

OT 3114/3116 - WISDOM LITERATURE

Fall Quarter, 2009

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Lecture -- Tuesday, 10:40-12:30

Precepts – #1 Thursday, 10:40- 11:30;
#2 Thursday, 11:40- 12:30
#3 Online

PURPOSE

To explore the continual biblical search for truth, meaning, and the right path as reflected in the wisdom writings of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament. These writings are studied with particular attention to issues of discipleship, pastoral care, mission, and biblical theology.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS for OT 3114 (full credit)

1. Regular preparation for and participation in class discussions, paying particular attention to assignments for precepts
2. Post your proverb and at least one translation by Tuesday, September 15.
3. A mini aural report (written optional) on an individual proverb due Sept. 16.
4. Take on the persona of one of Job's four friends and prepare to argue your part on Oct. 8.
5. Post a review of an article on Job due Oct. 22. Read other posted reviews.
6. A 1-2 page paper answering questions about Job, due Oct. 29.
7. Lead one portion of a Bible Study on Qoheleth 9 on Thursday, Nov. 5.
8. A mini oral/written report on wisdom in a book in the New Testament due Thursday, Dec. 3.
9. A one page preview explaining your major paper topic and listing some of the resources you will be using for the paper due no later than Dec 8.
10. A 10- to 15-page paper, due on or before December 15, on a specific issue raised by studying wisdom literature, such as:
 - wisdom and experience, law, creation, mission, *or* science;
 - a specific subject related to Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, or another wisdom book;
 - wisdom in the New Testament;
 - an area of your choice, selected in consultation with the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS for OT 3116 (half credit)

1. Regular preparation for and participation in class discussions, paying particular attention to assignments for precepts
2. Post your proverb and at least one translation by Tuesday, September 15.
3. A mini aural report (written optional) on an individual proverb due Sept. 17.
4. Take on the persona of one of Job's four friends and prepare to argue your part on Oct. 8.
6. A 1-2 page paper answering questions about Job, due Oct 29. **OR**
7. Lead one portion of a Bible Study on Qoheleth 9 on Thursday, Nov. 5.
8. A mini oral/written report on wisdom in a book in the New Testament due Thursday, Dec. 3.
So, you will have four assignments to do: #2-3, #4, #6 or #7, and #8.

An extensive bibliography (always in need of updating!), available on-line at <http://www.luthersem.edu/djacobso>, should be consulted as you work on this final paper.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Brown, William. *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Crenshaw, James. *Old Testament Wisdom, revised and enlarged*. Louisville: Westminster, 1998.

Recommended:

Recommended Commentaries on Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth

Brown, William P. *Ecclesiastes*. Louisville: John Knox, 2000. **Interpretation**

Clifford, Richard J. *Proverbs*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1999.

(Catholic; **Old Testament Library**, Scholarly. Good on rhetoric. Can be helpful at times.)

Davis, Ellen F. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2000. (Episcopalian; **Westminster Bible Commentary**, Straightforward. Written for laity. Good insights. Ecological and churchly concerns evident.)

Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs 1-9*. Anchor Bible 18A. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

(Jewish; **Anchor Bible** Most scholarly of all. Can learn a great deal. Has strong opinions, not always correct.)

Garrett, Duane A. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Nashville: Broadman, 1993.

(Baptist; **New American Commentary**, Helpful for literary analysis and structural issues)

Habel, Norman. *The Book of Job*. Phil.: Westminster, 1985. Keck, Leander E. et al. *New Interpreter's Bible: The Book of Proverbs, the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Book of Wisdom, the Book of Sirach*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. Perdue, Leo G. *Proverbs*. Louisville: John Knox, 2000.

(President and prof at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University; **Interpretation**.

My favorite of the commentaries on Proverbs. Balanced. Scholarly and Churchly. Good section on "features of sapiential imagination.")

Seow, Choon-Leong. *Ecclesiastes*. New York: Doubleday, 1997. Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. in Leander E. Keck et al. *New Interpreter's Bible: The Book of Proverbs, the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Book of Wisdom, The Book of Sirach*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.

(Prof at Eastern College in Pennsylvania; **The New Interpreter's Bible**. Helpful. Balanced. Often insightful. A good book for your library.)

Other Highly Recommended Books:

Brenner, Athalya. *A Feminist Companion to Wisdom Literature*. Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1995.

Camp, Claudia. *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*. Decatur: Almond (JSOT), 1985.

Collins, J J. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997.

Jacobson, Diane, Powell, Mark Allan, and Olson, Stanley *Opening the Book of Faith*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008.

Luther, Martin. *Notes on Ecclesiastes*. *Luther's Works*. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia, 1972.

McKinlay, Judith E. *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Perdue, Leo & Gilpin, W.C., ed. *The Voice From the Whirlwind*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.

Witherington III, Ben. *Jesus the Sage: the Pilgrimage of Wisdom*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994.

In addition, biblical reading and a number of articles are listed as required or recommended reading throughout the course. See specific class assignments and on-line bibliography.

Fall 2009 CLASS SCHEDULE

- TUES., SEPT. 8 **Lecture #1 Intro:** What is Wisdom, Who is Wise,
and How Does One Read a Proverb?
SEPT. 10 **Precept #1** Considering Wisdom
- TUES., SEPT. 15 **Lecture #2 Proverbs 10-31:** Introduced and Explored
SEPT. 17 **Precept #2 Proverbs 10-30:** Proverbial Sharing
- TUES., SEPT. 22 **Lecture #3 Proverbs 1-9:** Instruction and Wisdom Speeches
SEPT. 24 **Precept #3 Proverbs 10-30:** Proverbial Sharing Continued
- TUES., SEPT. 29 **Lecture #4 Proverbs 1-9, 31:** Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly
(Kristin Wendland)
OCT. 1 **Precept #4** Considering Proverbs 1-9
- TUES., OCT. 6 **Lecture #5 Job:** The Book, the Prologue, and the Lament
OCT. 8 **Precept #5 Job:** The Friends
- TUES., OCT. 13 **Lecture #6 Job:** Job's Case
OCT. 15 **Precept #6A Job:** Reading Texts with One Another
- TUES., OCT. 20 **NO CLASS --Reading Days**
OCT. 22 **Precept #6B** Write a review of one article you have read on Job.
- TUES., OCT. 27 **Lecture #7 Job:** God's Answer, Job's Response
OCT. 29 **Precept #7 Job:** Sharing your answers to questions about Job
- TUES., NOV. 3 **Lecture #8 Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes):** What's it all about and is there Hope?
NOV. 5 **Precept #8 - Qoheleth:** Teaching Chapter 9
- TUES., NOV. 10 **Lecture #9 Sirach (ECCLESIASTICUS):** History, Culture, and Woman Wisdom
As well as Wisdom in the Psalms
NOV. 12 **Precept #9 Sirach (ECCLESIASTICUS):** On History and Women
- TUES., NOV. 17 **Lecture #10** Issues of Canon; Wisdom at Qumran; Baruch
Wisdom of Solomon: Wisdom Encounters Hellenism
NOV. 19 **Precept #10** Reading Texts in Wisdom of Solomon
- TUES., DEC. 1 **Lecture #11** Wisdom in Judaism and Intro to Wisdom in the New Testament
DEC. 3 **Precept #11** Sharing insights about Wisdom in the New Testament
- TUES., DEC. 8 **Lecture #12 New Testament:** Jesus Speaks Wisdom/ Jesus is Wisdom
DEC. 10 **Precept #12** Exploring Wisdom in the New Testament
- TUES., DEC. 15 **Lecture #13** Wisdom, Experience, Jesus, Canon, Mission, Theology

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
(On-Line Precept, see your own tailored precept assignments)

TUES., SEPT. 8 **Lecture #1** Intro: What is Wisdom, Who is Wise,
and How Does One Read a Proverb?

TH., SEPT. 10 **Precept #1** Considering Wisdom

TUES., SEPT. 15 **Lecture #2** *Proverbs 10-31*: Introduced and Explored

Required reading:

- Read Proverbs 10-31 using NRSV, NIV and/or one of the Proverbs Commentaries which are listed above.

- Crenshaw, 1-79; Brown, 1-21.

Recommended Reading:

- Berlin, Adele. "Parallelism," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5, 155-160.

- Collins, John J. "Proverbial Wisdom and the Yahwist Vision" *Semeia*, #17, 1980

- Jacobson, Diane, "What is Wisdom? Who is She?" *Word & World*, 7, 1987, 241-244.

- States, Bert O. "Troping Through Proverbs," *American Scholar* (Summer, 2001): 105-112.

TH., SEPT. 16 **Precept #2** Proverbial Sharing

TH., SEPT. 24 **Precept #3** Proverbial Sharing Continued

Oral (and optional written) Assignment: Pick out **one** proverb from your reading of Proverbs 10-31 that you find particularly meaningful and/or interesting. Use whatever Hebrew you have to study the proverb. Compare at least three translations and read about your proverb in some of the newer commentaries or other books. Consider the proverb's meaning for you personally, for today's society, for the church, etc. Be prepared to make a 5- to 10-minute presentation on your proverb to the class. *If you wish*, write a one-to-two page paper or develop a handout on your proverb. You might want to look over the questions for the on-line precept group.

TUES., SEPT. 22 **Lecture #3** *Proverbs 1-9*: Instruction and Wisdom Speeches

TUES., SEPT. 29 **Lecture #4** Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly

TH., OCT. 1 **Precept #4** Considering Proverbs 1-9

Required Reading:

- Proverbs 1-9; Job 28

- Crenshaw, 80-82; Brown, 22-49; McKinlay, 11-132.

Recommended Reading:

- Brenner, A. *A Feminist Companion to Wisdom Literature*. Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995.

- Camp, C. *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1985.

- Camp, C. "What's So Strange About the Strange Woman?" *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis*. D. Jobling, P. L. Day, and G. Sheppard, Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1991, 17-31.

- Camp, C. "Woman Wisdom As Root Metaphor: A Theological Consideration." *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy*, ed J.Hoglund, K.Huwiler, E.Glass. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987.

- Hadley, Judith M. "From Goddess to Literary Construct: The Transformation of Asherah into Hokmah." *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods, and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner, and C. Fontaine, 360-399. Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1997.

- Washington, Harold C. "The Strange Woman of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judaeon Society." *A Feminist Companion to Wisdom Literature*, ed Athalya Brenner, 157-84. Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995

TUES., OCT. 6 **Lecture #5 Job:** The Book, The Prologue, and The Lament

TH., OCT. 8 **Precept #5 Job:** The Friends

Precept Assignment: Take on the persona of one of Job's four friends. To prepare to argue as that friend become familiar with one of the following sets of chapters: Eliphaz (4-5; 15; 22); Bildad (8; 18; 25); Zophar (11; 20); or Elihu (32-37)

TUES., OCT. 13 **Lecture #6 Job:** Job's Case

TH., OCT. 15 **Precept #6A Job:** Reading Texts with One Another

TH., OCT. 22 **Precept #6B** Write a review of one article you have read on Job.

Precept Assignment: See suggested articles below or choose an article from the bibliography on my web page <http://www.luthersem.edu/djacobso>

TUES., OCT. 27 **Lecture #7 Job:** God's Answer, Job's Response

TH., OCT. 29 **Precept #7 Online Job:** Sharing your answers to questions about Job

Online Written Assignment: ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT JOB.

Answer 2 of the following 4 questions:

1. *In the Prologue of Job we are introduced to three major characters: Job, God, and the Satan. Choose a characteristic or trait of each of the three and speak about how that trait or speech raises questions that are addressed throughout the book. Do you think the issues raised are resolved or adequately addressed?*
2. Discuss some aspect of God's response in Job 38-41 specifically in terms of this response's answering or resolving any of the poem's formal or theological movements.
3. *Picture yourself in a grocery store parking lot collecting charity for a new half-way house being sponsored by your home congregation. A distraught woman first drops some money into your collection can and then turns and says, "So you clearly are a religious leader. What is God up to any way? He is supposed to be a loving father. How can he let his children suffer? Why doesn't God do something?" What might you respond and how would your response be informed by your study of the book of Job?*
4. How does the book of Job speak to us about the worldwide AIDS epidemic?

Required Reading:

- All of the Book of *Job*.
- Introduction in Habel, Norman, *The Book of Job*, 21-69.
- Crenshaw, 89-115.; Brown, 50-119.
- Two of the following:
- Fingarette, Herbert. "The Meaning of Law in the Book of Job," *Hastings Law Journal*, 29, 1978, 1581-1617.
- LaCocque, André. He Deconstruction of Job's Fundamentalism, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126:1, 2007, 83-97.
- Newsom, Carol A. "The Moral Sense of Nature: Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job." *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* ns 15 no 1 1994: 9-27.
- Tsevat, M., "The Meaning of the Book of Job" in Crenshaw, *Studies in ...*, 341-374.

Also read as much of the following book as possible.

- Perdue, Leo & Gilpin, W.C., ed. *The Voice of the Whirlwind*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.
Note particularly the following articles:
- Habel, Norman. "In Defense of God the Sage," 21-38.
- Mettinger, Tryggve. "The God of Job: Avenger, Tyrant, or Victor?," 39-49.
- Gilkey, Langdon. "Power, Order, Justice, and Redemption: Theological Comments on Job," 159-171.

TUES., NOV. 3 **Lecture #8 Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes):** What's it all about and is there Hope?

Required reading:

- All of the book of *Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)*
- Crenshaw, 116-139; 184-204; Brown, 120-150.
- Luther on *Ecclesiastes*, Vol. 15, pp.12ff. (Intro and comments on chapters 1-3)

Recommended reading:

- Murphy, "The Faith of Qoheleth," *Word & World*, 253-60.
- Priest, John. "Humanism, Skepticism, and Pessimism in Israel." *JAAR* 36 (1968) 311-26.
- Sheppard, G., "The Epilogue to Qohelet as Theological Commentary," *CBQ* 39:182-189.
- Seow, Choon-Leong. *Ecclesiastes*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Williams, J., "What Does it Profit A Man?: The Wisdom of Koheleth" in Crenshaw, *Studies in . . .*, 375-389.
- Whybray, R.N. "Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy," *JSOT*, 23, 1982, 87-98.

TH., NOV. 5 **Precept #8 Qoheleth:** Reading Texts, reflection paper on Qoheleth due

Required reading

- Jacobson, Diane, Powell, Mark Allan, and Olson, Stanley *Opening the Book of Faith*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008 –chapters 2-3, pp.20-65

Precept Assignment: BIBLE STUDY ON QOHELETH, CHAPTER 9:

We will engage in a four part Bible study of Qoheleth, chapter 9, based on the four methods described in chapter 3 of *Opening the Book of Faith*. Each student, using one method, will help lead our study for 10 minutes.

TUES., NOV. 10 **Lecture #9 Sirach(ECCLESIASTICUS):** History, Culture, and Woman Wisdom
As well as Wisdom in the Psalms

TH., NOV. 12 **Precept #9 Sirach(ECCLESIASTICUS):** On Women

Required reading:

- All of *Sirach*
- Psalms 1, 19, 32-34, 111, 112, 119
- Crenshaw, 140-164.
- Mays, James L. "The Place of Torah Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL*, 106, 1987, 3-12.
- Ceresko, Anthony, "The Sage in the Psalms," in Gammie, J. and Perdue, L., ed., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East...*, 217-230.

Recommended Reading:

- Collins, J.J. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997, 21-131.
- Di Lella, A. "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom," in Crenshaw, *Studies in . . .*, 401-416.
- Gammie, John, "The Sage in Sirach," in Gammie, John and Perdue, Leo, ed., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990, 355-372.
- Sanders, Jack T. *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 1983.
- Trenchard, Warren. *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 1982.

TUES., NOV. 17 **Lecture #10** Issues of Canon; Wisdom at Qumran; Baruch
Wisdom of Solomon: Wisdom Encounters Hellenism

TH., NOV. 19 **Precept #10** Reading Texts in Wisdom of Solomon

Required reading:

- All of *Wisdom of Solomon*
- Baruch 1-5
- Crenshaw, 165-183.

Recommended Reading:

- Collins, J.J. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997, 133-232.
- Di Lella, A. "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom," in Crenshaw, *Studies in ...*, 401-416.
- Gammie, John, "The Sage in Sirach," in Gammie, John and Perdue, Leo, ed., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990, 355-372.
- Harrelson, Walter. "Wisdom Hidden and Revealed According to Baruch (Baruch 3:9-4:4)." *Priests, Prophets, and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*. Ed E. Ulrich, J.W. Wright, R.P. Carroll, and P. R. Davies, 158-71. JSOT Supplement Series, 149. Sheffield: Sheffield, 1992.
- Harrington, Daniel J. "Wisdom at Qumran." *Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed Eugene Ulrich, and James VanderKam, 137-52. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1994.
- Harrington, D. *Wisdom Texts From Qumran*. N.Y.: Routledge, 1996.
- Winston, David. *Wisdom of Solomon*. Anchor Bible, Garden City: Doubleday, 1979.

TUES., DEC.1 **Lecture #11** Wisdom in Judaism and Intro to Wisdom in the New Testament

TH., DEC.3 **Precept #11** Sharing insights about Wisdom in the New Testament

Oral Assignment:

- Look for wisdom influence in one of the following:
 - Matthew
 - Luke
 - Paul: I Corinthians, Romans
 - Colossians, Ephesians
 - James

TUES., DEC. 8 **Lecture #12** *New Testament: Jesus Speaks Wisdom/ Jesus is Wisdom*

Written Assignment:

A one page preview explaining your major paper topic and listing some of the resources you will be using for the paper due no later than Dec 8.

Required reading:

- Gese, Hartmut. "Wisdom, Son of Man, and the Origins of Christology: The Consistent Development of Biblical Theology." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3 (1981): 23-58.
- Jacobson, Diane. "Jesus As Wisdom in the New Testament." *The Quest for Jesus and the Christian Faith*, ed. Fred Gaiser, 72-93, St. Paul: Luther Seminary, 1997.

And from at least two of the following:

- Brown, 151-164
- McKinlay, 179-237
- Bouzard, W.C. "The Theology of Wisdom in Romans 1 & 2," *Word & World*, 1987, 281-291.
- Davis, James. *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of I Cor 1:18-3:20*, 1985.
- Fuller, Reginald and Perkins, PHEME. "Wisdom Traditions and Christology" in *Who is This Christ?*, 1983, 53-66.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is*. N.Y.: Crossroad, 1993.
- Lefebure, Leo D. "The Wisdom of God, parts 1 & 2," *Christian Century*, Oct.19 & 26, 1994.
- Perdue, L. "The Wisdom Sayings of Jesus." *Foundations & Facets Forum* 2, 3 (1986): 3-35.
- Perkins, PHEME. "Jesus, God's Wisdom," *Word & World*, 1987, 273-280.
- Scott, B.B., "Jesus as Sage: An Innovating Voice in Common Wisdom," in Gammie, John and Perdue, Leo, ed., *The Sage*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990, 399-416.
- Wilken, Robert. *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1975. BS1455.A7
- Witherington, Ben. *Jesus The Sage*, Minn.: Augsburg, 1994.

TH., DEC.10 **Precept #12** Exploring Wisdom in the New Testament

TUES., DEC. 15 **Lecture #13** Wisdom, Experience, Jesus, Canon, Mission, Theology,

Recommended Reading:

- Perdue, Leo, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," in ... *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990, 457-478.

Written Assignment:

A 10- to 15-page paper, due on or before December 18, on a specific issue raised by studying wisdom literature, such as:

- wisdom and experience, law, creation, mission, *or* science;
- a specific subject related to Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, or another wisdom book;
- wisdom in the New Testament;
- an area of your choice, selected in consultation with the professor.