“The purpose of Poetry is to instruct while it gives pleasure; instruction being the end, and pleasure the means.”

“It is the purpose of sacred poetry to form the human mind to the constant habit of true virtue and piety, and to excite the more ardent affections of the soul, in order to direct them to their proper end.”

- Bishop Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews

Hebrew Poetry is a study of the poetry of the Hebrew Bible, with special attention to translation and interpretation of Psalms. In addition to a focus on the form of and function of biblical verse, the class addresses the historical background and theological themes of particular Hebrew poems.

**Course Goals**

Our goals pertain to the italicized intended degree outcomes for the M.Div., M.A.C.M., and the M.A. degrees.

*Demonstrate exegetical skills in the interpretation of scripture*

1. To translate sections of biblical Hebrew poetry without notes.
2. To observe the particulars of Hebrew grammar in Hebrew poems.
3. To read and interpret Psalms in light of its ancient Near Eastern and canonical contexts.
4. To develop exegetical skills for interpreting Hebrew poetry.
5. To identify the theological perspectives within the book of Psalms.
Evidence of a love for God and others and a personal commitment to spiritual formation

1. To promote the integration of the book of Psalms into one’s individual and corporate spiritual life and to prepare students for teaching/leading others in this pursuit.

READINGS

Required Texts

Textbooks
Textbooks can now be ordered through a link on the HST website. The Textbooks tab can be viewed on the navigation bar on any page of the website. Check the book list provided under the Textbooks tab (http://hst.edu/students/textbook-services/) for correct ISBN’s and editions to insure correct ordering. A link provided there will take you to Amazon where you will only need to enter the ISBN to order your books. By going through our website, HST will receive some credit from the order. Thanks for your support.


Elliger, K. and Rudolph W., eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

Required Articles and Essays


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Exegesis Paper** (45% Due May 8) Students will select a Psalm of about ten verses for their paper. The paper should include an original translation of the Psalm, any text critical issues, an analysis of its poetic features, commentary on ANE backgrounds that inform one’s understanding of images and references within the Psalm, comment on possible genre identifications and/or *Sitz im Leben*, and a dialogue with scholarship on the Psalm. This is an exegetical paper, something like a commentary with attention to the poetic aspects of the Hebrew verse. Students should select a Psalm that we are not otherwise translating in our class (see schedule). Possible texts include, but are NOT limited to Pss 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, and 46. Students will present their analysis (with translation and interpretive remarks) in the final weeks of the course. The paper is officially due **May 8**, the day of our final exam. The paper is to be 15-20 pages not including bibliography, written in 12 pt Times New Roman and according to the standards of Turabian’s *Manual for Writers* and HST’s Supplement to Turabian. Late papers will be downgraded five points per day. See end of syllabus for writing advice.

2. **Homework and Preparation** (5%) There will be at least one homework assignment and weekly readings. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the translations of selected texts and the readings. Students will also take turns selecting a poetry reading and reciting it for the class, one per week.

3. **Midterm** (25%)

4. **Final Exam** (25%)

**GRADING SCALE**

A = 90-100  B = 80-89  C = 70-79  D = 60-69  F = < 60
PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Jan 16

Topics: Introduction to Psalms; What is Hebrew Poetry?
Readings: 48 pages
  Dobbs-Allsopp, “Poetry of the Psalms,” 79-98
  Brueggemann, “Psalms of Life and Faith,” 3-32
Translation: Psalm 1

Jan 23

Topic: Composition and Origin of Psalms
Readings: 103 pages
  Bellinger, “Psalms and the Question of Genre,” 313-325
  Ballhorn, “The Psalter as a Book,” 155-169
  Williamson, “Reading the Lament Psalms Backwards,” 3-15
  Seow, “An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter,” 275-293
  Lefebvre, “‘On His Law He Meditates’: What Is Psalm 1 Introducing?” 439-450.
Translation: Psalm 1

Jan 30

Topic: ANE Background of Psalms
Readings: 31 pages
  Smith, “Canaanite Backgrounds to the Psalms,” 43-56
  Schipper, “Egyptian Backgrounds to the Psalms,” 57-75
  Pss 29, 74, 104 in English
Translation: Psalm 48

Feb 6

Topic: Parallelism, the linguistic approach
Readings: 121 pages
  Kugel, “The Parallelistic Line,” 1-58
  Berlin, 1-63
  Prov 4:20-27 in English
Translation: Proverbs 3:1-8
Feb 12

Topic: Parallelism, the linguistic approach
Readings: 77 pages
  Berlin, 64-141
  Ps 24 in English
Translation: 103:1-14
Homework for next week: Translate Ps 29, organize it in poetic lines, comment on the poetic features covered so far.

Feb 19

Topic: Parallelism, the line, lyric, and orality of texts (Dobbs-Allsopp)
Translation: Lam 2:4-8
Ps 29

Feb 26 – Midterm exam on translation and poetic analysis

Mar 6 Intensive Week

Mar 13 Spring Break

Mar 20

Topic: Metaphor, Conceptual Metaphor Theory
Readings: 104 pages
  James, “A City Who Surrenders: Song 8:8-10,” 448-457
  Kövecses, Chapters 1-4, 3-62
  Brown, 1-14
Translation: Song of Songs 8:6-10

Mar 27

Topic: Prominent Metaphors in Psalms
Readings: 89 pages
  Brown 15-104
Translation: Psalm 19
Apr 3

Topic: Prominent Metaphors in Psalms (Brown)
Readings: 61 pages
   Brown 105-166
Translation: Psalm 42

Apr 10

Topics: GOD Metaphors; ANE Iconography and the Psalms
Readings: 77 pages
   Brown 167-206
   Keel 178-201
Translation: Psalm 76

Apr 17

Topic: Poetic Analysis of Ps 133
Readings: 67 pages
   Bellinger, “Poetry and the Theology in the Psalms: Psalm 133,” 3-14
   Mays, “There the Blessing: An Exposition of Psalm 133,” 79-90
Translation: Psalm 133

Apr 24

Topic: Poetic Analysis of Ps 139 (last chapter in Brown)
Reading: 19 pages
   Pressler, “Certainty, Ambiguity, and Trust,” 91-99
   Brown, 207-216
Translation: Psalm 139

Student Presentations?

May 1

Student Presentations

May 8 – Final

Total Pages of reading 797
ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Accessibility/Communication

HST professors are accessible to local and distance students. Please use the following to arrange appointments with me (in person or by phone):
Email: lhawley2@harding.edu
Cell Phone Number: (901) 275-0468
Office Phone Number: (901) 432-7729
The best way to communicate with me is by email. I check it often and expect you to check it as well for class announcements and additional documents. Feel free to contact me with your questions any time. I will use Canvas and your Harding University email address, so please make sure to check it regularly.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Steve McLeod, the Associate Dean, at 901-761-1353.

Credit Hour Workload

For every course credit hour, the typical student should expect to spend at least three clock hours per week of concentrated attention on course-related work, including but not limited to time attending class, as well as out-of-class time spent reading, reviewing, organizing notes, preparing for upcoming exams, problem solving, developing and completing projects, and other activities that enhance learning. Thus, for a three-hour course, a typical student should expect to spend at least nine hours per week dedicated to the course.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in all its forms is inconsistent with Christian faith and practice, and will result in penalties which could include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the course, and even dismissal from the school.
Canvas Online Learning System

In addition to the live video platform Zoom.us (see below), this course uses Harding’s Canvas Online Learning System, which is accessed at http://elearning.harding.edu. If you have problems gaining access to Canvas, contact HU technical support (501) 279-4545. You will need your HST username and your password to log into Harding Pipeline. These are the same credentials you use to register for classes via Pipeline.

When you need to contact your professor via email, you may use the email system contained in the Canvas learning management system, although it is best to email directly to lhawley2@harding.edu.

Harding University gives each student an email address that also utilizes your user name. Many students use other email addresses as their preferred address. You can set your Harding G-mail account to forward messages to an alternative email address if you want; however, it is your responsibility to check your Harding email account regularly because this is the official Harding email address to which all Harding-related email will be sent.

HST LIVE via ZOOM

In addition to Canvas (see above), this HST-Live course is supported with the video platform Zoom.us. For new Zoom platform users, go to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started for helpful video tutorials about using this platform. The HST Live/Zoom Meeting ID for this course is 9012750468.

Students new to HST LIVE should attend the HST LIVE orientation session scheduled for January 9 at 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Equipment Requirements for LIVE Sections:

- Internet access using a latest version of a web browser such as Firefox (preferred).
- Latest version of Zoom software. This changes periodically without notification. If you already have Zoom, use that account. Basic Zoom.us is available free.
- Laptop or tablet with camera or desktop computer with camera.
- Additional monitor – Live video conferencing is best facilitated with two monitors.