Old Testament Studies: Psalms and the Wisdom in Ancient Israel:  
LCBS3328-30  
Spring 2021 (213)  
Monday 8:00 -10:00 pm  

Joe Mira, MDiv  
Adjunct Instructor  
Mobile: 786-261-5325  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
Student will be introduced to the academic study of Israel’s worship and wisdom books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Emphasis will be given to the various critical issues related to the composition, reception, and interpretation of the books. Additionally, students will study relevant texts and theological themes related to the books. Prerequisites: Old Testament Survey and Hermeneutics

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES  
At the conclusion of the semester, the student will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate** knowledge of the various types of psalms.
2. **Identify** and **critically evaluate** the introductory issues related to the book, including issues of canonical shaping, theology, and interpretation.
3. **Identify** the basic literary features of biblical poetry and their function for interpreting the Psalms.
4. **Identify** and **explain** important theological themes in the Psalter.

COURSE TEXTS  
The following textbook is required:

1. The primary text is the Old Testament itself. Students are encouraged to use a modern translation/version of the Old Testament such as RSV, NRSV, NIV, HCSB, NASB, ESV, NET, etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation** (5%)
   Each Student is required to attend and participate in class.

2. **Reading Quizzes** (15%)
   Reading is an integral part of the course objectives, providing important background material to the lectures. Students are required to complete the assigned reading for each class meeting. Quizzes will be given to determine the quality of the student’s reading from the required readings. Quizzes will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions, and they will only cover the material specified on the syllabus schedule. Missed quizzes **cannot be made up** and will be scored as a “0”.

3. **Two Research Critical Introductions** (25%)
   Each student will write a **critical introduction** to the book of Psalms and her/his choice of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Song of Solomon. The purpose of this assignment is to provide a thorough, yet thoughtfully relevant, introduction to the books. The structure of the critical introductions should follow the “How to Write a Critical Introduction” form. The required textbook as well as Old Testament introductions (2 required), specialized introductions (2 required), commentaries (3 required), and journal articles (2 required) should be consulted. The assignment should include a variety of viewpoints. Introductions should be documented and written in **12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, and minimum of 3 full pages single-spaced**.

4. **Research Paper** (25%)
   Each student will write a major research paper on one of the selected topic below that deals with Psalms or Wisdom Literature. The majority of the paper should reflect thorough research from journals, commentaries, and proven monographs in the field. Each paper should have clear thesis and purpose statements. Students must write the major paper in accordance to Turabian 8th edition. Additionally, the student must use **Times New Roman 12 pt. font** and a minimum of **12 sources**, three of which must be from journals and/or dictionaries. The paper should be a minimum of 15 pages double-spaced (not including front matter and back matter). Papers that do not meet the page minimum will be penalized one letter grade per page short. Late work will be penalized a letter grade per day late. The use of **Study Bibles, Wikipedia, any non-approved internet sources**, and **Matthew Henry’s Commentary** is prohibited.

   **Topics for Research Papers**
   - Theodicy in the Old Testament
   - The Retribution Principle in Job
   - Ancient Near Eastern Influence on Proverbs
   - Who is Lady Wisdom?
   - The Demise of Solomonic Authorship
   - The Relationship between the Psalter and Biblical Law
   - Reading the Psalter: Canonical Shaping or Individual Psalms
   - How is imagery used in the Psalms?
   - How to read the royal psalms: Ancient kingship or a Messianic ideal?
5. **Mid-Term and Final Exam** (30% Total; 15 % each)
The student will complete a mid-term and a final exam on Blackboard in order to receive credit.

**EVALUATION**
The final evaluation for the course will be tabulated according to the following percentage breakdown:

- **Class Participation**: 5%
- **Reading Quizzes**: 15%
- **Two Research Critical Introductions**: 25%
- **Research Paper**: 25%
- **Mid-Term/Final Exam**: 30%

**GRADING SCALE**
- A: 93 - 100
- B: 85 - 92
- C: 77 – 84
- D: 70 – 76
- F: below 70

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Jan 25| Syllabus Overview  
How to Interpret Hebrew Poetry | “Interpreting Hebrew Poetry” Article on Blackboard | Due on Blackboard by January 31<sup>st</sup>  
Reading Quizzes |
| 2    | Feb 1 | An Introduction to the Psalter  
Theology/History of the Psalter | Estes pp. 141–51  
Psalms 1, 149–150 | Due on Blackboard by February 7<sup>th</sup>  
Reading Quizzes |
| 3    | Feb 8 | Psalms of Praise  
Psalms of Lament | Estes pp. 152–65  
Psalms 1, 96, 98, 113–114, 138, 145  
Estes pp. 165–77  
Psalms 13, 22, 42–43, 79 | |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Royal and Messianic Psalms</td>
<td>Estes pp. 178–90</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by February 20th Reading Quizzes</td>
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<td>Psalms of Wisdom and Trust</td>
<td>Psalms 2, 20, 22, 45, 110</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Estes pp. 191–99</td>
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<td>Psalms 11, 27, 40, 78, 90, 123–127</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>The Ancient World of Wisdom Sages and Biblical Wisdom Literature</td>
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<td>Due on Blackboard by February 28th Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>The Historical Study of Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>“Interpreting Wisdom Literature” Article on Blackboard</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by March 7th Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>An Introduction to Job Job 1–2</td>
<td>Estes pp. 11–28</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by March 13th Midterm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Estes pp. 28–35</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job 1–2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 15-19</td>
<td>Spring Break—No Class</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>The Dialogues of Job The Conclusion of Job</td>
<td>Estes pp. 35–115</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Estes pp. 115–28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job 40–42</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>The Theology of Job</td>
<td></td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by April 3rd Critical Introductions Due Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>An Introduction to Proverbs Proverbs 1–9</td>
<td>Estes pp. 213–61</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by April 10th Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Proverbs 10–31 The Theology of Proverbs</td>
<td>Proverbs 10–31</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by April 17th Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>An Introduction to Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>Estes pp. 271–85</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by April 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding <em>Hebel</em> and Everything under the sun</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes 1–5, 12</td>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Estes pp. 285–385</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Theology of Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>Estes pp. 393–404</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by May 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>An Introduction to Song of Songs</td>
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<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Theology of Song of Songs</td>
<td>Estes pp. 404–38</td>
<td>Due on Blackboard by May 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td><em>Final Exam</em></td>
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<td>Final Exam on Blackboard Due May 10th</td>
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**ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

1. *Attendance Policy*: Leavell College follows the attendance policy as stated in the Leavell College catalog.

2. *Policy for Late Submissions*: All late assignments will be penalized five points for the first day and one point per day thereafter, with no assignments being accepted more than one week past the due date.

3. *Plagiarism Policy*: A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all Leavell College students. Copying another person’s work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and committing other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited.* Any infraction may result in failing the assignment and the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Leavell College for further action.

4. *Classroom and Online Decorum*: Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of the others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times. Electronic devices should be used only for classroom purposes as indicated by the professor.

5. *Special Needs*: If you need accommodations for a disability, please set up a meeting with the professor for consideration of any modifications you may need.
6. **Emergency Plan:** In the event the NOBTS schedule is impacted due to a natural event, go to the seminary’s website for pertinent information. Class will continue as scheduled through the Blackboard site. Please note announcements and assignments on the course’s Blackboard site.

7. **Technical Assistance:** For general NOBTS technical help, go to [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/)

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Old Testament Introductions*


*Specialized Introductions*


How to Write a Critical Introduction

Critical introductions are essential to the serious Bible student. A well-crafted critical introduction will maintain its relevance for years to come. The purpose of a critical introduction is to synthesize the scholarly materials on a given biblical book. A typical approach to a critical introduction is below. This is merely a guide. Students should allow the scholarly discussions to assist in the structure of the critical introduction.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Hebrew Title of the Book</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. LXX or Latin Title of the Book (if it has bearing on the English title)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. English Title of the Book</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Authorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Traditional view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Historical-critical views (could be more than one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Setting of the Book</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. The setting of the book is typically related to the authorship of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. The traditional view will have one setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Historical-critical views could possibly have several settings for the book. It is here that students must use parenthetical citations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Structure of the book</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Scholars, many times, differ on the structure of biblical books.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Obviously, you will want to limit what you include in this section.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>History of Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. This section is crucial. Students should read widely to grasp the relevant approaches to interpreting the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Every major interpretive approach must be summarized. These summaries should include examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Critical Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Critical issues should extend beyond the authorship and setting of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Do scholars question the unity of the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Do scholars question the historicity of the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Major Theological Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. This section should not be a list, but rather example based.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Biblical examples should be used to illustrate major themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Introductions (2–3 sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Dictionary Articles (3–4 sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Specialized Introductions (2–3 sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Major Commentaries (5–7 sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Significant Monographs (1–2 sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Relevant Journal Articles (3–5 sources)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources for Writing a Critical Introduction

I. Psalms

Old Testament Introductions
B. Students must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Dictionary Articles
D. Each student must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Specialized Introductions
E. Each student must choose **at least two** from the following list:
Commentaries

F. Each student must read the introductions to at least two from the following list:

Journal Articles

G. Each student is required to use two journal articles from reputable journals.
Sources for Writing a Critical Introduction

II. Job

Old Testament Introductions


B. Students must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Dictionary Articles


D. Each student must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Specialized Introductions

E. Each student must choose **at least two** from the following list:
Commentaries
F. Each student must read the introductions to at least two from the following list:

Journal Articles
G. Each student is required to use two journal articles from reputable journals.
Sources for Writing a Critical Introduction

III. Proverbs

Old Testament Introductions
B. Students must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Dictionary Articles
D. Each student must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Specialized Introductions
E. Each student must choose **at least two** from the following list:
**Commentaries**

F. Each student must read the introductions to **at least two** from the following list:


**Journal Articles**

G. Each student is **required to use two** journal articles from reputable journals.
Sources for Writing a Critical Introduction

IV. Ecclesiastes

Old Testament Introductions


B. Students must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Dictionary Articles


D. Each student must choose **at least one** from the following list:

Specialized Introductions

E. Each student must choose **at least two** from the following list:
Commentaries

F. Each student must read the introductions to at least two from the following list:


Journal Articles

G. Each student is required to use two journal articles from reputable journals.
Sources for Writing a Critical Introduction

V. Song of Solomon
   Old Testament Introductions
   B. Students must choose **at least one** from the following list:

   Dictionary Articles
   D. Each student must choose **at least one** from the following list:

   Specialized Introductions
   E. Each student must choose **at least two** from the following list:
Commentaries
F. Each student must read the introductions to at least two from the following list:

Journal Articles
G. Each student is required to use two journal articles from reputable journals.