

**CS-421 – Bible IV Syllabus**  
**Wesley Theological Seminary Course of Study**  
**for the**  
**General Board of Higher Education and Ministry**  
**Spring 2023 Session**

**COS 421 – Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom Literature**

March 10-11 & April 14-15, 2023

Rev. Jonathan Lawrence, Ph. D. ([lawrenc7@canisius.edu](mailto:lawrenc7@canisius.edu))

**Synchronous Meeting Times:**

Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**\*\* Link to join online meeting will be sent out prior to the first day of class.**

Course Description:

This course examines God's Word as expressed through Israel's prophets, selected Psalms, and selected passages from Wisdom literature.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, history, and use of these forms of biblical literature among God's people.
2. Exegete these forms of biblical literature.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

**Required Texts: (You may view the list on the Course of Study Page as well)**

Walter Brueggemann, (Required) *Spirituality of the Psalms*

Louis Stulman & Hyun Paul Kim, (Required) *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature*

Richard Clifford, *Wisdom Literature* (Required)

Oded Borowski *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (Required) (Society of Biblical Literature, 2003)

**Reference:** Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terrence Frietham, David Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd Edition\**

Any additional readings will be listed in Blackboard.

All textbooks are available for purchase online through sites such as Amazon, or you may check available libraries or borrow from friends.

Students are encouraged to build a library of commentaries on the various books of the New Testament. There are many one volume and series commentaries in existence differing greatly in content, style, and level of difficulty. Suggested commentaries include the following:

*Harper's Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988.

*Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1982--.

*New International Biblical Commentary*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992--.

*The New Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994--.

*The Oxford Bible Commentary*. New York: Oxford U.P., 2001.

**Course Schedule (tentative – it may change based on need)**

Friday 3/10	1-3 pm	Introduction, Bible Context, Jonah and Prophecy
Saturday 3/11	8:30-11 am	Isaiah, Daniel and other Prophets, Discussion
Friday 4/14	1-3 pm	Hebrew Poetry, Psalms, Adaptations
Saturday 4/15	8:30-11 am	Proverbs, Writings, Discussion

**Assignment Instructions**

Readings and written assignments should be completed before the sessions as indicated. Assignment lengths are indicated by number of words – one double-spaced page is about 250 words. If you have any questions about the readings and/or essays, please feel free to email me before the class.

**The following reading should be completed prior to our first Zoom session  
Friday, March 10, 2023:**

1. *In New Oxford Annotated Study Bible:*

- a. Read the Books of Jonah, Isaiah, and Daniel including the notes and commentary on each page, and read (or review) the introductory essays to each book. – NOTE – since Isaiah is very long, focus on Chapters 1-11 and 49-55, but try to skim the rest of it for themes.
- b. In *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, please skim the supplementary articles for material related to the texts for this session and use <https://www.bibleodyssey.org> as well if time permits.

2. Read the following:

Louis Stulman & Hyun Paul Kim, *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature*

pp. 1-62 in *Daily Life in Biblical Times*

3. After reading the material, please answer the following questions. If possible, you may also consult a multi-volume Bible commentary, such as *The Anchor Yale Bible*, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, *Eerdmans Critical Commentary*, or *The Old Testament Library*.

**Please see Blackboard for the written assignments to be submitted before class.**

**The following readings should be completed prior to the third Zoom session  
Friday April 14, 2023**

In *The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible:*

- a. Review the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, including the notes and commentary on each page, and read (or review) the introductory essays to each book.

Note – If you have time, read through the entire book of Psalms before Session 3– if you read 3 Psalms a day, that will take you 50 days. Similarly, please try to read all of Proverbs.

Please make sure that you read Psalms 1-24, 40-43, 51, 119, 120-134, 150 and Proverbs 1-9 and 31.

- b. In *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, please skim the supplementary articles for material related to the texts for this session and use <https://www.bibleodyssey.org> as well if time permits.

2. Read the following:

Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms*  
Richard Clifford, *Wisdom Literature*  
pp. 63-126 in *Daily Life in Biblical Times*

3. Read the following play: *Life's Choices – A Play Based on Eight Characters in Proverbs*  
<https://www.sbl-site.org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=488>

- **\*\*All assignments and instructions will be available on Blackboard under the “Assignments” tab, and should also be submitted via Blackboard.\*\***

Instructions on posting to Blackboard are on the COS webpage. If you run into trouble, please contact [blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu) and they will help you.

If you are new to Course of Study at Wesley, please be sure to check Blackboard **once you receive your logon information from our IT department**. Please check with the COS office regarding when Blackboard access will be available. 3

**\*\*Be sure to include your name, course number and annual conference on each page of your paper. \*\***

#### **Format**

Papers should have one-inch margins on all sides, be double-spaced, and use a 12-point Times New Roman font. Please proofread papers carefully, avoiding as much as possible spelling, typographical, and grammatical errors, which can easily diminish the effectiveness of your writing.

#### **Criteria for Evaluating Course Work**

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work.

1. Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources. Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.

2. Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions. Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant and

accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.

3. Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas. Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.

4. Grammar, spelling, and form. Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

### Grading 4

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

- A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.
- A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.
- An “A-“ means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.
- An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student’s imagination at work; it has a creative edge.
- A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer’s opinions than the results of the writer’s analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.
- A “C” means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.
- A “C-“ means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.
- An “F” indicates evidence of plagiarism or work has not been submitted.
- No work will be accepted the last day of class and student will receive the grade of F.

#### **The Grade Scale is as follows:**

A = 93-100 C+ = 78-79

A- = 90-92 C = 73-77

B+ = 88-89 C- = 70-72

B = 83-87 F = 69 or below; for unsubmitted work, or submitted work where there is evidence

B- = 80-82 of plagiarism

### **Inclusive Language**

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

### **Academic Policies**

- Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty members have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.
  
- Plagiarism: Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:
  - Copying from another student's paper
  - Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
  - Using unauthorized material during an examination
  - Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

When you do quote from the textbooks or include an idea you read from the textbooks, use MLA Style parenthetical citations. This information is included within the body of your paper and includes within parenthesis: (1) Author's last name; and, (2) page number. Below is an example of how to properly quote and cite from a textbook. You do NOT need to include a Works Cited/Bibliography page. If you do not properly cite the sources of the information you include in your work, it is considered plagiarism! Again, the work should NOT be quote heavy! You are to ENGAGE the information and demonstrate you understand what is being said.

Example of MLA citation: "One of the major goals in the book is to explore the religious theological dimensions of the New Testament writings" (Holladay 2).

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.

***\*\*Please note that this syllabus is subject to change, if necessary, for the benefit of student learning and/or due to unforeseen circumstances.\*\****