Reformed Theological Seminary

Course Syllabus

Old Testament Poets 6OT5300

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Professor of Old Testament

* **Course Description:** An examination of the literary structure, themes, and history of the Psalms and wisdom literature of the Old Testament.
* **Course Objectives:**
* Comprehension:

1. To increase your knowledge of the English Bible in the Old Testament poetical books.
2. To increase your knowledge of introductory issues in Old Testament poetical books.
3. To increase your knowledge of the development of redemptive themes in the Old Testament poetical books.

* Competence:

1. To sharpen your ability to interpret the Old Testament poets in their historical, theological, and literary contexts.
2. To sharpen your ability to apply the teaching of the Old Testament poets in your own life and in the life of the local church.
3. To prepare those who are called to the ministry for licensure and ordination exams at their local presbyteries.

* Character:

1. To be a person of growing faith.
2. To be a person of increasing hope.
3. To be a person of deepening love.

* **Required Readings.** There are approximately 900 pages of required reading (with the exception of the Scriptural books). For the Biblical books of the Old Testament poets, students are free to use any English translation of their choice. The Hebrew text is preferred if possible.
* Miles V. Van Pelt, editor. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: Gospel Promised*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. Pages 341-356, 357-372, 373-398, 419-438, 439-456, 457-474.
* Mark D. Futato. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007
* Richard P. Belcher, Jr. *The Messiah and the Psalms*. Mentor: Christian Focus, 2006
* Tremper Longman. *How to Read Proverbs*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002
* Derek Kidner. *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1985
* Peter Y. Lee. *Joy Unspeakable*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Collection of additional essays and articles will be provided on the first day of class.
* Adele Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry”
* Jamie A. Grant, “Editorial Criticism”
* David Howard, “Recent trends in Psalms Study”
* Bruce Waltke, “Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms”
* Geerhardus Vos, “Eschatology of the Psalter”
* Bruce Waltke and David Diewert, “Wisdom Literature”
* Peter Y. Lee, “Psalm 110 Reconsidered: Internal and External Evidence in support of a NT Hermeneutic”
* **Requirements:**
  + **Attendance**: Since this class is offered as an intensive format and we are limited in actual class meetings, you are required to attend each class. If you know you cannot make it to a class session, notify me in advance.
  + **Reading Report**: See below for details.
  + **Song of Songs Project**: See below foe details.
  + **Research Paper**: See below for details.
  + **Exam**: There will be one EXAM—no Midterm. The exam will cover materials from the class lectures and required readings. This will be a take-home exam. You must take the exam no later than **Friday, July 29** and email it to me ([plee@rts.edu](mailto:plee@rts.edu)). If you are unable to take the exam by that date, let me know. A “Study Guide” will be made available.
  + **Final Grade**:

Reading Report 10% of total grade

Song Project 20% of total grade

Psalm paper 30% of total grade

Final Exam 40% of total grade

*The following scale will be used to determine your final grade: A (97-100), A- (94-96), B+ (91-93). B (88-90), B- (86-87), C+ (83-85), C (80-82), C- (78-79), D+ (75-77), D (72-74), D- (70-71), F (below 70).*

* **Office Hours:** I meet with students by appointment. Contact me if you would need to meet. I’d love to get together with you to discuss Scripture, theology, ministry, and life.

**Reading Report**

Provide the date in which you completed each of the required reading assignments and turn this form in on the due date for Reading Reports (**Due August 19**).

NAME:

* + - Mark D. Futato

*Interpreting the Psalms \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* + - Miles Van Pelt

*Introduction to the Old Testament* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* + - Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

*The Messiah and the Psalms Biblical Theology* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* + - Tremper Longman

*How to Read Proverbs* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* + - Derek Kidner

*The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

* + - Peter Y. Lee

*Joy Unspeakable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

* + - Adele Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Jamie Grant, “Editorial Criticism” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - David Howard, “Recent trends in Psalms Study” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Bruce Waltke, “Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Geerhardus Vos, “Eschatology of the Psalter” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Peter Y. Lee, “Psalm 110 Reconsidered” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Bruce Waltke and David Diewert, “Wisdom Literature” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Song of Songs Project**

It is a struggle to get to the lectures on the Song of Songs in this course and that is not good. In order to fit in discussions on this book and to help with ways to understand it, you will do a project assignment on this book. The format of the project will be as follows:

* Section 1 – Literary Discussion: Read Van Pelt’s introduction on the Song of Songs and Tremper Longman’s introduction in his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). The two have differing views on understanding the nature of the Song of Songs as a literary work. What are their contrasting views? Read the Song of Songs. Choose and defend which of the two you find most convincing.
* Section 2 – Poetic Analysis: You will write a BRIEF verse-by-verse commentary on **Song 4:1-5:1**. Pay special attention to the parallelism (see lecture for more details). You will need to consult commentaries (at least two) to do this section.
* Section 3 – Application Discussion: Of particular interest (and difficulty) is the application of the Song of Songs. How would you Song 4:1-5:1 (and the Song of Songs as a whole) in ministry? In what setting? What cautions, if any, are needed?

Due date: **July 13, 2019**

We will discuss your papers in class on due date.

**Psalms Paper**

The paper will be on **Psalm 73** where you will do an exegetical analysis of the psalm. You will follow a verse-by-verse approach while emphasizing the major theme/message of the psalm throughout your comments. The length of this paper will be 12-15 pages.

Writing a Hebrew poetry paper requires a different approach of literary analysis. To help students with the paper, I encourage them to follow the stages of development below. *You are only required to turn in the final product*.

* Stage 1: Parallelism and Terseness
* Analyze each of the poetic lines by describing the parallelism in each line.
* Determine the main thematic message of the psalm.
* Stage 2: Strophic Organization
* Determine the strophic groupings of the psalm and how each contributes to the overall message of the psalm.
* Reanalyze your line-by-line poetic parallelism from the previous stage. Describe how each poetic line contributes to the strophic-group they are in.
* Stage 3: Genre, Christ, and Application
* Identify and defend the genre of your text and the particular scenario of the psalmist.
* Describe the way in which Christ can be seen as the singer of the psalm.
* Describe the way in which the believer can be the singer of the psalm.
* Final Stage: Compilation
* You will compile and synthesize the previous stages by writing a 12-15 page study that can be used for the ministry of the Word in an ecclesiastical setting.
* **Due Date: August 5, 2019**
* The minimum requirements for these Term Papers are as follows:
* For page lengths, see above
* Double-spaced lines
* No title page
* A bibliography as the last page of the paper (this is not to be counted as part of the 12-15 page requirement) which uses at least **8 good** **sources** (solid scholarly, not popular theological, non-internet). Thus, utilize ATLA (see the office for access)

**Lecture and Reading Schedule**

Provided below is the tentative (and I stress “tentative”) schedule for the lectures of the course with the parallel reading requirements. You are encouraged to following the reading schedule.

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|  | **Date** | **Lecture Topic** | **Required Reading** |
|  | July 11 | * Course Introduction * What Makes Hebrew Poetry poetic?: *Parallelism* * What Makes Hebrew Poetry poetic?: *Meter (Terseness)* * What Makes Hebrew Poetry poetic?: *Imagery* | * Futato, *Psalms*, 23-55 * Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry” * Van Pelt, “Song of Songs” * David Howard, “Recent trends in Psalms Study” * Grant, “Editorial Criticism” |
|  | July 12 | * Psalms: Introduction * Psalms: Shape/Shaping of the Psalms * Psalms: Christology of the Psalms * Psalms: Genre Analysis * Song Project Discussion | * Van Pelt, “Psalms” * Futato, *Psalms*, 57-116 * Geerhardus Vos, “Eschatology of the Psalter” * Belcher, *Messiah*, 1-41 * Lee, “Psalm 110” * Futato, *Psalms*, 117-182; 183-229 * Belcher, *Messiah*, 42-207 * Van Pelt, “Lamentations” * Lee, “Joy in Psalms of Lament” |
|  | July 13 | * Introduction to Israelite Wisdom Tradition * Proverbs: Introduction * Proverbs 1-9, 10-31 | * Bruce Waltke and David Diewert, “Wisdom Literature” * Van Pelt, “Proverbs” * Longman, *Proverbs*, 13-58 * Kidner, *Wisdom*, 11-36 * Longman, *Proverbs*, 61-158 * Kidner, *Wisdom*, 37-55 * **DUE: Song Project** |
|  | July 14 | * The Wisdom of Job * The Book of Ecclesiastes | * Kidner, *Wisdom*, 56-89 * Van Pelt, “Job” * Lee, “Joy in…Job” * Kidner, *Wisdom*, 90-124 * Van Pelt, “Ecclesiastes” |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date** | **Final Assignments** |
|  | **July 29** | **Final Exam** |
|  | **August 5** | **Psalms Paper Due** |
|  | **August 19** | **Reading Report** |
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**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: OT Poets

Professor: Peter Y. Lee

Campus: Washington, D. C.

Date: April 8, 2019

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| **MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**  *In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.*  *\*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.* | | **Rubric**   * **Strong** * **Moderate** * **Minimal** * **None** | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | Understanding through lectures and reading, articulation through essay exams and a research paper |
| **Scripture** | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | Strong | Focus in the class is on understanding the original meaning, with some emphasis on language and more on hermeneutics, with the goal of understanding modern meaning |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate | The class has a good dose of Reformed distinctives, such as the emphasis on creation, fall, redemption, covenants, and kingship. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Strong | One conscious goal is to see students benefit personally in their faith from their understanding of the psalms and wisdom literature |
| **Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Minimal | Several issues in class deal directly with world view, especially the materials on wisdom and its use in the ancient and modern world. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.) | Minimal | Differing views of issues are set forth in an objective, fair, and winsome way |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Moderate | Psalms are useful for coping through various issues in life. Wisdom literature are practical guidelines for godly living. |

1. Do not purchase this book online. Contact me directly and I can provide a copy for your at a cheaper price. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)