

## **ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY**

### **Graduate Course Syllabus**

**Course Number:** BOT 652 OL

**Course Name:** Exposition of Psalms

**Semester and Year:** Spring 2024

**Instructor:** Jeehoon Kim, Ph.D.

**Contact Information:** Jeehoon.kim@twu.ca

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Semester Hours:** 3

**Course Instruction:** March 4 – April 27, 2024

### **Course Description**

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This course provides both an overview of the Psalter and more detailed analysis of selected psalms. Relevant hermeneutical issues are highlighted, key themes that are helpful for spiritual formation and ministry are investigated, and the enduring significance of this beloved anthology is explored.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

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#### **Knowledge and its Application**

- demonstrate knowledge of the structure and basic content of the book of Psalms.
- Exhibit knowledge of the historical, cultural, literary, and canonical contexts of the Psalms.
- Give evidence of ability to trace major theological themes and issues addressed in the book of Psalms.
- demonstrate basic understanding of how scholars have read the Psalms in the past.

#### **Cognitive Complexity**

- Differentiate the unique theological emphases of the Book of Psalms.
- Develop skills in conducting biblical theological research through careful analysis of a selected portions of the Psalms.
- Give evidence of competence to interact critically with the ideas of contemporary biblical scholars.

### **Inter-and intra-personal Wellness**

- Utilize resources of Psalms for personal spiritual enrichment.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the role of the interpretive community.
- Exhibit increased professional capacity and autonomy.
- Demonstrate superior organizational and time management skills.
- Show academic and personal integrity.

### **Aesthetic Expression and Interpretation**

- Consider and practice creative engagement in Psalms interpretation.
- Appreciate and participate in an informed discussion on the creativity and literary artistry of the psalmists.
- Demonstrate ability to engage in a dynamic educational environment within which the themes and texts of the Psalms are brought into relation with the issues of our time.

### **Social Responsibility and Global Engagement**

- Demonstrate the ability to analyze, appraise and evaluate the Psalms to contextualize and adapt its theology for diverse ministry contexts.
- Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to interpreting the Psalms' literary presentation and theology to better facilitate the pursuit of theological construction.

### **Spiritual Formation**

- Demonstrate greater understanding of and connection to God's work in the world through the Psalms and their relevance for personal spiritual life and worship.
- Exemplify a Christian ethic in pursuit of truth, reconciliation, compassion and hope through studies of the Psalms.
- Demonstrate academic proficiency to communicate effectively and to enter into conversation and constructive dialogue with others.
- Exhibit integrity and humility in all matters.

## **Required Texts and Materials**

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### **Books**

- DeClaissé-Walford, Nancy, Rolf A. Jacobson, Beth Laneel Tanner. *The Book of Psalms*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsman, 2014.
- Mays, James L. *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
- *The Holy Bible*. Preferred translations: NRSV, ESV, NASB, JPS Tanakh; paraphrases must be avoided.

### **Articles and Excerpts**

- Anderson, Gary A. "King David and the Psalms of Imprecation." *Pro Ecclesia* 15 (2006): 267-280.
- Firth, David G. "The Teaching of the Psalms." in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David G. Firth and Philip Johnston Leicester, 159-74. UK: Apollos, 2005.

- Swinton, John. "Chapter 5: Finding God in the Darkness." in *Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.

## Recommended Texts and Materials

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- Ryken, Lelend, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III. *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedic Exploration Of The Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures Of Speech, Literary Patterns And Universal Images Of The Bible*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998.
- Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- Brown, William P. *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

## Course Activities/Requirements

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Assignments are due by midnight on the day they are due. Students submit their assignments in the online Moodle classroom accessible through MyCourses ([www.learn.twu.ca](http://www.learn.twu.ca)). Assignment submit folders will be provided in Moodle platform. Marked and commented assignments will be returned in the Moodle classroom, and students will receive an automatic notification. The Moodle submission of each assignment will remain open until two weeks after the given due dates. However, late assignments lacking a valid reason for being late (i.e., a family emergency such as a major illness) will be penalized with a deduction of -0.25% from the overall grade for each day they are late. Weekend (Friday to Sunday) counts as 1 day. Please note that no detailed feedback will be provided for late submissions; only the grade will be provided.

\*In the event that an extension is needed, please contact the instructor immediately via email.

\*In the case of illness, whenever possible, please try to secure a doctor's note.

Here is an overview of all the assignments followed by a detailed description of them:

Week	Due Dates	ASSIGNMENTS	%	Acc %
1	Mar 5	Pre-reading		
2	Mar 16	Book Reviews (March 16)	20%	20%
3	Mar 18-23	Forum #1	5%	25%
4	Mar 25-30	Forum #2	5%	30%
5	Apr 6	Spiritual Journal	20%	50%
6	Apr 8-13	Forum #3	5%	55%
7	Apr 15	Video Presentation	15%	70%
	Apr 15-20	Forum #4	5%	75%
8	Apr 27	Reading Log and Statement	5%	80%
		Research Paper	20%	100%

### **1. Course Pre-Reading Requirement**

Due to the condensed nature of this course, please have the following read before the course begins:

- Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.

This book will help you with the Spiritual Journal assignment. As the course commences, start to read through the Psalms and begin to write your Spiritual Journal. You will also be expected to integrate ideas from this reading into the forum discussions and other assignments.

### **2. Reading Log and Statement (5%)**

Read the assigned course textbooks, articles, and relevant Scripture portions noted in the syllabus, and complete and sign the Reading Report (appended below).

Additional supplementary readings intended to facilitate class discussion and the engagement of the materials will be made available via the Moodle website at: [learn.twu.ca](http://learn.twu.ca)

### **3. Forum Participation (20%)**

Students are expected to contribute to the forum discussions by posting a minimum of four conversational (worth up to 10 points each) and three substantive contributions (worth up to 20 points each) per forum week. Please make sure that you spread out your contributions over at least three days during the designated forum weeks so that you engage in the forum conversations at different points.

Conversational contributions are simply those that join the flow of discussion with shorter responses (e.g. questions, affirmations, quick thoughts about what someone has said).

Substantive responses are responses that show a deep processing of relevant ideas (this usually takes 200-300 words). We have a tremendous opportunity to build upon one another's knowledge, insights, and experience. Our goal is to collaborate in the forum. At times, we will respectfully challenge each other. We anticipate that this will be a rich time of dialogue. To create a safe environment for this to take place, we must build a supportive subculture that encourages one another. Disagreeing and challenging can be stimulating if done in an edifying manner.

#### **Substantive participation may include (among other things):**

- Providing and developing a new thought, idea, or perspective.
- Citing an experience or example of what we are learning and showing how it applies.
- Adding a new twist on a perspective.
- Critically reflecting on an idea/concept.
- Questioning or challenging a principle/perspective and giving reasons for your questioning.
- Integrating Scripture and other sources in a meaningful way

#### **What Substantive Participation is NOT:**

- Very basic comments such as "I agree" or "I disagree."
- Restating what someone has said (*unless there is a direct purpose in doing so*).
- Disrespectfully disagreeing.

- Pat answers that are not thought-provoking.

**Below are examples of how to stimulate your own and others' thinking:**

- What would happen if...
- Other times it may be helpful to...
- It is my understanding...what is your experience with this?
- You might approach this from...
- Is it possible that...
- Would you consider...
- Maybe...
- Possibly...
- Sometimes...
- I'm wondering if...
- Do you think...

Have fun!

Note: You can use any of your forum posts in other papers for this course. I would also encourage you to view the posts of others as resources that you can cite in your papers. Everyone brings a wealth of insights into the class!

**4. Book Reviews (20%)**

Students will read Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer* and Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms* and evaluate them (no more than 5 pages each, not including title page). The review will include the following:

- 1) contribution to your understanding of the book of Psalms;
- 2) treatment of issues that are relevant to the reader;
- 3) practical applications (spiritual formation, prayer, and worship);
- 4) constructive criticisms that you think would improve or refine the books;
- 5) concluding with summarizing how this book is useful to you and how it may be useful to others.

Provide specific examples to substantiate your critical comments, and include appropriate bibliographic information for your examples (page numbers). In addition, complete and sign the Reading Report appended below. The review is due on Mar 16<sup>th</sup>, but the report may be submitted at the end of the semester.

**5. Praying and Meditating the Psalms: Spiritual Journal (20%)**

Peterson suggests a daily routine of spending around 10 to 15 minutes praying the Psalms, followed by 5 to 10 minutes of journaling (Peterson, *Answering God*, p. 129). The journaling should involve writing down whatever comes to mind without attempting to analyze or interpret the psalm. You will not be asked to refer to any secondary resources (commentaries, articles, dictionaries, etc). The purpose of this exercise is to focus on oneself and to allow the praying person to communicate with God. This

assignment requires you to read significant portions of book of Psalms and Peterson's book. Then, choose six dated entries from your journal, each consisting of 250 words, for a total of 1500 words to be submitted.

#### **6. Expositing and Living the Psalms: Research Paper and Video Presentation (35%)**

Students will choose a psalm from the provided list and write a Research Paper and make a Video Presentation. You will need to analyze and interpret the psalm and explain its significance for contemporary church life, ministry, and witness today.

- Pss 3, 4, 8, 12, 19, 28, 29, 47, 59, 61, 95, 88, 99, 110, 111, 113, 141, 142, 149.

Students may propose another psalm of their choice, provided it is relevant to their context.

Tips for the Research Paper (20%):

- 1) Select a psalm. Try to find a passage that is relevant to your situation today.
- 2) Familiarize yourself with the psalm similar to your journal entry.
- 3) Analyze the literary character of the Psalm: the psalm's genre, structure, movement, use of images.
- 4) Do a careful exegesis of the psalm. Identify key words, check their meaning in a lexicon or commentary and compare the meaning of this word in other places in the Old Testament. Explain how the meaning of these important words shed light on your topic.
- 5) Determine its canonical context. Discuss how the psalm relates to the theology and shape of the Psalter and to the rest of the canon.
- 6) Summarize the essential message of the psalm and its contribution to the overall message of the Psalter.
- 7) In the conclusion, discuss how the psalm is applied in your ministry context.
- 8) Use at least 8 academic sources such as class texts, reference works (concordance, Bible dictionary/encyclopedia, theological dictionary, etc.) and other reputable and recent books and journals/periodicals (but not Study Bible notes, internet blogs, or Wikipedia).
- 9) The paper should be 12 pages double-spaced (excluding Title Page and Bibliography). Approximately 6 pages should be devoted to analysis of the psalm, exegetical, historical issues, approximately 4 pages to theological construction, and 2 pages to contemporary application (ethical, social, ecclesiological, etc.).

The Video Presentation (15%) should be consisted of a short summary of your paper along with the importance of your findings for your ministry and/or Christian life. Students may use PowerPoint presentation on a ZOOM recording or with PowerPoint with a voiceover. Presentations must be uploaded to Moodle. The videos should be no more than 10 minutes.

Furthermore, the Video Presentation will serve as each student's "substantive participation" for Forum #4, eliminating the need for additional substantive contributions. Each student, however, should engage in four "conversational participations" on other students' video presentations. These contributions can consist of multiple discussions on one or two video presentations or one discussion on each of four different video presentations.

## Grading System

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Letter Grade	Percentage	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	97-100	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	93-96.99	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	90-92.99	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skilful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	87-89.99	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.
B	83-86.99	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	80-82.99	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	77-79.99	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	73-76.99	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	70-72.99	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision <i>or</i> references and resources not taken fully into account <i>or</i> examples are basic or not completely convincing <i>or</i> barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below 70	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

## Course Outline

Date	Discussion	Readings	Learning Task
Week 1 (Mar 4-9)	<u><i>Introducing the Psalms</i></u> 1. Introduction to the Book of Psalms 2. Praying the Psalms 3. Living the Psalms 4. Meditating on the Psalms	Peterson, <i>Answering God</i> DJT, Psalm 1, 2	Due: Pre-Reading (Mar 5 <sup>th</sup> )
Week 2 (Mar 11-16)	<u><i>Basics of Hebrew Poetry</i></u> 5. Analyzing the Parts 6. Parallelism 7. Images in the Psalms 8. The Use of ANE Mythopoeic Images	DJT, Psalm 23, 104, 127	Due: Book Reviews (Mar 16 <sup>th</sup> )
Week 3 (Mar 18-23)	<u><i>The Genre of Psalms Part 1</i></u> 9. Hymns/Praise 10. Laments 11. Thanksgiving	Swinton, "Finding God in the Darkness" DJT, Psalm 3, 30, 47	Forum #1
Week 4 (Mar 25-30)	<u><i>The Genre of Psalms Part 2</i></u> 12. Psalms of Confidence, Wisdom, Kingship 13. Imprecation Psalms	Anderson, "King David and Psalms of Imprecation" DJT, Psalm 16, 49, 137	Forum #2
Week 5 (Apr 1-6)	<u><i>Issues in Modern Psalms Studies</i></u> 14. Overview of Modern Psalms Studies 15. The Role of History 16. The Nature of the Text	DJT, <i>Psalms</i> , "Title Text and Translation" and "Form Criticism and Historical Approaches to Interpretation" DJT, Psalm 93, 94	Due: Spiritual Journals (Apr 6 <sup>th</sup> )
Week 6 (Apr 8-13)	<u><i>The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter</i></u> 17. Shaping of the Psalter 18. The Shape of the Psalter	Firth, "The Teaching of the Psalms" DJT, "The Canonical Shape of the Psalter" DJT, 146-150	Forum #3
Week 7 (Apr 15-20)	<u><i>The Psalms and David</i></u> 19. The Psalm Titles 20. Case Study on the Title of Psalm 60	DJT, "Authorship, Superscriptions, and Date" DJT, Psalm 34, 51	Forum #4  Due: Video Presentation (Apr 15 <sup>th</sup> )
Week 8 (Apr 22-27)	<u><i>The Psalms and Christ</i></u> 21. Messianic Psalms 22. The Psalms and the NT 23. Psalms in the Patristics	DJT, Psalm 22, 72, 89	*Due: Research Paper and Reading Log (Apr 27 <sup>th</sup> )

\* DJT: Nancy DeClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*.

## Grade Appeals

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made with the ACTS Office.

## Course Policies/Statements



## **ADD/DROP POLICY**

All OL courses are open for registration until the first day of class. Once the class has begun, students wishing to drop or withdraw from the class must contact the Registrar's Office by submitting a request through the TWU Service Hub ([twu.ca/help](http://twu.ca/help)). Tuition (excluding fees) refund rates are as follows:

Weeks 1-2 - 100%  
Week 3 - 60%  
Week 4 - 50%  
Week 5 - 40%  
Weeks 6-8 - 0%

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM AT TWU**

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic misconduct. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar](#) (p. 47).

<https://prezi.com/od62fxnkbnmxh/plagiarism-how-to-get-it-out-of-your-life/> (Prezi presentation)

<http://bit.ly/1p00KX3> (Google Slide presentation offering more comprehensive information)

## **STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY**

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office on their website at: <http://www.twu.ca/student-life/student-success/disabilities-and-equity-access>.

## **HOSPITALITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

TWU is committed to an ethic of inclusion centred on the principles of Christian hospitality, reciprocity and reconciliation. We seek to cultivate generous learning spaces that are based on respect for differences and are open to diverse views, opinions, and identities that are thoughtfully expressed in a collegial manner. We welcome and value all voices, including those from under-represented groups or those who have been marginalized.

The following policies are optional but recommended, to allow you to efficiently respond to student challenges to the syllabus. *Click on these fields and press delete if you do not wish to use*

them:

## **CAMPUS CLOSURE AND CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY**

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to the <https://www.twu.ca/about-us/policies-guidelines/university-policies/campus-notification>.

## **COURSE GRADE APPEALS**

Students can appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating in writing their reasons for contesting the grade. Deadline for such appeals is one week after the student has receipt of grade. Formal course grade appeals can be made through the ACTS Academic Director's Office.

## **PAPER FORMATTING**

The preferred manner for citations is the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format. For information and accuracy you may wish to reference the following style guide: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Students may find the following website helpful: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that Trinity Western University, Langley campus is located on the traditional ancestral unceded territory of the Stó:lō people.

## Reading Log and Statement

I have read \_\_\_\_ % of the selected readings of DeClaisé-Walford et al, *The Book of Psalms*

I have read \_\_\_\_ % of Peterson, *Answering God*

I have read \_\_\_\_ % of Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*

I have read \_\_\_\_% of the Supplemental Readings (SR) Assignments

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_