GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OT 770 Old Testament Poetical Books
T-Th 10:45am-12:15pm
Fall 2010

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary objective of the course is to develop skills to interpret poetical books from the perspective of the Hebrew text. In addition to building upon exegetical methodology learned at the 600-level, class times will be devoted to an examination of the poets’ main themes against their historical (when appropriate) and theological backdrop.

- Exegetical Process. How to interpret the Hebrew text of the poets.
- Setting. How the poets fit within the life and worship of Israel
- Practical context. Developing skills to preach and teach from OT Hebrew poetical texts.

Additional notes:
- Course documents (handouts, Powerpoints, etc.) will be available on Cams. It is the student’s responsibility to check Cams for announcements, handouts, etc.

INTERNET USAGE
Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1) F. Andersen, Job (Tyndale Commentary, IVP)
2) P. Craigie, M. Tate Psalms 1-50 (Word Biblical Commentary, Word)
3) D. Estes, Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms (Baker)
4) A. Berlin, Dynamics of Hebrew Parallelism (Eerdmans)
Please also consult/review these 600-level texts:

- G. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Zondervan, 2003)

**IV. HEBREW COMPETENCY EXAM**

All 700-Level students are required to take a Hebrew competency exam that includes translation and parsing. The exam is scheduled for the first day of class

*Hebrew competency for the course:*

Hebrew competency must be demonstrated both in terms of the language and exegetical methodology in order to pass the course, regardless of grades on the two tests and exegesis paper. Thus, if a student fails to demonstrate Hebrew and/or exegesis competence in any aspect of the course, he/she will not be able to receive a passing final grade.

**V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*Mid-Term and Final Tests* (40%):

**Part I:** Translation and parsing (with exegetical comments) of a set text covered in class (no lexicon allowed).

**Part II:** Identification and short essay questions based on the required readings and materials covered in class.

*Hebrew Exegesis Paper* (minimum of 25 pages; 50% of course grade): Specific guidelines will be made available in class. Students are expected to abide by the academic policies as found in the Student Handbook (re: plagiarism, late assignments, etc.). For style consult *The SBL Handbook of Style*. This is especially important for footnotes and bibliography.

*Class Participation* (5%): Students need to come to class prepared to discuss (= read, parse, comment on exegetical steps) the assigned texts. Unexcused absences and absences beyond one week (equivalent of 3 hours of class) will result in loss of class participation grade (in fairness to those who attend all the classes).

*Readings* (5%):

- Estes and Berlin in their entirety
- Select articles (to be posted on CAMS)
- The poets in translation (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)
• Select readings in the required commentaries. Regarding Andersen and Craigie/Tate the expectation is that students will critically interact (not simply read) with the assigned sections of the commentaries.

Students need to submit a written report of the percentage of readings completed.

**DUE DATES:**
- Exegesis paper due: December 21 (4pm)

**VI. PREPARATION BEFORE FIRST CLASS**

- Review 600-level texts *Old Testament Exegesis* (D. Stuart); *Old Testament Textual Criticism* (Brotzmann)
- Review First-year Hebrew grammar (for the competency exam)

**VII. CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 Tues 14 Sept/ Th 16 Sept**
- Covenantal framework of Wisdom Literature
- Review of Method: grasping “The Big Picture of the Book” in Poetical books
- Hebrew competency exam
- Ps 1-2

**Week 2 Tues 21 Sept/ Th 23 Sept**
- Method: “Text Criticism and Translation of Wisdom poetry”
- Begin Estes, Berlin
- Read Craigie/Tate “Introduction”
- Ps 23; Ps 29

**NOTE:** choice of passage for the exegesis paper is due this week

**Week 3 Tues 28 Sept/ Th 30 Sept**
- Ps 51
- Read Ps 32 in translation
- Optional reading: Ps 32 in Hebrew
- Read Craigie/Tate pp. 369-414

**Week 4 Tues 5 Oct/ Th 7 Oct**
- Method: “Lexical analysis of Wisdom Poetry”
- Ps 22
- Read Craigie/Tate pp. 415-472
Tues 12 Oct/ Th 14 Oct READING WEEK (NO CLASS)

Week 5
   Tuesday 19 Oct: Mid-Term Test (90 minutes)
   Thursday 21 Oct: Ps 48 (not included in the mid-term)

Week 6 Tues 19 Oct/ Th 21 Oct
   • Method: “Structural analysis of wisdom Poetry”
   • Job 19
   • Read Andersen “Introduction”

Week 7 Tues 2 Nov/Th 4 Nov
   • Method: “Poets in OT context”
   • Job 31

Tues 9 Nov/ Th 11 Nov READING WEEK (NO CLASS)

Week 8 Tuesday 16 Nov (Note: no class on Thursday 18 Nov)
   • Method: “Wisdom poetry in its ANE context
   • Job 40:1-14

Week 9 Tues 23 Nov (Thursday 25 November is Thanksgiving: No class)
   • Job 40:15-25
   • Method: “The Poets in NT context”

Week 10 Tues 30 Nov/ Th 2 Dec
   • Job 42
   • Method: “The Poets in Theological context”
   • Read ch 2 “The Incomprehensible Righteousness of God” in D. Thomas, Calvin’s Teaching on Job (2004) ON RESERVE

Week 11 / Th 9 Dec
   Tuesday 7 Dec: Contextualizing and Applying Wisdom Literature
   Thursday 9 Dec: Final Test (90 minutes)
EXEGESIS PAPERS ARE DUE ON 21 Dec at 4 pm (no electronic copies/ a box will be outside my office)

VIII. BIBLICAL HEBREW SELECT REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries/Concordances


Hebrew Grammar


**Hebrew Vocabulary**


**Hebrew Text**


**Poetry**


van der Meer, W., de Moor, J.C. eds, *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite*


