

## **OT3112 F6 Worship in Israel**

Spring 2009 (Half course)

Office hours: By appointment

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### ***Catalog Description***

An overview of the Psalms along with related Old Testament texts with particular attention to their illumination of the form, substance, and theology of Israel's worship. The course investigates how this background informs the structure and theology of New Testament worship and the worship of the Christian church, especially in its use of Psalms.

### ***Goals***

To gain an understanding of the nature and theology of the biblical psalms

To appreciate the variety of ways the tradition has read and understood the Psalter

To learn to recognize the different types of psalms and their place in worship

Through detailed study of specific psalms to learn to apply appropriate methods of Bible study to Old Testament poetic material

To consider other biblical texts related to the worship of Israel

To gain an introduction to the forms, phenomena, and theology of the worship of ancient Israel

To consider the implications of Old Testament worship for New Testament theology

To discuss and practice ways to use this material in Christian worship

### ***Required Books***

The biblical book of Psalms

Walter Brueggemann, *Worship in Ancient Israel: An Essential Guide*, 2005

Lynn Domina, ed., *Poets on the Psalms*, 2008

John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation*, 2005

### ***Suggested Book***

John D. Witvliet, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources*, 2007

—a useful volume for musicians and worship planners

### ***Expectations***

Students are expected to be regular in attendance at lectures and preceptorials, to have spent some time with the primary announced text(s) for class sessions, to have read all assigned material, to engage actively in discussion, and to hand in papers or post online contributions on or before the day assigned. Because of their timely relation to the progress of the course, late papers will be downgraded, and additional work may be required.

### ***Plan of the Work***

The work of the course will be comprised of four related parts:

Lectures (Mondays) — introduction to the psalms and the worship of Israel

Preceptorials (Wednesdays/Fridays) — working together on themes and texts related to the material of the course

- Online — an opportunity to share insights and reflections as we read the book of Psalms and poets' reflections on the psalms
- On your own — background readings (and writing) on historical, technical, and theological aspects of Old Testament worship

### ***Schedule of Lectures and Preceptorials***

- Feb 9 (2 hrs)      Introductory Matters; Introduction to Hebrew Poetry (Ps 8)
- Feb 11/13          Hebrew Poetry (continued)  
                           Read Adele Berlin, "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 4, 301-315.  
                           Optional: For more on Hebrew poetry and the psalms, read Mark Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007) 23-55.
- Feb 16 (2 hrs)      The God of Israel's Worship — God of History, God of Creation, God of the Family  
                           Deut 26:1-11; Ps 148; 1 Sam 1:1-2:10  
                           Read Brueggemann, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, 1-10.  
                           As background for the course, read Rolf Rendtorff, "The Location of Life before God: The Cult," in *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Deo, 2005) 509-544 (e-reserve).
- Feb 18/20          Practicing the Poetry  
                           Read and consider Ps 6 as an example of Hebrew worship poetry. In 2-3 pp. suggest a literary and/or formal structure of the psalm and indicate a use for it in Christian worship that takes some note of your proposed structure. The preceptorial papers can be relatively informal and might well include showing your actual work (or work in progress) on the text in question or your proposed structures laid out in graphic form. As much as possible, base your analysis on your own work on the psalms, but, as always, any use of secondary sources should be cited.
- Feb 23 (2 hrs)      The Times and Seasons of Worship  
                           The Place of Sacrifice  
                           Pss 42/43; 121; Deut 10:12-22  
                           Read Brueggemann, 11-23.
- Feb 25/27          Psalms in Worship  
                           Consider Ps 107. Write a 2-3 page proposal for its use in public worship based on its structure and content. You may choose the mode of the psalm's presentation (song, reading, drama, etc.). Include a rationale and goal for your proposed use.
- Mar 2 (2 hrs)      The Places and People of Worship

Pss 48; 82; 132  
 Read Brueggemann, 25-37.

- Mar 4/6            Prophets versus Priests?  
 Read Frederick J. Gaiser, "The David of Psalm 51: Reading Psalm 51 in Light of Psalm 50," *Word & World* 23/4 (2003) 382-394 (e-reserve).  
 Read Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "A Church of the World or a Church of the Word?" (sermon on Exod 32), in Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, ed. Edwin H. Robertson, trans. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowdan (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 243-248 (e-reserve)  
 From your presumed perspective as pastor, parish musician, staff person, or congregation member, write a brief Lenten meditation on Ps 50 for a hypothetical parish newsletter.
- Mar 9 (2 hrs)     Singing and Praying the Psalms of Lament  
 Ps 13; 1 Kings 8:22-53; Joel 1:13-14; 2:1-2, 12-17  
 Read Brueggemann, 39-61.  
 Read Frederick J. Gaiser, "Deliver Us from Evil," *Word & World* 22/1 (2002) 3-5 (e-reserve or online at the *Word & World* archives: [www.luthersem.edu/word%26world/ContentsW2002.asp](http://www.luthersem.edu/word%26world/ContentsW2002.asp).)  
 For examples of contemporary laments in the tradition of the Psalms, see Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), and/or Gene Broughton, "The Lord Heard My Cry: Recapturing the Use of Biblical Lament" (D Min thesis, Luther Seminary, 2006).
- Mar 11/13        A place for "testimony" in mainline Christian worship?  
 Read Frederick J. Gaiser, "'I will tell you what God has done for me' (Psalm 66:16): A Place for 'Testimony' in Lutheran Worship?" *Word & World* 26/2 (2006) 138-148; and John W. Kleinig, "What's the Use of Praising God?" *Lutheran Forum* 40/2 (Summer 2006) 6-14 (both on e-reserve).  
 Read and consider Ps 40. Write a 2-3 page proposal for its use in public worship based on its structure and content. Include a rationale and goal for your proposed use. (Similar songs of thanksgiving include Pss 9; 18; 30; 32; 34; 40; 66:13-20; 92; 116; 118; 138. See also Isa 38:9-20; Jon 2: 2-9; Job 33:26-28.)
- Mar 16 (2 hrs)   Singing and Praying the Psalms of Praise  
 Pss 30; 113; 1 Chr 16:1-43  
 For an introduction to Paul Gerhardt's psalm paraphrases, see Frederick J. Gaiser, "'I Sing to You and Praise You' (Psalm 30): Paul Gerhardt and the Psalms," *Word & World* 27/2 (2007) 195-205 (e-reserve).
- Mar 18/20        Psalms in Christian Ministry  
 Read Brueggemann, 63-85.  
 Discussion also of papers based on reading Eaton, pp. 3-58 (see below), and Rendtorff (see Feb 16).

### ***Online Components***

Beginning with the second week, students will read the book of Psalms and *Poets on the Psalms*, ed. Lynn Domina, and reflect together online on their reading. Each student will post a reflection on the assigned readings and also a response to the student who has posted immediately before him or her. (The first student to post will respond later to the last student in that group.)

#### **Reading the Book of Psalms**

By Feb 18

Read Book I of the Psalter (Pss 1-41).

Post a response that includes a brief characterization of Book I as a whole (What is the tone or mood of these psalms? How do they strike you? Is there order or continuity? How or why are they a “book”?) and your reflection on one of the psalms in this section. Your observations should be personal, but should show some evidence of our common academic study of the Psalter as a component of worship in Israel. Post a response to another student.

By Feb 25

Read Book II of the Psalter (Pss 42-72).

Post a reflection on Book II and on one of these psalms; respond to another student as before.

By Mar 4

Read Book III of the Psalter (Pss 73-89).

Post a reflection on Book III and on one of these psalms; respond to another student.

By Mar 11

Read Book IV of the Psalter (Pss 90-106).

Post a reflection on Book IV and on one of these psalms; respond to another student.

By Mar 18

Read Book V of the Psalter (Pss 107-150).

Post a reflection on Book V and on one of these psalms; respond to another student.

#### **Reading *Poets on the Psalms***

By Feb 20

Read the introduction and the first three essays in *Poets on the Psalms* (by DeFrees, Phillips, and Ostriker). Post a reflection on this material. The essays are reflections by poets, not necessarily theologians or exegetes, so you may or may not quibble with particular interpretations, but they do represent authentic responses by thoughtful readers. What do you hear? What strikes you or triggers your own thought? You may applaud, disagree, be spurred to deeper consideration, bring to bear other readings or experiences—or any number of other things—but your response should have some theological weight rather than merely personal opinion (though without excluding your opinion). Post a response to another student.

By Feb 27

Read the next three essays (by Essbaum, Dame, and Rogers) and post a reflection and

response.

By Mar 6

Read the three essays on Ps 23 (by Sasanov, Citino, and Estes) and post a reflection and response.

By Mar 13

Read the essays by Domina, Glancy, and Ayres and post a reflection and response.

By Mar 20

Read the final two essays (by McCann and Tobin) and post a reflection and response.

### ***On Your Own***

By the various assigned dates (above)

Read Brueggemann, *Worship in Ancient Israel: An Essential Guide*.

By Mar 18/20 (date of your preceptorial)

Read the introduction to John Eaton, *The Psalms* (pp. 3-58). Reflecting on this reading and the material from Rendtorff (Feb 16), write a 3-5 page paper on some aspect of the significance of Israel's worship for contemporary Christian worship. This paper should follow appropriate academic style for citations, notes

### ***Grading***

Grading will be based on written assignments, online contributions, and level of class participation. Students must satisfactorily complete each assignment to pass the course.

### ***Alternative Assignment***

Students who desire to do a major paper in lieu of some of the shorter papers should contact the instructor. For graduating seniors, such a paper could be considered for the Milton prize in Old Testament.

### ***Brief Selected Bibliography***

(Books marked with asterisk are on reserve in the library.)

\*Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*, 2007

A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72; Psalms 73-150* (New Century Bible), 1972

Bernhard Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak to Us Today* (3d ed., rev. and expanded), 2000

Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 2 vols., 1994

John J. Astelot and Aelrod Cody, "Religious Institutions of Israel," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R. Brown, J. Fitzmyer, R. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 1253-1283

Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*, 1993

- Samuel Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 1999
- \*Dave Bland and David Fleer, eds., *Performing the Psalms*, 2005
- \*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, 1970
- \*Gene Broughton, "The Lord Heard My Cry: Recapturing the Use of Biblical Lament" (D Min thesis, Luther Seminary, 2006).
- \*Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller, eds., *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, 2005.
- Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, 1984
- \*Walter Brueggemann, *Worship in Ancient Israel: An Essential Guide*, 2005
- \*Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, 2002
- \*Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-50*, 2003
- Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*; Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100*; Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (Word Biblical Commentary), 1983, 1990, 1983
- James Crenshaw, *The Psalms: An Introduction*, 2001
- Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Psalms*, 1998
- Nancy deClaisé-Walford, *Introduction to the Psalms: A Song from Ancient Israel*, 2004
- \*Lynn Domina, ed., *Poets on the Psalms*, 2008
- \*John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation*, 2005
- \*John Eaton, *The Psalms Come Alive*, 1984
- \*Mark Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*, 2007.
- Frederick Gaiser, *Psalms*, 1986 (Search Weekly Bible Studies, Unit 13)
- \*William Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 1993
- \*Denise Dombkowskie Hopkins, *Journey through the Psalms*, rev. and expanded ed., 2002
- \*Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59; Psalms 60-150; Theology of the Psalms* (Augsburg Fortress Continental Commentaries), 1988, 1989, 1986
- \*C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, 1958
- \*James Limburg, *Psalms* (Westminster Bible Companion), 2000
- Martin Marty, *A Cry of Absence*, 1983
- James L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms*, 1994
- \*James L. Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, 2006
- \*James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation), 1994
- \*J. Clinton McCann, Jr., "The Book of Psalms," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 4, 1996, 641-1280; cf. also in this volume, A. Berlin, "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry," 301-315.
- J. Clinton McCann, Jr., *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*, 1993
- J. Clinton McCann, Jr. and J. C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001)
- Patrick Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 1986
- Patrick Miller, *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, 2000
- Patrick Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer*, 1994
- Roland Murphy, *The Gift of the Psalms*, 2000.
- \*Eugene Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*, 1989
- \*Calvin Seerveld, *Voicing God's Psalms* (with CD), 2005
- \*Marti J. Steussy, *Psalms* (Chalice Commentaries), 2004
- \*Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, *Religious Institutions*, 1965
- \*Howard Neil Wallace, *Words to God, Word from God: The Psalms in the Prayer and Preaching of the Church*, 2005

\*Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995)

Artur Weiser, *Psalms* (Old Testament Library), 1962

Claus Westermann, *The Living Psalms*, 1989

\*Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message*, 1980

Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 1981

\*John D. Witvliet, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources*, 2007