



HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5060 Wisdom Literature Syllabus

Summer 2021, June 7-11

8:00-10:55 AM

1:00-4:15 PM

Professor: Lance Hawley

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Phone: (901) 275-0468

Zoom Meeting ID: 9012750468

“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

Bland, Dave. *Proverbs and the Formation of Character*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015.

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.)

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 of your choice (e.g., NIV, ESV, Jewish Study Bible, NAS). Ask me if you are unsure about your translation. **You should choose a Bible in which you feel good about writing notes.** 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.

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

Dempster, Stephen G. "Ecclesiastes and the Canon." In *The Words of the Wise are like Goats: Engaging Qohelet in the 21st Century*, eds. Mark Boda, Tremper Longman III, and Cristian Rata, 387-400. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Fox, Michael V. *Ecclesiastes*. JPS Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS, 2004. (Pages ix-xxi)

_____. "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.

Greenstein, Edward L. "A Forensic Understanding of the Speech from the Whirlwind." In *Text, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, ed. Michael V. Fox, et al., 241-258. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996.

Greenstein, Edward L. "Sages with a Sense of Humor: The Babylonian Dialogue between a Master and his Servant and the Book of Qohelet." In *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed., Richard J. Clifford, 55-65. Atlanta: SBL, 2007.

Habel, Norman C. "'Only the Jackal is My Friend' On Friends and Redeemers in Job." *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 227-236.

Hamilton, Mark. "Elite Lives: Job 29-31 and Traditional Authority." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32 (2007): 69-89.

Hawley, Lance. "The Rhetoric of Condemnation in the Book of Job." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139 (2020): 459-478.

Kynes, Will. "The 'Wisdom Literature' Category: An Obituary." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 69 (2018): 1-24.

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.

Provan, Ian. "Fresh Perspectives on Ecclesiastes: 'Qohelet for Today.'" In *The Words of the Wise are like Goads: Engaging Qohelet in the 21st Century*, eds. Mark Boda, Tremper Longman III, and Cristian Rata, 401-416. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Seitz, Christopher R. "Job: Full-Structure, Movement, and Interpretation." *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 5-17.

Shveka, Avi, and Pierre Van Hecke. "The Metaphor of Criminal Charge as a Paradigm for the Conflict between Job and His Friends." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 90 (2014): 99-119.

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. Job Journal (15% 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?
2. Research Paper (35%; 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. I recommend that you 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), but you may also choose to write 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 11). 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.**
3. Final Exam (35% June 26-30) – The final will be comprehensive covering all of the readings and class lectures. Students must set aside a two-three hour block 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 or use Proctorio.
4. Practicing Wisdom Disciplines (15%; due via Canvas August 1) – This portion of your grade is based on a good faith effort. You are required to journal (encouraged to handwrite in a journal) the following assignments. You will scan your journal and turn it in on Canvas.
 - a. Pray for Wisdom

- i. Compose at least three prayers for wisdom virtues. Use virtues and biblical texts in Bland’s book (lists on pgs 45-46, 49-50, 54-55, 87) as a spring board.
 - ii. Form a breath prayer from a wisdom text. Pray it 50 times a day for a week and report the effect. For example, memorize Qoh 1:2 and speak it with each exhale.
- b. Conversations – Interview experts in wise living, who have formed good habits and insights with regard to a particular area of life (money, relationships, friendship, service, food, suffering, time management). Write a short reflection after the conversation.
- c. Retreat, Observe, and Compose – Bring a question for God or topic about life to the wilderness. On three different occasions, take at least one hour outside in silence to observe how God’s wisdom is expressed in creation. How is God answering or *not* answering your question? Compose three proverbs based on your observations. Consider using the “better than” proverbial form.
- d. Practice and Reflect. Write a wisdom reflection on one or more of the following:
 - i. Make “to do” lists (daily, weekly, monthly)
 - ii. Build/Create something (house project, art project)
 - iii. Clean and organize a closet, garage, office, etc.
 - iv. Take a break from social media
 - v. Attend a funeral

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

June 7-12 Class Meeting (See schedule below for assigned reading pages)

June 7 Job Journal

June 11 Paper Prospectus

June 26-30 Final Exam

July 23 Research Paper

Aug 1 Wisdom Practices Journal

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

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 INTERACTIVE VIDEO EDUCATION (HST LIVE) via ZOOM

In addition to Canvas (see above), this 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 or <https://zoom.us/j/9012750468>.

Students new to HST LIVE should watch the recorded HST LIVE orientation session, available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1os3e5SC8SY73884o5HbX9vGvb_zphXP9/view?usp=sharing

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.
- Ear buds with microphone - Apple MD827LL/A EarPods with Remote and Mic work well. Order on Amazon.com, <https://goo.gl/jLYfBG>.
- Additional monitor – Live video conferencing is best facilitated with two monitors.

Course Etiquette for HST Live:

- HST Live is a convenience for distance broadcast and attendance. In terms of responsibilities, it is no different than on-campus participation. Attendance is required just as if in residence on the Memphis campus. Full participation in the class is expected.

- Please make arrangements in your ministry context or employment to be in attendance for all calendared sessions (e.g., a staff meeting is not an excused absence). The same applies to arriving late or leaving early.
- Be seated in an environment that approximates a classroom setting (e.g., a chair at a desk in your office). Remain stationary at your computer during the class session except during breaks.
- Arrange for your HST Live environment to be distraction free. Please do not answer phone calls during class.
- Failure to observe these and related etiquette matters will result in grade reductions at the professor's sole discretion.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

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

June 7 AM – Introduction to Wisdom and her biblical literature (From Proverbs to Wisdom of Solomon).

Readings – Berlin 301-315; Fox 3-27, Sneed 50-71, Kynes 1-24 (85 pages)

June 7 PM – Proverbs 1-3

Readings – Fox 53-161 (108 pages)

June 8 AM – Proverbs 5-9

Readings – Fox 189-318 (130 pages)
Brown, “Rejoicing in His Inhabited World,” 271-316 (48 pages)

June 8 PM – Proverbs 10-31

Readings – Bland 41-90, 105-161 (106 pages)

June 9 AM – Introduction to Ecclesiastes; Ecclesiastes 1-4

Readings – Fox, *Ecclesiastes* ix-xxi; Seow 47-69; Dialogue of Pessimism Greenstein, “Sages with a Sense of Humor,” 55-65 (33 pages)

June 9 PM – Ecclesiastes 7-9, 12

Readings – Dempster, 387-400; Provan, 401-416 (28)

June 10 AM – Job 1-3

Discussion of Job Journal

Readings – Fox, “Reading the Tale of Job,” 145-162 (18 pages)

June 10 PM – Job 4-19

Readings

Babylonian Theodicy; The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer

Habel, 227-236; Hawley, 459-478 (29)

June 11 AM – Job 20-37

Readings – Hamilton, 69-89; Seitz, 5-17 (33 pages)

June 11 PM – Job 38-42

Readings – Fox, “God’s Answer,” 1-23; Pidcock-Lester 125-132; Greenstein, “Forensic Understanding,” 241-258; Shveka and Van Hecke, 99-119 (78 pages)