

# COS 421 Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom Literature

## **Course Goals: COS 421 - Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom Literature**

This course examines God's Word as expressed through Israel's prophets, selected Psalms, and selected passages from Wisdom literature.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, history, and use of these forms of biblical literature among God's people
2. Exegete these forms of biblical literature
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

## **Text-Book List**

*Unless otherwise noted, please use most recent edition.*

## **Required Texts for 421 – Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom Literature**

1. Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms* (Fortress Press; Abridged edition (November 16, 2001)); ISBN 978-0800634506.
2. Louis Stulman & Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Abingdon Press (October 1, 2010)); ISBN 978-0687465651.
3. Richard Clifford, *The Wisdom Literature: Interpreting Biblical Texts Series* (Abingdon Press (August 1, 1998)); ISBN 978-0687008469.

## **Reference Texts**

1. Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terrence Frietham, David Peterson, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (students will have the book from a previous class or licensing school) (Abingdon Press; 2nd edition (September 1, 2005)); ISBN 978-0687066766.

## **Recommended / Supplementary Texts**

None

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## Advance Assignments or Pre-Class Assignments:

### (Post Class for Spr21 & Sum21) Assignment 1:

Write two exegetical papers of 4-5 pages each, one on **Jeremiah 1:1–10**, the other on **Psalms 1**.

- First, work with these texts *on your own, without consulting other helps* (commentaries, study Bible notes, etc.). As you prepare your essays, read each passage in several translations, and formulate your own questions and thoughts about its text.
- Only *after* you have developed your own thesis statement about the key argument(s) made in each passage, should you utilize other sources (e.g., commentaries, monographs, journal articles, etc.) to help refine your readings of the texts and further explore their historical, religious, and cultural contexts.
- Remember, the purpose of exegesis is to find and explain the meaning of Scripture, *not* to bring meaning to Scripture: our goal is to understand the biblical text in its original, ancient context(s).

### (Pre) Assignment 2:

Write a 4 to 5-page essay, on the following question:

- What is a prophet in the Hebrew Bible? Is there a single definition? Use specific examples from the Hebrew Bible to support your arguments.
- How do you understand the differences and similarities between the activities and objectives of early Israelite prophets (e.g., Samuel, Elijah, Elisha) and later “writing” prophets (e.g., those prophets whose writings are preserved in the books of Isaiah through Malachi)?
- Our course textbooks will be helpful in preparing your answers to these questions.

### (pre) Assignment 3:

Write a 4 to 5-page essay, on the following question:

- Provide a short definition of biblical Wisdom literature, briefly comparing it to other sorts of literature we find in the Hebrew Bible.
- Then select one book as an example of Wisdom literature from the Hebrew Bible (i.e., Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Job) and summarize the worldview of its author(s).
  - What message is this author(s) trying to convey and how does it compare to that of other writers preserved in the Hebrew Bible?
- Our course textbooks will be helpful in preparing your answers to these questions.

## Saint Paul Course of Study School Expectations and Preparation:

The mission of the Course of Study School is to educate and share in the formation of Local Pastors as effective and faithful spiritual leaders of the ministry of the Church, the body of Jesus Christ in the world.

Our agreement with the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville is that we will provide a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. This process assumes cooperation between the instructors, the students and clergy mentors in the annual conferences.

The Division of Ordained Ministry recommends a guideline of 15-20 pages of written work for each course. That translates into 30 to 40 pages of written work for each module. If a student takes four classes (two modules), that individual will write about 80 pages during the year. Those papers are based on the reading of approximately 4-5 textbooks per class.

To keep our promise of **year-round learning**, and to keep the assignments from accumulating and overwhelming a student, the book list is available for students so that they can **begin reading** as early as possible. We encourage students to put dates on their calendars and plan for reading days, as well as time for writing. You know the demands of certain religious seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Easter. Work around them.

The writing manual approved by the Saint Paul Course of Study School faculty is: **Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7<sup>th</sup> edition**. It is recommended that each student have a good collegiate-size American English dictionary of the student's choice in paperback or hardcover and copyrighted since 1998.

### Related to Paper Structure

- Use Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition. You may find further help at [www.eturabian.com](http://www.eturabian.com).
- Unless otherwise indicated, all papers must be typed, 1" margins on all sides, Arial 11 or Times New Roman 12, double-spaced, with indented paragraphs (no additional line spacing between paragraphs), and page numbers. Cover pages and bibliography are not included in assigned page count.
- Cite any quoted sources with appropriately formatted footnotes (not endnotes or parenthetical notes); list these and other sources within an appropriately formatted bibliography. If you use a scriptural reference, cite the translation you use in a footnote and the actual Bible in the bibliography. Each paper should have a bibliography.
- Do not begin sentences with "and" or "but." Do not use contractions. Do not include parenthetical commentary in your papers.
- Use inclusive language when referring to God and/or humankind.
- Use appropriate formatting for page numbering, book titles, etc.
- Double-check spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence fragments, tense agreement, etc.

### Related to Content

- Read the assigned books thoroughly.
- Resist the temptation to write a book report! Instead, focus your writing on what the author(s) have to say about the assigned topic(s), integrating your own thoughts about the topic(s).

### Related to Critical Thinking

- Read the assigned books thoroughly, making notes of what resonates within you and what brings up resistance in you.
- Are there other books or resources that would be appropriate? Bring them into the conversation.
- Practice being in dialogue with all the authors and their material. Who would say what? How would you and the other writers respond? This practice dialogue will not be included in your papers, but it will help you to move into critical reflection.
- If you strongly agree or disagree with an author's point of view, offer your own affirmation or disagreement, supporting your view with additional resources.
- Watch for unsupported "leaps" made by a writer. What, in your opinion, is missing? Use additional resources to fill in the gaps.

### Related to Timeliness

- Submit all your assignments on time.

**In the event of an emergency situation**, a student may request an **extension** from the Director and assigned faculty to the due date for advance assignments. This request may be made via email, and if granted, may extend to a *three-week maximum*. A student may only receive **two extensions during their tenure as a Saint Paul** Course of Study student – so use them wisely. If assignments are not completed, the policies of the COS are such that the student may be asked postpone participation in a particular session of COS until that individual can complete all the work.

Learning can be fun! Consider your reading as a dialogue with authors – some will be more interesting than others. All will have something to teach us. Share the learning process with friends or colleagues or interested members of your congregations.

### **Book List:**

Each course has Assigned:

**Required Texts.** Students are required to read them, use them in their assignments and are accountable in the classroom for any discussion or presentation of materials.

**Reference Texts** (when applicable) are also required; assignments assure the use of the recommended books; they are not classroom texts. Assigned texts and recommended books help the student build their own library.

**Recommended (Supplementary) Texts** (when applicable) are valuable, but optional texts if a student wants to pursue an area of ministry.

Students may acquire the books in a variety of ways: Order from Cokesbury.com; order from another vendor such as Amazon etc.; purchase a used book; borrow from a colleague; Kindle or e-book.

### **Instructions for sending assignments to COS office at Saint Paul School of Theology:**

Course of Study Students are to upload their papers through Moodle. **You will need to set up a Moodle account in order to submit your assignments.** If you need assistance in setting up your Moodle account, please contact [cos@spst.edu](mailto:cos@spst.edu) for informational handouts. **Additional questions on Moodle can be directed to our IT help desk at [helpdesk@spst.edu](mailto:helpdesk@spst.edu) (hours: M – F 8:00am – 5:00pm).**