



OTEN5319: Ecclesiastes (English)
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division
Fall 2020
Tuesdays 2:00-4:50 pm

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NOBTS Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course will introduce students to methods for understanding and interpreting Ecclesiastes within its historical and literary context. Additionally, the course will emphasize the wisdom tradition in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East to place Ecclesiastes within its proper context. Finally, the course will equip students for interpretation and application of Ecclesiastes.

Student Learning Outcomes

Learners will demonstrate understanding of

1. the historical and literary background of Ecclesiastes within the framework of wisdom literature in Ancient Israel;
2. the critical issues associated with Ecclesiastes including authorship, dating, literary structure, genre, and more;
3. how to exegete and apply the book of Ecclesiastes.

Required Textbooks & Articles

Textbooks

- Bartholomew, Craig G. and Ryan P. O'Dowd. *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011.
- Garrett, Duane A. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs in New American Commentary*. Nashville: B&H, 1993.
- Gibson, David. *Living Life Backward: How Ecclesiastes Teaches Us to Live in Light of the End*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.

Any modern English translation of the Bible.

Commentaries (Choose One in consultation with the professor)

- Bartholomew, Craig G. *Ecclesiastes*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.
- Crenshaw, James L. *Ecclesiastes*. The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1987.
- Enns, Peter. *Ecclesiastes*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Longman III, Tremper. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Murphy, Roland. *Ecclesiastes*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol 23a. Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
- Provan, Iain. *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

Articles & Chapters

- Ansberry, Christopher B. "Wisdom and Biblical Theology." Edited by David G. Firth & Lindsay Wilson. *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2017, pp 174-193.
- Bennett, Stephen J. "Wisdom Literature." Edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, et. al. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.

- Bullock, C. Hassell. "Wisdom, The 'Amen' of Torah." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52, no. 1 (2009): 5-18.
- Crenshaw, James L. "Ecclesiastes, Book of." Edited by David Noel Freedman. *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Custis, Miles, and James S. Reitman. "Ecclesiastes, Book of." Edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, et al.. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.
- Dell, Katharine J. "Reading Ecclesiastes with the scholars." Edited by David G. Firth & Lindsay Wilson. *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2017: 81-99.
- Murphy, Roland E. "Wisdom in the OT." Edited by David Noel Freedman. *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Course Teaching Methodology

Students will read from a variety of sources in order to gain new insights into the background and text of Ecclesiastes. Students should read the book of Ecclesiastes in at least FIVE modern translations. Textbooks and supplemental reading will also be required throughout the course. Lectures will augment the reading. Asking questions and participating in class discussions will be pivotal for critical interaction with the readings and lectures. In order to facilitate critical thinking and asking good questions, students will be required to keep a weekly journal. Students will also interact with other students and the professor in Blog posts in Blackboard. Finally, students will submit a research or application paper for the final assignment.

Course Requirements

This course will consist of:

- **Ecclesiastes Reading:** Read the book of Ecclesiastes in at least FIVE modern translations. (At least one of these translations must be the Christian Standard Bible translation). Students will record each reading and the version used for each reading under the Assignments section of Blackboard.
 - Rationale: Repetition in reading aids in understanding and recollection. By reading different translations, nuances in the text become more apparent.

- Each reading should be done in a different manner. For example, you may decide to read the whole book in one sitting. The next time, you may decide to read one chapter a day and read more deeply. Try to vary your routine.
- **Required Reading & Supplemental Reading:** Students must complete ALL reading assignments for the course. Students should complete weekly reading assignments BEFORE the next class meeting. The reading will consist of books, articles, and commentaries.
 - Rationale: The breadth of reading in this course is designed to expose you to many new ideas and ways of thinking about Ecclesiastes and wisdom literature.
 - Disclaimer: I do not necessarily agree with everything in the assigned reading and you are not required to agree with everything the authors propose. You are expected to think and interact critically with the authors and their ideas. Being challenged is good for you. "If you're the smartest person in the room, then you're in the wrong room."
 - The amount of reading may seem unreasonable at first. As Vincent van Gogh said, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." Pace yourself and keep to a schedule.
- **Journal:** Students will keep a weekly journal throughout the course. The entries may be written or typed, but a typed submission must be submitted to Blackboard. Journals should be at least one page, single-spaced when typed, but no longer than two pages. These journals are for your private reflections and thoughts. Any sensitive information will be shared in confidence with the professor. ***Journal entries will be due every Monday by 11:59 pm*** (see **Course Schedule** below). Journal entries should consist of the following elements:
 - *Questions:* Try to write at least 3 questions you have about the material. These can come from class lectures, the assigned reading, or class discussion. Write good questions! These questions will be used to foster class discussion and may generate a great research paper.
 - *Quotations:* Find at least 3 quotations from the reading for that week. They can be quotations that caused you to think, statements with which you disagreed, or good summary statements that encapsulate

the reading. Provide a brief explanation for each quotation as to why you chose it.

- *Reflections*: Spend some time reflecting and journaling. Use these as starter questions:
 - What have I learned that's new?
 - What have I learned that challenges me?
 - How is this material relevant to me, the Church, the world?
 - What material am I struggling to understand?
- **Blog Posts and Responses**: In addition to the weekly journal entries, students should also participate in the weekly blog posts on Blackboard. No due dates exist for Blog responses. Students should feel free to interact with each post throughout the semester. However, every student must interact with each blog post at least once before the final paper is submitted. It is in the students best interest to interact weekly.
 - Before midterms, the professor will post a blog entry each week on a given topic. Students should read the blog post and interact with it and other students by posting responses. Students will be required to respond at least once per week, although responding more than once is encouraged.
 - After midterms, students will be assigned a topic and be required to write a blogpost and submit it. The rest of the class will then interact with the post(s) for that week. Use the professors blog posts as a guide for writing your own. **Blog posts (not responses) are due on Wednesdays at 11:59 pm.**
- **Final Project**: Students will submit a writing project as the final assignment. Topics should be chosen in consultation with the professor. Projects can take one of two forms.
 - Final Project Forms
 - *Research Paper*. The student will complete a research paper with a clearly stated research question and thesis statement. The paper should be well-researched and include proper citations from critical sources (e.g. commentaries, monographs, journal articles, etc). Proper english grammar and Turabian adherence are required. The research paper should be 2,500 - 3,000 words (double or single-spaced are acceptable).

- *Application Paper.* The student will complete an application paper which applies the text of Ecclesiastes to a life or ministry context. The paper should be well-researched using proper citations from critical sources (e.g. commentaries, monographs, journal articles, etc). Proper english grammar and Turabian adherence are required. The application paper should be 2,500-3,000 words (both double or single-spaced are acceptable). The application paper can take the form of a sermon manuscript, teaching lesson, or similar application scenario.
 - *Rough Draft.* Students will be required to submit a rough draft of the assignment on which they will receive feedback before submitting the final version.
 - Assignment Requirements
 - 2,500-3,000 words (5-6 single-spaced pages or 10-12 double-spaced pages)
 - 15 resources minimum(at least 5 commentaries, 4 journals, and 2 dictionary/encyclopedia articles). These resources do not have to be quoted in the paper, but must be included in your bibliography.
 - Title page and selected bibliography
 - Page numbers and section headings

Student Evaluation

Assignment Percentages for Final Grade

Class Participation & Attendance	12%
Journal Entries (14 total)	25%
Blog Posts and Responses (5% for Post, 12% for Responses)	18%
Ecclesiastes Reading	10%
Reading	15%
Final Project	20%

Final Project Grading Rubric

	Spelling, Grammar, & Prose (10%)	Adherence to Style Guide (10%)	Research, Notes, & Biblio (25%)	Content: Depth, cohesion, focus, & concision (45%)
0	Unacceptable number of spelling and grammar errors.	No adherence to style guide. No title page, footnotes, headings, page numbers, etc.	Does not cite sources	Lacks cohesion and flow. No clearly defined topic. Paper fails to demonstrate understanding.
1	Spelling & grammatical errors throughout.	Some adherence to style guide. Includes some elements, but lacks many others.	Some citations. Citations are from non-critical sources and do not meet the requirements of the assignment	Minimal cohesion and flow. Topic present, but unfocused discussion. Lack of clarity.
2	Some spelling & grammatical errors.	Adherence, but with major errors. Title page incorrect, footnote citation errors, etc.	Citations meet some of the requirements, but lacks breadth of research.	Some cohesion and flow. Topic stated, but lacks focus and clarity in discussion.
3	Minimal spelling & grammatical errors.	Adherence, but with minor errors. Footnote citations contain punctuation errors, margins, etc.	Citations meet the minimum requirement set forth for the project.	Cohesion and flow are good, but some weak points in the discussion. Focus and clarity are present.
4	No spelling & grammatical errors.	Adheres to style guide.	Citations show depth and breadth of research and interaction with scholarship.	Excellent cohesion and flow. The topic is clearly stated and the focus of the paper is on the topic. The discussion is easy to follow for the reader.

Course Schedule

Week	Class Meeting	Topic	Reading/Assignment
1	Jan 19	Course Intro & Intro to Wisdom Lit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading (read before Jan 26 meeting): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Wisdom Literature" in LBD ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, Intro & Ch 1-2 ● Journal Entry 1 (due Jan 25)
2	Jan 26	Wisdom in ANE & Wisdom in Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Wisdom in the Old Testament" in ABD ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, Ch 3 ● Journal Entry 2 (due Feb 1)
3	Feb 2	Old Testament Wisdom & Ecc as Wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Wisdom, The 'Amen' of Torah." Bullock in JETS ○ "Ecclesiastes, Book of" LBD ● Journal Entry 3 (due Feb 8)
4	Feb 9	Critical Issues in Ecc & Ecc 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading (Read before Feb 23 meeting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Garrett, <i>Ecclesiastes</i>, pp 253-281 and Commentary on chs 1-2 ○ Second Commentary, Introduction & Commentary on chs 1-2 ○ "Ecclesiastes, Book of" ABD ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, Ch 8 ○ Dell, "Reading Ecclesiastes with the scholars" in <i>IOTWL</i> ● Journal Entry 4 (due Feb 15)
5	Feb 16	<i>Mardi Gras - No Class Meeting</i> ● Journal Entry 5 Due (Due Feb 22)	
6	Feb 23	Library Day & Ecc 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, Ch 9 ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 1-2

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Journal Entry 6 (Due Mar 1)
7	Mar 2	Ecc 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 3 ● Journal Entry 7 (Due Mar 8)
8	Mar 9	Ecc 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, chs 4-6 ● Journal Entry 8 (Due Mar 15)
9	Mar 16	<i>Spring Break - No Class</i>	
10	Mar 23	Ecc 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 7 ● Journal Entry 9 (Due Mar 29) ● Student Blog 1 (Due Mar 22)
11	Mar 30	Ecc 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 8 ● Journal Entry 10 (Due Apr 5) ● Student Blog 2 (Due Mar 31)
12	Apr 6	Ecc 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commentaries ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 9 ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, ch 10 ● Journal Entry 11 (Due Apr 12) ● Student Blog 3 (Due Apr 7)
13	Apr 13	Ecc and Proverbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gibson, <i>LLB</i>, ch 10 ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, chs 4, 11 ● Journal Entry 12 (Due Apr 19) ● Student Blog 4 (Due Apr 14) ● Rough Draft of Final Project Due @ 11:59pm
14	Apr 20	Ecc and Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bartholomew, <i>OTWL</i>, chs 6, 12 ○ Ansberry "Wisdom and biblical theology" in <i>IOTWL</i> ● Journal Entry 13 (Due Apr 26) ● Student Blog 5 (Due Apr 21)
15	Apr 27	Ecc and OT Wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Journal Entry 14 (Due Mar 3) ● Student Blog 6 (Due Apr 28) ● Ecclesiastes Readings (5x) Due
16	May 4	<i>Finals Week - No Class</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final Project (Due May 4 @ 11:59 pm)

Course Policies

Flex Students: If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Blackboard. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in the graduate catalog. (See page 184 in the graduate catalog: https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/academics/GraduateCatalog.pdf).
2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done through [assignment by professor] after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.
4. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

Technical Assistance: For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Academic Policies: Please refer to the [NOBTS Graduate Catalog](#) for all policies related to absences, grading scale, final examination schedule, and other related topics.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”: NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments: NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Assignment Format: Unless otherwise directed, all assignments are to be submitted according to the SBL Handbook of Style, 2nd ed. PDF format is the only acceptable format for electronic submission. All written assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. Paper copies and email attachments will not be accepted.

Also, a copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Blackboard shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: [NOBTS Style Guide](#)

Completion of all assignments: Students are expected to complete and submit all assignments during the semester in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

Citizenship/Conduct: Class participation (or lack thereof) directly affects the final grade for this course. Thus, proper behavior and attire are expected at all times in the classroom. Open food and drinks are not permitted, though bottled drinks are (so long as capped). Should the professor be delayed, students are requested to wait fifteen minutes before leaving. Class is then dismissed unless otherwise directed. For questions concerning these policies, please visit me at HSC 109.

Electronic Devices: Laptops, phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are allowed in the classroom with the express purpose of course related activities. Social media, messaging, non-class related emails, etc. will not be permitted. Students in violation of this policy will be dismissed from class and required to meet with the instructor.

Attendance: Please refer to the Graduate catalog concerning attendance and absences policies. In a typical 3 hour course, a student can miss no more than 9 hours of seat time (not the same as missing 9 classes) and still receive credit for a course.

Make-up Work: Make-up of a missed exam, quiz, report, or submission of course requirements is not allowed. As such, the professor will assess a late penalty for any submission of past due requirements. The typical penalty is ½ letter grade drop per day late. Contacting the professor before or during the absence/situation (via phone, text, or e-mail) can result in a reduced penalty. The responsibility of obtaining missed lecture notes or handouts is entirely the responsibility of the student.

Contacting the Instructor: Students may contact the professor outside of class by phone only during the hours from 8am - 5 pm. Students should also allow up to 48 hours (excluding weekends) for email responses. Requests for in-person meetings should be made via email.

Disabilities and Accommodations: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary does not discriminate against applicants/ students on the basis of personal disabilities. The Seminary, in voluntary compliance with the American Disabilities Act, will provide reasonable institutional accommodations, modifications, and adjustments to enable and empower students with disabilities to participate in Seminary programs and activities to the fullest extent possible. However, NOBTS cannot support accommodations that place undue hardship on the Seminary or its resources or which alter the essential requirements of curriculum and academic progress. While the seminary does not provide direct assistance to students in the form of equipment or personnel, accommodations may be made by individual professors at their discretion. These accommodations usually take the form of early access to lecture materials in electronic format and additional time to complete tests and assignments. The most efficient way to pursue such accommodations is to provide the Director of Testing and Counseling (Dr. Jeff Nave, jnave@nobts.edu, 504-282-4455 ext. 8004) with documentation of the condition for which you seek accommodation, an explanation of helpful accommodations received in the past, and a description of the specific accommodations you desire. The Director of Testing and Counseling will document your request and communicate on your behalf with the professors who teach the course(s) for which you are registered. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for “special” accommodations on a case by case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Hurricane/Severe Weather Evacuation: For up-to-date weather information stay tuned to:

- WBSN FM-89.1

- WWL Channel 4
- WWL AM-870
- www.nobts.edu

Mandatory Evacuation: Hurricane season lasts from June 1 to November 30. If the Mayor or the President of NOBTS recommends that you leave the city, then do so. If a mandatory evacuation is called everyone except emergency personnel must leave. Staying on campus is not an option. See the Student Handbook for further information regarding hurricane preparedness, evacuation, and shelter.

NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service: Sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service by going to <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html>

Bibliography

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Fox, Michael V. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

———. *Ecclesiastes*. The JPS Bible Commentary, edited by Michael Fishbane. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004.

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Kidner, Derek. *The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn and a Time to Dance*. The Bible Speaks Today, edited by J. A. Motyer. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.

- Kreeft, Peter. *Three Philosophies of Life: Ecclesiastes, Life as Vanity, Job, Life as Suffering, Song of Songs, Life as Love*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989.
- Krüger, Thomas. *Qoheleth*. Translated by O. C. Dean, Jr. *Hermeneia : A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, edited by Peter Machinist et al. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- Lohfink, Norbert. *Qoheleth*. Translated by Sean McEvenue. *Continental Commentaries*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Longman, Tremper III. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, edited by R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Murphy, Roland. *Ecclesiastes* in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol 23a. Grand Rapids: Thomas Nelson, 1992.
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