in the first half of the regular class time; lectures resume in the second half. The examinations are not cumulative. Once an exam is taken on a section of the course, that material is finished. Hence, the final exam of the course, taken during exam week, will cover only the subject matter treated since the last exam. All seminarians must take written exams. Lay students may take written exams or, within 48 hours of the specified dates may opt for an exam by Skype technology.

Course Calendar:

Subject to change due to the pace of students and questions/discussions. Bold face indicates non-movable exams and assignments.

Week 1 31 August 2017

Lesson 1

1. Definitions of Wisdom
2. Salvation history theology and creation theology

Week 2 7 September 2017

Lesson 2

1. Wisdom outside Israel

2. "Wisdom" root of word

Week 3 14 September 2017

Lesson 3

1. Personification of Wisdom
2. Personification of Wisdom: its misuse

Week 4 21 September 2017

Exam One

Lesson 4

1. Sages and prophets

Week 5 28 September 2017

Exegesis Passage due for approval

Lesson 5

1. The poor, widow and orphan: the nexus of Law, Prophets and Wisdom
2. The afterlife: an example of an exegetical investigation

Week 6 5 October 2017

Lesson 6

1. Proverbs
2. Proverbs

Week 7 12 October 2017

Lesson 7

1. Proverbs: examples
2. The Song of Songs

Week 8 19 October 2017

Exam Two

Lesson 8

1. Esther, Hebrew and Greek

Week 9 26 October 2017

Lesson 9

1. Tobit
2. Sirach

Week 10 2 November 2017

Lesson 10

1. Book of Wisdom
2. Job and his friends

Week 11 9 November 2017

Exam Three

Lesson 11

1. Job – the theophany

Week 12 16 November 2017

Exegesis Paper Due

Lesson 12

1. Job’s sin; the resolution
2. Qoheleth

23 November 2017

No Class Thanksgiving Break

Week 13 30 November 2017

Lesson 13

1. Psalms Hebrew poetry
2. “curse” Psalms

Week 14 7 December 2017

Lesson 14

1. Psalms of Lament and Thanksgiving
2. Selected examples of Psalms

Week 15 14 December 2017

Exam Four

Grading Criteria

The final grade will be the average of the four examinations and the exegesis paper added equally.

The following grade scale is published in the Catalog.

Grade Interpretation

Grade	Honor Points	Percent	Interpretation
A	4.0	100-94	Exceptional/Outstanding performance
A-	3.7	93-90	Superior
B+	3.3	89-87	Very Good
B	3.0	86-83	Good/Graduate level performance
B-	2.7	82-80	Average
C+	2.3	79-76	Below Average/Below graduate performance
C	2.0	75-70	Minimum Acceptable
C-	0	69 and below	Fail
F	0		Failing - In Pass/Fail courses no honor points
P	0		Passing - In Pass/Fail courses; no honor points
W	0		Withdrawal - No credit or honor points
I	0		Incomplete - No credit or honor points

Incomplete Grades - An Incomplete, "I," grade is given in exceptional situations to a student whose course work has been satisfactory, but who because of illness or other unforeseen circumstances has been unable to complete all course requirements. The student must request the "I" from the instructor before the final class of the course. *A Petition for an "I" Grade* is filed with the Academic Dean's Office and Registrar's Office. The work is to be completed no later than eight weeks from the end of the term. If an "I" is not removed by the final designated date, it automatically becomes an "F."

Drop/Add Withdrawal - A student may drop, add or withdraw from this course only after having complied with all the procedures outlined in the current Catalog. (*Not in Catalog with grades*)

General Guidelines *These are taken from the Catalog or the Web site except where indicated*

Guidelines for Academic Study - Students are expected to devote at least 2-3 hours of study per week, per credit. A normal reading load is about 500 pages per credit and research writing of about 5 pages per credit.

Standards for Written Assignments - Class assignments must be submitted electronically and in hard copy, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor, and proofread for proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and form. In preparing research papers requiring documentation, students are to follow the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, (latest edition). The manual is available in the Campus Bookstore and Library. Students are required to reference the *Student Writing Guide* posted on the Seminary Web Site. The Writing Center is available to aid students in preparing written and/or oral assignments. *To this may be added any requirements of the professor mandating use of the Writing Center,*

Disabilities Accommodation – Students enrolled in this course who have documented disabilities should contact the professor at the first class session. Reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that students with disabilities have access to course materials and interaction in modes in which they can receive them. *(Should be added to the Catalog)*

Class recording – Prior permission to record class lectures must be obtained. A signed affidavit may be required. Consult the professor before any recording takes place.

Class Attendance – Seminararians are required to be punctual and regularly in attendance at class sessions. Non seminarian students enrolled in online courses may chose, at their discretion, to attend classes in person or online in real time or time shifted. At the opening of a term, instructors will inform students of any specific policies governing attendance. Frequent absences may result in an academic penalty and/or failure in the course. Students should confer with the instructor concerning foreseen absences.

Inclement Weather - Students are expected to exercise good judgment and precaution in determining the safety of travel from their areas. Classes that have resident faculty and students exclusively will meet.

Academic Integrity - Students are expected to maintain personal honesty and professional integrity in examinations, assigned papers, and research projects. Source materials and citations used in the preparation of papers are to be indicated by proper documentation. Copyright laws should be honored when duplicating materials. Plagiarism and cheating are a breach of academic integrity. Plagiarism is defined as: “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (a created production) without crediting the source: to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (*Webster's New Collegiate Dic-*

tionary 9th ed, Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1981, p. 870). Violations in this area are considered a serious offense. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. When the instructor *suspects* a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor may confront the student.
2. If the instructor has *evidence* that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor should confront the student with the evidence. The student has an opportunity to explain what happened.
3. If the instructor is convinced that plagiarism has occurred, the instructor may suggest a course of action: e.g. rewrite the assignment and receive a grade or the student may take a “0” for the assignment and not rewrite the assignment.
4. The Academic Dean should be informed of the outcome of this discussion and a note will be placed in the student’s file. The respective formation mentor is informed by the Academic Dean.
5. If there are repeated offenses, the student will fail the course.
6. The student who fails a required course must repeat it.
7. A student who plagiarizes or cheats consistently in the academic program will be dismissed from the program.
8. For dismissal from the academic program, a board consisting of the Rector, Academic Dean, the student’s mentor, the faculty member(s) affected by the student’s plagiarism and a faculty member of the student’s choosing will be convened and a decision rendered. This decision will be communicated to the student by the Rector.

Cheating is defined as “to deprive of something valuable by the use of deceit or fraud; to influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice; to elude or thwart by or as if by outwitting <cheat death>*intransitive verb*: to practice fraud or trickery; to violate rules dishonestly <cheat at cards><cheating on a test> (“cheat.” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. 5 May2010 <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/cheat>). In short, “cheating is defined as the intentional act of breaking the rules, or attempting to achieve personal gain through fraud or deceit. With children, cheating usually refers to academic fraud, such as copying answers from another student while taking an exam, or breaking the rules in a game” (Dianne K. Daeg de Mott, Thomson Gale, Detroit, Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence,1998).

Examples of cheating in an academic setting include, but are not limited to:

- a. copying answers for an exam from another student;
- b. writing out the answers to an exam beforehand and turning them in at the time of the exam;
- c. obtaining the answers to an exam prior to the exam and using them during the exam in some way;

- d. having another person take an exam or write a paper for you;
- e. continuing to write answers to an exam after the time has expired (timed examinations);
- f. obtaining copies of an exam or answer key to aid in studying for the exam or preparing an assignment;
- g. passing notes to another student during an exam;
- h. asking another student for help during the writing of an exam;
- i. using another person's paper, presentation, reflection, etc. and handing it in as your own work;
- j. using electronic devices such as computers or mobile phones to obtain answers during an exam.

(The term "exam" may be substituted with "quiz," "paper," or "presentation" as the case may be.)

Notice of Change The information in this syllabus is subject to change. The professor reserves the right to make any necessary changes.

Select Bibliography

Students are encouraged to use the many on-line resources available through the campus library or any other modern library.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Anchor Bible

Anchor Bible Dictionary.

Elenchus of Biblica. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Press.

Hermenia

Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. (rev. ed.)

Jensen, Joseph. God's word to Israel. (rev. ed.) Wilmington: Glazier Press, 1984.

Obloy, Rev. Leonard. *Job: a Miniseries Commentary*. Hamilton, VA: The Catholic Distance University, 1994.

Obloy, Rev. Leonard. *The Psalms, an Introduction*. Hamilton, VA: The Catholic Distance University, 1993.

Obloy, Leonard. “*Job*”. Lecture Series, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Cleveland, 2010. Audio Download from Saintjohncathedral.com.

Obloy, Leonard. “*Psalms*”. Lecture Series, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Cleveland, 2010. Audio Download from Saintjohncathedral.com.

Old Testament Message Series

Pritchard, James. *The Ancient Near East Text*. Princeton: University Press, 1969.

The New Jerome Biblical Commentary.

(General Guidelines Revised November 2015)