

## INDIANA AREA EXTENSION COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL

University of Indianapolis

1400 E. Hanna Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46227

**COS 421 BIBLE IV: Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature** Instructor: Dr. Douglas A. Witt

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

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** include:

1. Understanding 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.

### **BOOKS REQUIRED**

#### **TEXTS**

Stulman, Louis and Kim, Hyun Paul. You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.] ISBN 978-0-687-46565-1, 323 p. (YAMP)

Brueggemann, Walter. Spirituality of the Psalms. [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.] ISBN 978-0-8006-3450-6, 76 p. (SOP)

Clifford, Richard J. The Wisdom Literature. (Interpreting Biblical Texts.) [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.] ISBN: 978-0-687-00846-8, 181 p. (TWL)

A good study bible with notes and some general articles (e.g., New Interpreters' Study Bible, NIV Archeological Study Bible, Oxford Annotated Bible).

#### **REFERENCE**

Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terrence Fretheim, David Petersen. A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.] ISBN 978-0-687-06676-6. (TIOT)

**The Reference Book is required for the course. Students who do not show a familiarity with the reference book in their written work will receive no better than a C for their work.**

#### **Grading:**

Grades for all students are assigned as letter grades, [A,B,C,D,F]. The student's final grade is based upon fulfilling the requirements of the course, including written assignments (2/3 of grade) and in-class participation (1/3 of grade).

#### **REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE.** Instructions (As of Oct 2018)

1. Regular class attendance. See the Student Manual statement on attendance for further details.
2. Read the material assigned, study it prior to class, and participate in class discussion.
3. Submit written work by the assigned dates. See further instructions on p. 2
4. Cite all your sources following the guidelines of Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students.
5. Add a title page to each assignment that includes: (a) the name of the course, (b) your name, (c) the instructor's name, and (d) the date of the class.
6. Make a copy of your typed or written material before submitting it.

#### **Instructor Information**

The Rev. Dr. Douglas Witt, 1306 Busseron St., Vincennes, IN 47591 Phone: 812 882-5245  
doug.witt79@gmail.com

# COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature

---

## HOMEWORK INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read the text assignments, take notes and answer the questions completely in your own words, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the text that you read. Rather, digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words, footnoting your source.
2. Follow word count limits specified in the assignments.
3. Format your written work to be double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 portrait orientation pages. If you print out your work to hand in, make sure it is printed clearly (good typewriter ribbon, or clean printer). Use 12-point font on a computer.
4. Begin each numbered item on a new page, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not include the questions with your answers.
5. **If you quote from a text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including page[s]) in parentheses at the end of each usage.** Quotations should not be more than a sentence or two in length. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words and sentence structure, not in the words or sentence structure of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may use the abbreviations suggested by the Required Books list. For example, if the source is Terence E. Fretheim, The Pentateuch, use TP, p.\_\_\_\_. If you refer to books that are not listed on the class-reading list, then provide full bibliographic information. Author, Title, (Place of publication; publisher, date), page number. Scriptural citations should be by chapter and verse, with the translation used (e.g., Exod.3:14(NIV)).
6. Place a title page with each group of assignments for this course including: a. the course number, b. name of the course c. your name, and d. the date that the assignments are due.
7. Submit the papers to the instructor, preferably by e-mail. **Homework assignments will not be accepted after the last class of the term without prior arrangement.** See the Student Manual statement on incompletes for further details.

NOTE: Using other people's language or intellectual property without acknowledgment or documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. **Such stealing, otherwise known as plagiarism, can mean failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry.**

## CLASS PREPARATION AND STUDY

Study habits are important. Clergy should have good study habits. Persons who have had college or university experience should have developed good study habits. Persons who have not had such experience should pay special attention to observing them. One rule that students in college learn is the "twofer" one. One should study two hours outside of class for each hour in class.

It frequently helps to read text material twice. The first reading is to see the general ideas and progress of the author's thinking, the issue that is taken up, the thesis and conclusions and reasons for whatever thesis or conclusion that is claimed. Then ask: is the thesis justified? Is something important omitted? Is the argument sound and convincing? Are there other solutions to the issue? Are such conclusions better than those of the author? It may be helpful to make notes. For example, outline the text by writing one sentence that summarizes a paragraph or a section.

## COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature

---

### Friday, January 18, 2019

Advance preparation: Read pp.1-23 in You Are My People. **Suggested:** A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 269-274 and 299-307. Answer the following question:

Stulman and Kim see written prophecy as both “disaster literature” and “survival literature.” How do you understand their argument? At the end of the first chapter, they raise the question of how we as “citizens of a superpower” can relate to the literature of “the captured and conquered, the vulnerable and wounded.” How would you answer their question? (400-600 words)

### Saturday, January 19, 2019

#### The Books of Jeremiah and Jonah

Advance preparation: Read pp. 97-141 and 206-210 of You Are My People, and the following passages of Scripture: Jeremiah chapters 1-12, 15, 18, 23, 26-33, 40-41 and 46-51; the Book of Jonah. **Suggested:** A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 327-380 and 448-49.

Be ready to discuss Stulman and Kim’s concepts of “interpretive community” and “prophetic meaning-making”

1. Based on your reading in You Are My People and in Jeremiah, and any supplementary reading that you did, write a paper in which you:
  - a. discuss the various ways the Book of Jeremiah deals with suffering and why Stulman and Kim see the presentation of suffering as so important to understanding the Book of Jeremiah.
  - b. discuss how Stulman and Kim see suffering as the necessary ground of hope. Do you agree or disagree? How and why?  
(500-700 words)
2. The Book of Jonah has often been used to call the church to repentance. Based on your reading in You Are My People, and any supplementary reading that you did, write a paper in which you:
  - a. identify the implied interpretive community of the Book of Jonah and discuss how the story might have spoken to them.
  - b. discuss with whom the Book of Jonah calls us to identify
  - c. what is the word of Jonah for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church?  
(500-700 words)

## COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature

---

**Saturday, March 9, 2019**

### Interpreting the Psalms

Advance preparation: Read the following passages of Scripture: Genesis 1, Isaiah 5:1-7; the book of Jonah; Psalms 1, 8, 13, 22, 24, 29, 30, 37, 51, 64, 65, 79, 81, 88, 90, 91, 104, 109, 131, 137 and 145. Read all of The Spirituality of the Psalms. **Suggested:** A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 115-120 and 439-443.

Be prepared to discuss: Brueggemann's categories of Orientation, Disorientation, and New Orientation; the meaning and significance of "theodicy" to our understanding of God and divine actions.

1. Based on your reading of Brueggemann, some of the Psalms of Orientation (e.g., Psalms 1, 8, 14, 15, 33, 37, 104, 112, 131, 133, 145), some of the Psalms of Disorientation (e.g., Psalms 13, 32, 35, 51, 73, 74, 79, 86, 88, 90, 130, 137), some of the Psalms of New Orientation (e.g., Psalms 23, 29, 30, 33, 34, 40, 66, 91, 93, 97-100, 113, 114, 135, 146-150), and any supplemental reading that you did, write a paper in which you discuss Brueggemann's three categories (orientation, disorientation, new orientation) and compare them to how you have understood the Book of Psalms. (500-700 words)
2. Brueggemann suggests that theodicy is "the rationale or legitimacy for the way in which society is ordered (Spirituality of the Psalms, p.62). What does Brueggemann mean by consensus or crisis? Do you think we are in a time of consensus about theodicy or crisis in theodicy (how we order our social lives)? What is the Church's role in the social order today? (750-1000 words)

**OR**

2. Prepare to lead a short (15-20 min.) class study on a psalm chosen by you in consultation with the instructor. Be clear on what you want the class to learn, including identifying the category into which the psalm fits. Turn in a one-page outline of your presentation to the instructor.

# COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature

---

**Saturday, April 13, 2019**

## Wisdom in the Old Testament

Advance preparation: Read pp. 13-114 in The Wisdom Literature as well as the following passages of Scripture: Proverbs, chapters 1-9 and 30-31; Job, chapters 1-21 and 38-42; and Ecclesiastes, chapters 1-4 and 6-9. **Suggested:** A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 381-424.

1. Based on your reading of Clifford's discussion of the book of Job, the assigned readings in the book of Job, and any supplemental reading that you did, write a paper in which you:
  - a. identify the issue of theodicy as the book of Job presents it
  - b. discuss how you see the book of Job speaking to the church and the world in the 21st century. (500-700 words)
  
2. Clifford suggests that Ecclesiastes 6:10 – 7:14 says "Despite wise sayings, no one knows what is good." What is the key verse or verses for you in this passage? How does this fit in with your understanding of the Hebrew Bible? Discuss what the word of God is from these texts for the church today. Do a one-page outline of how you would preach on this passage. (400-600 words, plus one-page outline)