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

**OCTOBER 18 – NOVEMBER 19, 2021**

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Bob Rambo | Lead Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church

6000 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS 39211

Email – [Bob.Rambo@christunitedjxn.org](mailto:Bob.Rambo@christunitedjxn.org) Phone – 601-956-6974

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

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

**COURSE GOALS:**

Students will be able to:

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

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

* *Spirituality of the Psalms* by Walter Brueggemann
* *You are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* by Louis Stulman and Hyun Paul Kim
* *Wisdom Literature* by Richard Clifford.

**REQUIRED REFERENCE BOOKS:**

* *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd edition* by Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terrence Fretheim, and David Petersen.
* NRSV-New Interpreter’s Study Bible

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

* Read the three required texts in their entirety.
* In the *NRSV New Interpreters Study Bible*, read the entire books of Amos, Ecclesiastes, and Job.
* Complete all written assignments and submit them by the deadline.
* Fully participate in 12 hours of face-to-face class work on Zoom over three Friday/Saturday weekends—October 22-23; November 5-6; and November 19-20.
* Complete 8 hours of asynchronous instruction and discussion on Course Connect within the stated deadlines.

**DOCUMENTATION**: Please always *cite your sources* whenever you are quoting or summarizing from a text, even if it is obvious or mentioned in the assignment. Provide at least the author's name, the title, and the page number, even in discussion assignments. **Please see the plagiarism section of this syllabus for more information.**

**STYLE**:

Chicago Manual of Style documentation is expected for bibliographic references and any quoted or paraphrased materials. Basic information about this style may be found at The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). For this course we will be using the Notes and Bibliography (NB) options.

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html>

**HONOR CODE:**

The Honor Code refers to our commitment as a Christian community to maintain academic honesty and integrity.  The Honor Code of MSCOS requires that all material submitted by a student must be the student’s own work.  Violations include cheating, turning in someone else's work as one's own, copying and pasting information directly from the internet into one's own work without citation, and plagiarism, which is to knowingly claim the work of another person as one’s own (including the lack of proper citation in a paper or other assignment).

Any person found guilty of violating the Honor Code may be subject to one or more of the following actions: receiving a warning, failing the assignment, being removed from the course, failing the course, being placed on probation, and being expelled from MSCOS.  Regardless of what the action is, communication about the incident will be sent to the student’s district superintendent and local pastor registrar. All MSCOS students are required to abide by the MSCOS Honor Code, and to seek to uphold the highest standards of academic and pastoral integrity.

**PLAGIARISM:**

Papers must reflect your own thoughts, words, sentence structure, and ideas. Any use made of another author’s material must be acknowledged in the form of a citation (a footnote and/or bibliographic reference, appropriately formatted using the Chicago Manual of Style), whether or not the material was included in the form of a direct quotation. This applies equally to information from online sources and other websites.

Please note that this professor does not regard *Wikipedia* articles as reliable scholarly resources. Importing online material – or any other material, whether written and published, or from a podcast, video, etc. –without formal written acknowledgement is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and a violation of the Honor Code. *Err on the side of caution and cite anything and everything you use to complete your assignments.*

**PASS/FAIL GRADING CRITERIA:**

* 50% written assignments that display knowledge and comprehension of texts
* 25% in-class participation
* 25% attendance (mandatory)

**PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (due by October 18, 2021)**

* Read *WISDOM LITERATURE* by William Clifford in its entirety
* Read *Ecclesiastes* 11-12.
* Write a 3-page summary of *Wisdom Literature* by Clifford. What is “wisdom literature”? How does wisdom literature differ from other parts of Scripture? What books are considered “wisdom literature” in the Bible? Include a brief summary (2-3 paragraphs) of each wisdom literature book.
* Submit your paper to Dr. Rambo at [Bob.Rambo@christunitedjxn.org](mailto:Bob.Rambo@christunitedjxn.org)

**FOR OCT 22-23, 2021**

**ASYNCHRONOUS ASSIGNMENTS on Course Connect|2 HOURS**

* Watch introduction/orientation video on Course Connect
* Submit any questions about the course or course assignments to the instructor on Course Connect. Other students may have the same questions. The instructor will respond on Course Connect or directly to students.

**ASSIGNMENT #1 (due Friday October 22)**

* Watch *How to do Exegesis* (7:51)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFMDRKMHAKg>

* Watch *How to Interpret Scripture* (7:15) by Whiteboard Ministry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPP3hJFj7z0>

Answer the following reflection questions and dialog with classmates on the Course Connect discussion forum. With at least two other classmates, compare your responses to the reflection questions. How are your responses similar? How are they different? Can you identify ways that you specifically engage in exegesis in your sermon preparation?

**VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

* *What is “exegesis”?*
* *Why is “exegesis” essential to faithful biblical teaching and preaching?*
* *How do I engage in “exegesis” in sermon preparation?*

**ASSIGNMENT #2 (Due Friday October 22)**

* Watch “Wisdom Literature” video by Dr. Chris Miller

<https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/fe8EftU1REqCIhQd_V4l4A>

* Write a 3-page summary of the Miller video on “Wisdom Literature”. What is the purpose of Wisdom Literature? Summarize the “way of life” Wisdom Literature recommends for readers? Is Wisdom Literature always “correct”? What happens if it’s not?
* Write a 2-page exegesis of *Ecclesiastes* 11:9-12:4a. What is the central message of this passage? Does the writer express optimism or pessimism about life?

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM | FRIDAY OCT 22 |** **5-7 pm**

* 5:00 – JOB
* 6:00 – PROVERBS

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM | SATURDAY OCT 23 |** **8-10 am**

* 8:00 – ECCLESIASTES
* 9:00 – SONG OF SOLOMON

**FOR NOV 5-6, 2021**

**READING ASSIGNMENTS**

* Read *SPIRITUALITY OF THE PSALMS* by Walter Brueggemann. In particular, be able to clarify the differences between psalms of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Which of these psalms best describes this moment in the world? The nation? Your personal life? How can we use these various types of psalms to speak God’s word to our people?
* Read one of the following each day for 7 days – PSALM 1 or 74 or 100. Keep a simple journal and make entries each day by asking yourself these questions: *HOW HAS MY INTERPRETATION OF THIS PSALM CHANGED AS I READ IT EACH DAY? HOW HAS MY UNDERSTANDING OF GOD CHANGED/DEEPENED? HOW HAS MY UNDERSTANDING OF MYSELF CHANGED?*

**ASYNCHRONOUS ASSIGNMENTS on Course Connect | 3.5 HOURS**

* Watch PSALMS: PART 1 video (45:32) by Dr. Chris Miller | **1.5 HOURS**

<https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/BkqmaMgpSEeZaDdu-0jv9g>

* Watch PSALMS: PART 2 video (43:00) by Dr. Chris Miller | **1.5 HOURS**

<https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/eBF75jvZGUOYmQF6dMXOjw>

* Watch Psalms (8:01) by The Bible Project on youtube.com | **.5 HOUR**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8>

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

* Write a 3-page summary of *Spirituality of the* Psalms. Identify the three types of psalms Brueggemann identifies in the book. What distinguishes them from each other? Which type of psalm speaks most to you?
* Write a 2-page reflection paper on one of the psalms of disorientation. What is the message of the psalm? In what ways does this fit the category of being a “psalm of disorientation”? How does this psalm speak to you at this moment?
* Submit writing assignments to Rev. Dr. Rambo via Course Connect by November 5, 2021

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM | Friday, November 5, 2021, | 5-7 p.m.**

* 5:00 – OVERVIEW OF THE PSALMS
* 6:00 – PSALMS OF ORIENTATION

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM |Saturday November 6, 2021| 8-10 a.m.**

* 8:00 – PSALMS OF DISORIENTATION
* 9:00 – PSALMS OF REORIENTATION

**FOR NOV 19-20, 2021**

**READING ASSIGNMENT**

* Read *YOU ARE MY PEOPLE* by Kim in its entirety
* Read the entire book of Amos in the New Interpreters Study Bible

**ASYNCHRONOUS ASSIGNMENTS on Course Connect | 2.5 HOURS**

* Watch “7-Minute Seminary” video: *WHAT IS A PROPHET?* | **.5 HOURS**
* Watch *THE EXILE* video by The Bible Project on youtube.com | **.5 HOURS**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9_WhQFE>

* Watch “Prophecy Literature: Jonah and Nahum” video by Dr. Chris Miller | **2 HRS**

<https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/pnRloK5fAkygdvymd3CZUw>

Answer the following reflection questions and engage in dialog with at least 2 other classmates on the Course Connect discussion forum by November 18. Why was the Exile of 587 B.C. so important to Judah? Identify a modern “prophet”.

**VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

* *What was the “Exile”? Was the Babylonian Exile the only “exile” in Israel’s history?*
* *What does it mean spiritually to be “in exile”?*
* *What is a “prophet”?*
* *What distinguishes a “true” prophet from a “false” prophet?*

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

* Write a 3-page summary of *You Are My People*. Discuss the role of the prophets. Explain the various ways to identify the various prophets: former/latter; pre-Exile/post-Exile; “major” and minor”. Discuss why the experience of Exile affected Israel so profoundly and how it changed the message of the prophets.
* Write a 2-page summary of the prophet *Amos*. Who was Amos? When did Amos prophesy? What prompted his being called to be a prophet? Where did his prophetic ministry take place and what was happening at the time? What was Amos’ primary message?
* Submit your papers to Rev. Dr. Rambo via Course Connect by November 19, 2021

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM | Friday, November 19, 2021| 5-7 p.m.**

5:00 – INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS

6:00 – ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH

**CLASS SESSIONS BY ZOOM | Saturday, November 20, 2021| 8-10 a.m.**

8:00 – EZEKIEL

9:00 – THE MINOR PROPHETS