

EMB 2004 HS

Introduction to the Old Testament II: Wisdom Literature

*This is a preliminary draft of the syllabus. The final version will be available on Blackboard.

Dr. Heather Macumber
 Classroom: TBA
heather.macumber@alum.utoronto.ca

Class (Wednesday): 9-12 am
 Office Hours (Wednesday): 12-1pm
 Office: TBA

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will focus on the Wisdom literature of ancient Israel, particularly the books of Job and Ben Sira (Sirach). Attention will be drawn to the role of revelation in wisdom books and the varied traditions found in ancient Israel. Students will be challenged to consider how these ancient books are still relevant (and useful) in this present age.

II. COURSE MATERIALS:

a. Required Texts:

1. A Bible that includes the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books and the New Testament (NRSV, RSV or New Jerusalem translation). Recommendations: HarperCollins Study Bible, New Oxford Annotated NRSV or Oxford Jewish Study Bible (will also need the NT and Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books).
2. Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life*

*assigned books are available at Crux Books (5 Hoskin Ave.)

b. Assigned Articles (required reading):

See class schedule for the additional articles. They will either be available online or on reserve at the library.

c. Biblical Texts (required reading):

It is not enough to simply read about the Old Testament, one must also read it. A requirement of this course is to read a major portion of the Old Testament. Please see the class schedule for a list of assigned readings (in addition to those assigned for class discussions).

III. COURSE WEBSITE: <http://portal.utoronto.ca>

The main means of communication for this course will be through Blackboard. Handouts, announcements and sample papers will be made available online. Please register with your utoronto.ca email address as per TST policy.

IV. COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goals: To provide students with:

- An overview of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament
- An awareness of the development of religious traditions in ancient Israel

Objectives: To enable students to:

- Students will gain an understanding of the various streams of traditions in the Wisdom Literature
- Evaluate the texts within their historical and social contexts with an emphasis on historical-critical methods
- Apply the wisdom literature of the Old Testament to their contemporary settings and in modern religious discourse especially with regards to preaching and teaching

V. Assignments and Grading

10% Class Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend each class and participate actively in discussions. Active engagement with the material requires a commitment to read both the primary and secondary readings assigned each week.

30% Class Presentations

Students will select a text from Job or Sirach to analyze (see Blackboard for signup sheet) and present their findings to the class. A variety of resources such as commentaries, monographs and articles should be consulted. Students will hand in a short report (1 page) and a bibliography of sources. Presentations will occur throughout the semester.

20% Annotated Bibliography and Proposal: In preparation for the research paper, students will compile a bibliography of relevant sources. A minimum of 50% of the entries will be annotated (a short summary of the source). This is meant to facilitate research for the exegetical or thematic paper. In addition, a short proposal (2-3 pages) should accompany the bibliography describing why the student has chosen a certain passage, their proposed thesis and outline to the exegetical paper. A sample proposal sheet will be made available on Blackboard.

Due: **February 8, 2017**

40% Final Paper

A 10-12 page (limits are firm) formal research paper on a subject of the student's choice (related to Wisdom literature in ancient Israel). This paper should argue for a clear thesis with evidence drawn both from primary and secondary sources. Papers may be thematic or exegetical in nature. Students should consult with the instructor before choosing their topic. A sample list of essay topics will be available on Blackboard.

Due: **March 29, 2017**

VI. COURSE POLICIES

a. Late Policy

Any work handed in late will be penalized 1/3 of a grade per day (including weekends and will not receive comments (A- to B+). Please contact the instructor in the case of a family emergency or illness to make accommodations (in advance of the deadline).

b. Writing Style Guidelines:

All written work must use Canadian spelling and students are advised to consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (7th ed.; revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007). Parenthetical references (such as MLA or APA) will not be accepted. The Chicago Manual of Style is also available online: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/contents.html> Another excellent resource RefWorks is available through the library and the webpage “Advice on Writing at the University of Toronto” at <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/advise.html>

c. Inclusive Language:

All students are expected to use gender-inclusive language both in their written work and class participation (i.e., use “man” or “he” only when referring specifically to males).

d. Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is unacceptable and a zero tolerance policy is adopted in this course. Please see the University Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters which is available online at <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html>. It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and a claim of ignorance concerning plagiarism is insufficient. More information can be obtained at the following sites: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.html> and <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/%7Ekloppen/plagiarism.htm> .

e. Other Resources:

A variety of course documents are available online through Blackboard. Students are responsible for reading them as they contain important information required for the course especially the papers.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1

January 4

Class: Introduction

1. Course Outline and Requirements
2. Introduction to Wisdom Literature
3. The Sage in Ancient Israel

Background Readings:

1. Proverbs 1-2; Psalms 1-2
2. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 1-14

Week 2

January 11

Class: Metaphors & Biblical Theology

1. Reading Biblical Poetry
2. Scriptural Metaphors
3. Introduction to Exegesis

Readings:

1. Adele Berlin, "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry" *New Interpreter's Bible* vol. 4, pp. 301-315 (NIB vol. 4 is in the **reference section** of Emmanuel's library: BS491.2 .N484 1994) *available also on Blackboard
2. Kirsten Nielsen, "Metaphors and Biblical Theology" (Blackboard)
3. Douglas Stuart, "Exegesis," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Volume 2: D-G*, editor-in-chief David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 682-88.(available on Blackboard)

Week 3

January 18

Class: Proverbs & Creation

1. Wisdom in the ANE
2. Creation Traditions
3. Introduction to Proverbs
4. The Female Sage

Readings:

1. Prov 7-9, 31; Gen 1-2; Psa 8, 104; Isa 40-46
2. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 15-32.
3. Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Blackboard).
4. Selections of ANE wisdom texts from Matthews, *Ancient Near Eastern Parallels* (on Blackboard).

Week 4**January 25***Class: Job the Steadfast*

1. Introduction to Job
2. The Trials of Job
3. The Divine Drama

Readings:

1. Job 1-3; 42
2. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 33-48.
3. Balentine, "For No Reason," *Interpretation* 57 (2003): 349-69.

Week 5**February 1***Class: Job & Theodicy*

1. The Problem of Suffering
2. God on Trial (movie clip)

Readings:

1. Job 3; 6-7; 9-10; 12-14; 16-17; 19; 21; 23-24; 26-31
2. West, "Reading Job 'positively' in the context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa" (Blackboard).
3. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Place of Pain in the Space of Good and Evil" in *Pain and its Transformation: The Interface of Biology and Culture* (S. Coakley and K. Shelemay, ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 406-419 (Blackboard).

Week 6:**February 8***Class: Job & His Friends*

1. Retributive Theology
2. "Friendly" Advice
3. The Elusive Elihu

Readings:

1. Job 4-5; 8; 11; 15; 18; 20; 22; 25; 32-37
2. Matthews, "A Sufferer and a Friend in Babylon," in *Old Testament Parallels* (Blackboard).
3. Carol Newsom, "Job and His Friends: A Contest of Moral Imaginations," *Interpretation* 53 (1999): 239-53.

Week 7**February 15***The Resolution of Job*

1. The Divine Answer
2. The Framework
3. The Legacy of Job

Readings:

1. Job 1-2; 38-41; 42
2. Testament of Job
3. Athalya Brenner, "Job the Pious? The Characterization of Job in the Narrative Framework of the Book" *JSOT* 43 (1989): 37-52.

Week 8**NO CLASS: Reading Week****February 22****Week 9****March 1***Class: Qoheleth*

1. Questioning Wisdom
2. Chasing after the wind
3. Social Context of Wisdom

Readings:

1. Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)
2. Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, 49-63
3. Whybray, "Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy," *JSOT* 23 (1982): 87-98.

Week 10**March 8***Ben Sira*

1. The Hellenistic Context
2. Revelation in Wisdom Literature

Readings:

1. Prologue to Ben Sira, Ben Sira 1-4, 9, 17
2. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 65-81.

Week 11**March 15***Class: Cosmogony & Creation Theology*

1. Lady Wisdom Revisited
2. Creation in Ben Sira

Readings:

1. Ben Sira 23-24; 35-39
2. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 133-149.
3. Claudia Camp, "Honor and Shame in Ben Sira: Anthropological and Theological Reflections" (available on Blackboard).

Week 12**March 22***Class: Cultural Memory and the Role of the Sage*

1. Exemplarity
2. The Sage in Ancient Israel

Readings:

1. Ben Sira 44-51
2. Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," pp. 165-182.

Week 13**March 29***Class: The Presence of Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible*

1. Solomon & Wisdom
2. Psalms
3. Apocalypticism

Readings:

1. Psalms 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133
2. Daniel
3. Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 97-110.
4. Mark Sneed, "Is the 'Wisdom tradition' a tradition?" *CBQ* 73 (2011): 50-71.

Evaluation of Papers

Below is the grading scale for Basic Degree Students (TST website). Papers in this course must go beyond simply summarizing an author's work. Students are expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate both the primary and secondary literature. A paper should never be mainly a string of quotations or simply repetition of secondary literature. Students are expected to be creative and to advance their own arguments. Finally, stylistic format (spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, page layout (1 inch margins), font (12 point Times New Roman), footnote and bibliographical citations) is very important and papers will be graded accordingly.

LetterRange	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A Range	Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge basis.			
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating

				critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base.
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base.
B Range	Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.			
B+	77-79	3.3	Very good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.