



HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5060 Wisdom Literature Syllabus

Summer 2018, June 4-8

8:00-10:55 AM

1:00-4:15 PM

Instructor: Lance Hawley

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“Let the wise hear and add learning, and let one who has understanding acquire guidance, in order to understand proverbs and epigrams, the words of the wise and their enigmas.”

Proverbs 1:5-6

COURSE GOALS

We will devote ourselves to the study of wisdom in the biblical books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. Our goals pertain to the following intended degree outcomes for the M.Div., M.A.C.M., and the M.A. degrees

Demonstrate knowledge of the basic content of the English Bible

Demonstrate exegetical skills in the interpretation of scripture

1. To read and interpret biblical Wisdom literature in light of its ancient Near Eastern and canonical contexts.
2. To develop exegetical skills for interpreting Hebrew poetry.
3. To identify the central themes and theological perspectives of Wisdom literature and to understand what “wisdom” means in various literary settings.

Evidence a love for God and others and a personal commitment to spiritual formation

4. To promote the integration of Wisdom teachings into one’s life, to encourage students to draw upon Wisdom literature for character formation, 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.

Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs 1-9*. Anchor Bible 18A. New York: Doubleday, 2000. (You may skip the small font portions in the commentary sections. These sections contain many valuable insights, but they are generally more technical.)

Habel, Norman C. *The Book of Job: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster. (In the commentary sections, you are only assigned to read certain pages. When reading Habel's translations, compare them with your English version.)

An English translation of the Bible. Your assigned reading begins with the biblical text itself. You should read each Wisdom book in its entirety in the course of our semester. I will be working from the NRSV and supplement our discussion with observations from the Hebrew text. Feel free to use a different major committee based translation that you would like. Ask me if you are unsure about your translation. You will be responsible for pointing out important differences in translation in the course of our discussions. Hebrew is not required for this course.

Required Articles and Essays

Berlin, Adele. "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 4, ed. Leander E. Keck, 301-315. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Bland, Dave. *Proverbs and the Formation of Character*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. (chapters 4 and 6, 65-90, 105-121)

Brown, William. "'Rejoicing in His Inhabited World': Wisdom's Playhouse in Proverbs," *Ethos of the Cosmos*, 271-316.

Fox, Michael V. *Ecclesiastes*. JPS Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS, 2004.

_____. "God's Answer and Job's Response." *Biblica* 94 (2013): 1-23.

_____. "Reading the Tale of Job." In *A Critical Engagement: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of J. Cheryl Exum*, ed. David J. A. Clines and E. J. van Wolde, 145-162. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

- Jones, Scott C. "The Values and Limits of Qohelet's Sub-Celestial Economy." *Vetus Testamentum* 64 (2014): 21-33.
- Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. (chapters 8 and 9, 111-149).
- Pidcock-Lester, Karen. "'Earth Has No Sorrow That Earth Cannot Heal': Job 38-41." In *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr., 125-132. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Seitz, Christopher R. "Job: Full-Structure, Movement, and Interpretation." *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 5-17.
- Seow, Choon-Leong. *Ecclesiastes*. Anchor Bible 18C. New Haven: Yale, 1997. (pp. 47-69).
- Sneed, Mark R. "Is the 'Wisdom Tradition' a Tradition?" *CBQ* 73 (2011): 50-71.

ANE Readings

All in: Hallo, William W. *The Context of Scripture*. Vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
 Amenemope, 115-122
 The Babylonian Theodicy, 492-495
 Dialogue between a Man and His God, 485-486
 Dialogue of Pessimism, 495-496
 The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer, 486-492

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Proverbs Curriculum (10% due via Canvas by June 25) – Using the Book of Proverbs, write a detailed outline of eight lessons (Bible classes curriculum). Compose one of the lessons (about 4-6 pages). The lesson should include commentary like notes on the text, discussion questions for the class, and creative exercises for interacting with the text. Make sure to indicate your anticipated audience in your outline. Imagine giving this to someone else to teach the class. The outline and the lesson should be clearly organized and free of grammatical errors.
2. Job Journal (10% due via Canvas by June 7) – **Prior to doing other assigned readings on Job**, read the book of Job in one sitting, taking breaks after chapters 2, 3, 14, 28, 31, 37, 41, 42 to briefly answer questions outlined below. Reading the book of Job straight through takes roughly three hours, so allow sufficient time for both reading and writing. Your journal should be about eight pages long when complete (double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman). This paper is a reflection on your personal experience as a reader, so I am not concerned with continuity of argument or standards of citation (there should not be any). Nevertheless, you should present your reflections with proper grammar and style. Here are the questions:

- a. What stands out to you about the rhetoric of the book and how it influences you as a reader?
 - b. Based only on what you have read so far, what is the theological point of the book of Job?
 - c. How have the characters changed in perspective and attitude? Are Job and his friends pious?

3. Research Paper (40%; due via Canvas by July 23) – The paper is an opportunity for students to explore a theological theme or critical issue in a particular Wisdom text. You may choose to write an exegetical paper that seeks to expose the contextual/intended meaning of a short text (e.g., a literary analysis of Proverbs 9:7-12 and its function within the chapter) or a paper that addresses a theme in a series of texts (e.g., Determinism and Free will in Ecclesiastes). You must submit a written proposal to me prior to the end of the intensive week (June 8). The proposal should be about one page and include the question that you are attempting to answer, your thesis, and your plan of research. You should also include a list of ten resources that you intend to use for your research. I encourage you to get an early start. The paper is to be 12-14 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 three points per day. I will not accept papers turned in after July 26

4. Final Exam (40% June 14-15) – The final will be comprehensive covering all of the readings and class lectures. Students must set aside a two-three hour block on June 14 or 15 to take the exam. It will be short answer and essay. The exam will be administered on Canvas. Students will have to arrange for a proctor.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

June 4-8 Class Meeting (See schedule below for assigned reading pages)

June 7 Job Journal

June 8 Paper Prospectus

June 14 or 15 Final Exam

June 25 Proverbs Curriculum

July 23 Research Paper

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: (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.

Library Resources

If you have not taken 5990 (Advanced Theological Research) or 5770 (Research in Counseling), or took either class more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site (www.hst.edu) for information concerning library services to students. Under the “library” tab you will find a link to and instructions for searching the HST online catalog. There are also instructions for using the following databases available through the library: OCLC FirstSearch, EBSCOhost, Infotrac, PsycINFO, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. Contact the library for passwords to these databases. Also available are the research guides distributed in 5990 and 5770. These annotated bibliographies list basic tools you will find helpful in your research.

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.

GRADING SCALE

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

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

All readings are to be completed *prior* to class. See notes above about Fox and Habel commentary readings.

June 4 AM – Introduction to Wisdom and her biblical literature (From Proverbs to Wisdom of Solomon).

- a. Wisdom in its ancient Near Eastern context
- b. The social setting of Wisdom literature in Israel
- c. Introduction to Hebrew poetry

Readings – Berlin 301-315; Fox 3-27, Sneed 50-71 (60 pages)

June 4 PM – Proverbs 1-3

Readings – Fox 53-161 (108 pages)

June 5 AM – Proverbs 5-9

Readings – Fox 189-318; Murphy, “Lady Wisdom,” 133-149 (181 pages)
Brown, “Rejoicing in His Inhabited World,” 271-316 (48 pages)

June 5 PM – Proverbs 10-31

Readings – Amenemope; Bland 65-90, 105-121 (51 pages)

June 6 AM – Introduction to Ecclesiastes; Ecclesiastes 1-4

Readings – Fox, *Ecclesiastes* ix-xxi, Jones 21-33; Seow 47-69; Dialogue of Pessimism (58 pages)

June 6 PM – Ecclesiastes 7-9, 12

Readings – Murphy, “Wisdom Literature and Theology,” 111-131 (20 pages)

June 7 AM – Job 1-3

Discussion of Job Journal

Readings – Habel 21-69, 75-78, 85-112; Fox, “Reading the Tale of Job,” 145-162 (115 pages)

June 7 PM – Job 4-19

Readings – Habel 112-115, 124-139, 144-152, 167-168, 173-181, 189-202, 211-213, 218-224, 228-234, 245-246, 270-276; 302-309 (Compare Habel’s translations with your English Bible. Where there are significant differences, make a note and read his explanation in the commentary.) (84 pages)

Babylonian Theodicy; The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer

June 8 AM – Job 20-37

Readings – Habel 388-440; Seitz 5-17 (74 pages)

Assignment – Skim Habel 351-447 for his explanation of who is saying what in chs. 24-32. Come to class prepared to outline and explain his view of the ordering of these texts and the identity of the various speakers. Be able to explain his primary evidence for the ordering. More of this will be in his “Design” sections and also the introduction to the book. Read the “Design” sections for chs. 28, 29, 32.

June 8 PM – Job 38-42

Readings – Habel 517-586 (including “Design” for first divine speech, 526-535); Fox, “God’s Answer,” 1-23; Pidcock-Lester 125-132 (100 pages)