OT 770  OLD TESTAMENT POETICAL BOOKS
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Spring, 2016
J. J. Niehaus

I  COURSE PURPOSE

A study of the nature and techniques of Old Testament poetry. Careful attention will be
given to matters of metrics, line and strophic structure, historico-grammatical exegesis
and text criticism. The course includes special introduction to the various poetical books
of the Old Testament and samples of exegesis, with the emphasis on the Psalms.

II  PREREQUISITES:  OL 502; OT 511; a 600-level OT exegesis course

III  COURSE SCHEDULE  Sessions 2:00–4:30

29 Jan  Lecture 1  Introduction to Hebrew poetic techniques:
parallelism (Lowth, Gray, Kugel)
meter (Ley/Budde/Sievers, Cross/Freedman, Stuart)
(Pss 2:6, 7:17, 118:2-4; 135:2.13; Pr 31:30)

5 Feb  Hebrew Competency Test (Ps 2:1–5)

12 Feb  Lecture 2  Early Poetry (Gen 1:27, 2:23, 4:23-4, 9:6, 12:2-3)

19 Feb  READING WEEK

26 Feb  Lecture 3  Early Poetry (Ex 15:1-18; Num 24:5-9)

4 Mar  Lecture 4  Early Poetry continued
Introduction to Psalms:
schools of interpretation, Davidic authorship, Gunkel
Psalm 1    Torah psalm
Psalm 2    "Royal"/Messianic psalm

11 Mar  Test on Lectures 1–4

18 Mar  Lecture 5  Psalm 29    Hymn/Praise psalm

25 Mar  READING WEEK

1 Apr  Lecture 6  Psalm 22    Individual Lament/Messianic psalm
Lam 5    Community Lament
Jon 2:1-10    Individual Thanksgiving
Psalm 135    Salvation History ("Narrative") psalm

8 Apr  Lecture 7  Isa 1:1-21    Covenant Lawsuit
Isa 8:23-9:6    Messianic oracle, sentence name, text crit
Isa 44:24-28    Form criticism, vaticinium ex eventu

15 Apr  Lecture 8  Introduction to Wisdom Poetry
Jb 38:1-7    Knowledge/Creation
Pr 8:22-31    Wisdom/Creation

22 Apr  Lecture 9  Pr 9:1-18    Personification
Eccl 3:1-15    Wisdom/Judgment

29 Apr  Test on Lectures 5–9
IV COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1 Required readings = REQUIRED TEXTS (WITH PAGES TO BE READ), as listed below. These count 10% of the course grade. Use reading report attached to syllabus. The reading report must be stapled to your final paper and submitted with it. Reading reports submitted late will not receive full credit, but will receive proportional credit at the discretion of the professor.

2 Two tests, as noted. These will be one hour each and will cover the lectures (and Hebrew passages) specified. Each test will count 10% of the final grade.

3 An exegesis paper on Ps. 8:1-10. The paper will be 15 pages long. Your own translation of the psalm must precede the paper. A sermon outline must follow it. (See below, VII EXEGESIS PAPER OUTLINE, for detailed guidelines). The paper will count 70% of the final grade, and is due on 2 May (seniors 22 Apr).

V REQUIRED TEXTS

Craigie, Peter C., Psalms 1-50 WBC 19 (Waco: Word, 1983)
Garrett, Duane, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (Broadman, 1993)

VI EXEGESIS STEPS

Broadly speaking, exegesis is the process by which a text, as a concrete expression of a "sender" to a to a "receiver" is systematically explained. The steps of exegesis are interrelated and not necessarily sequential. In abbreviated form they are:

1. Delimit the passage for study, noting opening and closing formulae (if any). Is the passage a true pericope, that is, "a self-contained unit of Scripture," or "a preachable unit?" E.g., Ezek. 37:1-14 (revitalized bones), and Ezek. 37:15-28 (the two sticks joined to symbolize the one nation, Israel), are both pericopes in this sense. Ezek. 37:1-28 is not.

2. Determine the literary context of the pericope, and its function in that context. (E.g., is it a word of encouragement placed strategically amid prophecies of impending disaster?)
3. Outline the passage, noting interrelationships of elements. E.g., are certain words or ideas repeated, and what is the significance of this? Are certain contrasts established, and what would God teach us thereby?

4. Check words of historical and theological import in dictionaries; seek cross-references with other passages by means of a concordance. E.g., Heb. *go‘el* (kinsman redeemer in Job 19:25. From Boaz and Ruth we know it's a kinsman redeemer - cf. Jesus.

5. Compare other translations, noting significant differences. Words have different shades of meaning. Some translators choose one shade of meaning, others choose another. What are the merits of their choices? What is your choice, and why?

6. Ask: what is unique about the text? What is typical (such as rhetorical or stylistic devices, e.g., parallelism, chiasmus, paranomasia, diatribe, irony, etc.)? How do the typical elements relate to those which are unique? What is their function?

7. What is the setting of the text -- its *Sitz im Leben* (the social setting in the life of Israel in which particular literary forms, e.g. psalms, prophecies, parables, occurred)?

8. What is the function of the passage? Is it didactic, kerygmatic, emotive? How is the hearer expected to respond? What does this say about its content?

9. What is the New Testament usage of the passage? How does the NT understand or develop the OT meaning?

10. List question and problem areas.

11. Consult reference tools. Check commentaries and peridocial literature for insights into your own questions.

12. State succinctly the results of your investigation: the text's meaning in its original setting.

13. What is its meaning for today? (Involved in both of these last questions, of course are issues of biblical anthropology and theology: What does the passage reveal about people? About God?)
VII EXEGESIS PAPER OUTLINE

1 page Translation of pericope. Single spaced.

1 page Textual criticism - deals with every item in BHS apparatus relating to the pericope. Single-spaced.

12 pages Body of exegesis paper. Cover especially items: 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13 of exeg. steps. It is preferable to do these in numerical order, with appropriate headings to indicate which item you are discussing (e.g., "2. LITERARY CONTEXT"). Results of item 11 can be incorporated into any and all phases of the paper. Double-spaced. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable.


VIII SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY (Books marked with * strongly recommended)


Keach, Benjamin. *Preaching From the Types and Metaphors of the Bible.* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1972).


Kline, Meredith G. *Images of the Spirit.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980).

Kline, Meredith G. *Kingdom Prologue.* (GCTS, 1989).


Lorets, Oswald. *Das althebraische Liebelied.* (Herstellung: Butzon and Bercker Kevelaer, 1971).


READING REPORT

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DATE..................................................

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<th>Assigned:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Craigie, Peter C., <em>Psalms 1-50</em> pp. 25-367</td>
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<td>Garrett, Duane, <em>Proverbs, etc.</em> pp. 19-432</td>
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