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

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## Course Description

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

## Course Objectives:

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.

## Course Format & Meeting Dates

COS 421 is a hybrid course. This means that there will be both in person and online components to your work and learning. In person class attendance (dates immediately below) and timely completion of reading, writing, and viewing assignments are mandatory for the class. You’ll note in the “Assignments and Deadlines” section below that many assignments are due long before our first in person class. These assignments are “pre-course” work and are a required component of the course.

**Weekend #1:** Friday, September 30

Prior to 6pm: Check-In

6pm – 7pm: Worship

7pm – 9pm: Class

Saturday, October 1

9am – 12pm: Class

1pm – 3pm: Class

**Weekend #2:** Saturday, October 22

10am – 12pm: Class

1pm – 3pm: Class

## Course Materials

# *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, &Job.
* Complete all written assignments and submit them by the deadline.
* Fully participate in in-person classes on Friday 9/30, Saturday 10/1, and Saturday 10/22.
* Complete 8 hours of asynchronous instruction and discussion on Course Connect within the stated deadlines.

## **Course Expectations**

1. ***Effective Research & Writing***

A. Cite your Sources  
Always cite your sources. If the information or ideas you are sharing have been shaped by other sources, cite them. Even if it’s from a required course text and seems obvious, cite it. Use quotations whenever you are quoting from a text. Give all pertinent information so that your reader(s) can easily reference the original information for themselves. Provide at least the author's name, the title of the work, and the page number, even in online discussion assignments.

# B. Maintain Appropriate Style

For this course, we will be utilizing the Chicago Manual of Style for bibliographic references and all in text citations. 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>

# C. Keep the 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.

D. Do Not Plagiarize

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 published works.

Failure to cite other’s work–even if you’ve encountered it from videos or podcasts–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.*

# E. Utilize Reliable Sources

For the purposes of this course, you should limit your research to scholarly books and journals or otherwise reliable online materials. *Wikipedia* is not a reliable source of scholarly information. If you find it on *Wikipedia,* verify it in a more reliable medium before utilizing it in your work. There are better and worse online resources. If you have questions, contact Rev. Bowen.

# *Grading and Evaluation*

Your grades will be determined by the quality of your work. Written work should be submitted no later than 8pm on the due date; each day after that will receive a one letter grade deduction. Written work should be proofread carefully.

Letter grades signify the following:

* A — work exhibits profound insight and mastery of material
* B — work demonstrates comprehension of the material & development of desired skills
* C — work meets the basic expectations and requirements of the course
* F — work fails to meet the minimum expectations and requirements of the course

Your final grade will be calculated according to the following weight:

50% - Formal Written Assignments

20% - Classroom Engagement 20% - Course Connect Engagement

10% - Personal certification that you have read/viewed materials

## Assignments & Deadlines

# Connect to Online Forum Deadline: Tuesday, September 20

* Log-in to Course Connect
* 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.

# The Discipline of Exegesis Deadline: Wednesday, September 21

* Watch [*How to do Exegesis*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFMDRKMHAKg) (7:51)and [*How to Interpret Scripture*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPP3hJFj7z0)(7:15) by Whiteboard Ministry
* Answer the following reflection questions and dialog with classmates on the Course Connect discussion forum:
  + What is exegesis?
  + Why is exegesis essential to faithful biblical teaching and preaching?
  + How do I already engage in exegesis in preparing sermons & bible studies?
* Engage at least two other classmates on Course Connect. Compare your responses to the reflection questions.
  + How are your responses similar? How are they different?
  + What can you learn from their perspective?
  + Are there questions you might explore more deeply together?

# Introduction to Wisdom Literature Deadline: Friday, September 23

* ***Wisdom Literature*** William Clifford
  + Read the book in its entirety
  + Submit a 3–4-page summary of *Wisdom Literature* with attention to the following questions:
    - What is wisdom literature?
    - How does wisdom literature differ from other parts of Scripture?
    - What should the church bear in mind as we read and interpret wisdom literature in the 21st century?
* Create an annotated list of the Wisdom Literature books and write a 2-3 paragraph summary of each. Submit via Course Connect.
* “[Wisdom Literature](https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/fe8EftU1REqCIhQd_V4l4A)” video by Dr. Chris Miller
  + Watch the video
  + Submit a 2-3-page summary of Dr. Miller’s video on “Wisdom Literature” with attention to the following questions:
    - 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?
* Read Ecclesiastes 11-12.
  + Submit a 2-page exegesis exercise of *Ecclesiastes* 11:9-12:4a considering the questions provided in handout

# Introduction to the Psalms Deadline: Wednesday, September 28

* Read one of the following each day for 7 days: Psalm 1, Psalm 74, or Psalm 100.
  + ***Note that you’ll need to begin this assignment no later than 9/21 to complete it on time***
  + Keep a simple journal and make entries each day by asking yourself these questions:
    - What does this Psalm mean?
    - Has my sense of it changed as I continued to read it?
    - In what ways has it changed or deepened my understanding of God?
    - In what ways has it changed or deepened my understanding of myself?
  + Bring the journal with you to our first class
* ***Spirituality of the Psalms***
  + Read *Spirituality of the Psalms* by Walter Brueggemann with an eye towards questions from the writing prompt below.
  + Submit a 3–4-page summary of *Spirituality of the Psalms.* Be sure to answer these questions:
    - Distinguish between psalms of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation
    - Which of these categories of psalms most expresses your sense of the state of the world right now? Our nation? Things in your everyday life?
    - How can these psalms shape our leadership of God’s word to our people?

# Introduction to the Psalms (pt. 2) Deadline: Friday, September 30

* Watch [Psalms](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9phNEaPrv8) (8:01) by The Bible Project along with [Psalms: Part 1](https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/BkqmaMgpSEeZaDdu-0jv9g) (45:32) and [Psalms: Part 2](https://www.cedarville.edu/media/video/bibleminorclasses/eBF75jvZGUOYmQF6dMXOjw) video (43:00) by Dr. Chris Miller
* Submit a 2–3-page summary of the videos listed above with particular attention to the following questions:
  + - How are the Psalms structured and ordered?
    - How did Israel compile and utilize the Psalms?
    - What is the significance of the word Hallelujah?
    - What are some of the primary categories of psalms?
    - What are some of the main themes of the Psalms?
    - What is the connection between the Psalms and Jesus?
    - How does Dr. Miller’s explanation of the Psalms help you understand the sentence, “Jesus Christ is Lord?”
* Submit a 4 -6 paragraph reflection on one of the psalms of disorientation for discussion on Course Connect
  + What is the message of the psalm?
  + How does it develop throughout the psalm?
  + In what ways does it fit or not fit the standard category of “disorientation?”

# Introduction to the Prophets Deadline: Thursday, October 20

* ***You are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature*** by Louis Stulman and

Hyun Paul Kim

* Submit a 3–4-page summary of *You Are My People*, being sure to:
  + - Discuss the role of a prophet in ancient Israel
    - Explain the temporal markers used speak about prophets
      * Former/Latter
      * pre-exilic; exilic; post-exilic
    - Explain the canonical markers for prophets (major & minor)
    - Explain why the exile is such a significant event in Israel’s history
* Read the entire book of Amos (NRSV)
  + 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?
* Watch (a) [WHAT IS A PROPHET?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMhgaMVLHcY) [Seven Minute Seminary], (b) [The Exile](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9_WhQFE) [The Bible Project], and [“Prophecy Literature: Jonah and Nahum”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSua9_WhQFE)  [Dr. Chris Miller]
  + Answer the following reflection questions on Course Connect:
    - What is a “prophet”? What distinguishes a “true” prophet from a “false” prophet?
    - What was the “Exile”? Was the Babylonian Exile the only “exile” in Israel’s history?
    - Why was the Exile of 587 B.C. so important to Judah?
    - What does it mean spiritually to be “in exile”?
    - Identify a modern “prophet.”
  + Engage at least 2 other class member’s posts on Course Connect.
    - ***Posting before the deadline on Course Connect will help others engage your thoughts more effectively!***