



# HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

5130 Hebrew Poetry  
Spring 2024, Mondays 8:15-10:55 AM

Professor: Lance Hawley  
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“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 particular features 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 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

Berlin, Adele. *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*. Revised and Expanded. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008.

Brown, William P. *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

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

### Required Articles and Essays

Ballhorn, Egbert. "The Psalter as a Book: Genre as Key to Its Theology." In *The Psalter as Witness: Theology, Poetry, and Genre*. Ed. W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. and W. H. Bellinger, Jr. 155-169. Waco: Baylor University, 2017.

Bellinger, William H., Jr. "Psalms and the Question of Genre." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Ed. William P. Brown, 313-325. Oxford: Oxford University, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Poetry and Theology in the Psalms: Psalm 133." In *The Psalter as Witness: Theology, Poetry, and Genre*. Ed. W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. and W. H. Bellinger, Jr. 3-14. Waco: Baylor University, 2017.

Brueggemann, Walter. "Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function." *JSOT* 17 (1980): 3-32.

Dobbs-Allsopp, F. W. "Poetry of the Psalms." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Ed. William P. Brown, 79-98. Oxford: Oxford University, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Way of Poetry in Psalm 133." Ch. 5 in *On Biblical Poetry*. 326-349, 503-524. Oxford: Oxford University, 2015.

Hawley, Lance. "Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Joban Discourse." Ch. 2 in *Metaphor Competition in the Book of Job*. 45-66. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2018.

James, Elaine. "A City Who Surrenders: Song 8:8-10." *Vetus Testamentum* 67 (2017): 448-457.

Keel, Othmar. "God in the Temple." Chapter IV in *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Trans. Timothy J. Hallett, 177-201. New York: Seabury, 1978.

- Kövecses, Zoltan. Chapters 1-4. In *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. 2d ed. 3-62. Oxford: Oxford University, 2010.
- Kugel, James L. "The Parallelistic Line: 'A is so, and *what's more*, B.'" In *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*. 1-58. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1981.
- Lefebvre, Michael. "'On His Law He Meditates': What Is Psalm 1 Introducing?" *JSOT* 40 (2016): 439-450.
- Lemon, Joel M. "Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Psalms." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Ed. William P. Brown, 377-391. Oxford: Oxford University, 2014.
- Mays, James Luther. "There the Blessing: An Exposition of Psalm 133." In *A God so Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*. Ed Brent Strawn and Nancy Bowen, 79-90. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Pressler, Carolyn. "Certainty, Ambiguity, and Trust: Knowledge of God in Psalm 139." In *A God so Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*. Ed Brent Strawn and Nancy Bowen, 91-99. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Schipper, Bernd U. "Egyptian Backgrounds to the Psalms." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Ed. William P. Brown, 57-75. Oxford: Oxford University, 2014.
- Seow, C. L. "An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter." *JBL* 132 (2013): 275-293.
- Smith, Mark S. "Canaanite Backgrounds to the Psalms." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Ed. William P. Brown, 43-56. Oxford: Oxford University, 2014.
- Williamson, H. G. M. "Reading the Lament Psalms Backwards." In *A God so Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*. Ed Brent Strawn and Nancy Bowen, 3-15. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Exegesis Paper (45% Due April 29)** Students will select a Psalm of about ten verses for their paper. The paper should include an original translation of the Psalm, notation on 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 week(s) of the course. The paper is officially due **April 29**, Monday of final exam week. 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**.
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 8

Topics: Introduction to Psalms; What is Hebrew Poetry?

Readings: 60 pages

Dobbs-Allsopp, "Poetry of the Psalms," 79-98

Bellinger, "Psalms and the Question of Genre," 313-325

Brueggemann, "Psalms of Life and Faith," 3-32

Translation: **Psalm 1**

Jan 15

Topic: Composition and Origin of Psalms

Readings: 91 pages

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 22

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, 68, 74, 104 in English

Translation: **Psalm 48**

Jan 29

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 5

Topic: Parallelism, the linguistic approach

Readings: 77 pages

Berlin, 64-141

Ps 24 in English

Translation: **Psalm 103:1-14**

Homework for Feb 14: Translate Ps 29, organize it in poetic lines, comment on the poetic features covered so far. Use Template.

Feb 12

Topic: Parallelism, the line, lyric, and orality of texts (Dobbs-Allsopp)

Translation: **Lam 2:4-8**

**Ps 29**

Feb 19 – **Midterm** exam on translation and poetic analysis

Feb 26 – Intensive/Study Week

Mar 4 – Spring Break

Mar 11

Topic: Metaphor, Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Readings: 104 pages

James, “A City Who Surrenders: Song 8:8-10,” 448-457

Hawley, “Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Joban Discourse,” 45-66.

Kövecses, Chapters 1-4, 3-62

Brown, 1-14

Translation: **Song of Songs 8:6-10**

Mar 18

Topic: Prominent Metaphors in Psalms

Readings: 89 pages

Brown 15-104

Translation: **Psalm 19**

Mar 25

Topic: Prominent Metaphors in Psalms (Brown)

Readings: 61 pages

Brown 105-166

Translation: **Psalm 42**

Apr 1

Topics: GOD Metaphors; ANE Iconography and the Psalms

Readings: 77 pages

Brown 167-206

Lemon, "Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Psalms," 377-391

Keel 178-201

Translation: **Psalm 76**

Apr 8

Topic: Poetic Analysis of Ps 133

Readings: 67 pages

Bellinger, "Poetry and the Theology in the Psalms: Psalm 133," 3-14

Dobbs-Allsopp, "The Way of Poetry in Psalm 133," 326-349, 503-524

Mays, "There the Blessing: An Exposition of Psalm 133," 79-90

Translation: **Psalm 133**

Apr 15

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**

Apr 22 – Student Presentations

Apr 29 – 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.

### **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 quizzes/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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Library Resources**

If you have not taken 5990 (Advanced Theological Research) or took it more than a year ago, go to the HST Web site ([www.hst.edu](http://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, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. Contact the library for passwords to these databases. Also available are the research guides distributed in 5990. 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.

### **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](mailto: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 watch the HST LIVE orientation video before the first day of class. The video can be found at <https://hst.edu/students/canvas-online-learning/>.

### ***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.

# How to Be a Poet

BY WENDELL BERRY

*(to remind myself)*

i

Make a place to sit down.  
 Sit down. Be quiet.  
 You must depend upon  
 affection, reading, knowledge,  
 skill—more of each  
 than you have—inspiration,  
 work, growing older, patience,  
 for patience joins time  
 to eternity. Any readers  
 who like your poems,  
 doubt their judgment.

ii

Breathe with unconditional breath  
 the unconditioned air.  
 Shun electric wire.  
 Communicate slowly. Live  
 a three-dimensional life;  
 stay away from screens.  
 Stay away from anything  
 that obscures the place it is in.  
 There are no unsacred places;  
 there are only sacred places  
 and desecrated places.

iii

Accept what comes from silence.  
 Make the best you can of it.  
 Of the little words that come  
 out of the silence, like prayers  
 prayed back to the one who prays,  
 make a poem that does not disturb  
 the silence from which it came.