

BIBL 413, Psalms, Syllabus (3 credits)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A systematic survey of ancient Hebrew Hymnody including an exegesis of several selected Psalms.

REQUIRED TEXTS & RESOURCES

Any modern translation of the Bible.

Mark D. Futato. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2007.

Tremper Longman III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1988.

John H. Morris. An Honor and Shame Analysis of Psalm 22. Presented at a regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, 2004.

NOTE: The Point University Bookstore may offer this textbook (s) in other formats. Information can be found at www.pointuniversityshop.com.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Each course begins on a Wednesday with a Getting Started module before moving into the week 1-7 content. The introduce yourself forum is required during the Getting Started module in order to be counted present during this half-week of instruction. The introduce yourself forum is open from the start of the course to the first Sunday. All posts are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Participation is required to be marked present for this time period. Keep in mind that in future weeks, forum due dates may be different.

Unless stated otherwise, graded assignments are due on the last day of the course week (Sunday). <http://point.edu/course-schedules/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be required to:

- **Engage in *daily* reading of key passages** from the Psalms which are relevant to the week's topics and themes. Students should pay close attention to the historical and literary context as well as to the characters, events, places, and concepts in each week's reading (where available). Students should also make good use of a study Bible by reading the introduction to the Psalms.
- **Complete assigned readings on a *daily* basis** in the required textbooks by Futato and Longman. The textbooks are core to the learning in this class will provide critical contextual, literary, and interpretative information and therefore will assist in the daily readings of scripture. Students are encouraged to engage in *daily* textbook reading. The amount of reading in this class is sizeable but is not overbearing. Therefore, it is recommended that they calculate the number of pages of reading in a week, divide it by the number of days in the week, set a daily reading goal, and reach it on a *daily* basis.

- **Experiencing a Psalm Presentation.** Present your experience of three Psalms of your choice to the class. The mode of presentation is left to the student. It may be a formal paper in the appropriate format (APA, etc.), video, storyboard, cartoons, speech, sermon, dramatic presentation or anything else the student wants to do. The point of the exercise is to experience a Psalm and then share that experience with the class. Anything that meets the requirements of the assignment is acceptable. As a professor, I have seen 4,317,649 PowerPoints and have no desire to see another one. Creativity will be rewarded. You should attempt to pick one Psalm from the beginning, middle and end of the Psalter. Given how flexible the presentation options are, I can't tell you how long your presentation needs to be. You need to make sure you address all six areas listed below. If I were writing a paper for a presentation, I suspect that it would be 3-5 pages of Times Roman, double spaced text. Appendix B explains how to go about experiencing a Psalm. **These presentations will be due by the end of the second, third and sixth class.**

There are no quizzes in this class, so you will have to show you mastered the textbook information by including what you learned from the text in your Psalm close reading presentation.

Regardless of format, here is what your presentation must include.

1. Historical context of the Psalm (if known). What was going on in the social, religious, geographical, political and military world that had an impact on the understanding and interpretation of the Psalm?
 2. Literary context of the Psalm. How does the Psalm's position in the Psalter have an impact on the understanding and interpretation of the Psalm? For instance, I think it is important that Ps 23 (one of the most comforting Psalms) comes immediately after Ps 22 (one of David's strongest Laments).
 3. Elements of "structure" that help you understand the Psalm and how they have an impact on interpreting and applying the Psalm. The concept of 'structure" will be explained during the professor's videos on Experiencing the Psalms.
 4. Poetic elements in the Psalm and how they have an impact on the interpretation and application of the Psalm.
 5. Any Old or New Testament parallels or connections. The discussion should include how the Psalm is used in the parallel text and how that effects interpretation of that text. For instance, the book of Hebrews frequently uses the Psalms as proof texts and justifications for its arguments about the person and work of Jesus.
 6. A modern day application in your own life. What are you going to do differently or live differently based on what you have learned about the Psalm?
 7. **MISSING ANY ONE OF THESE AREAS WILL RESULT IN AT LEAST A 15 POINT DEDUCTION IN YOUR GRADE FOR THE PAPER.**
- **Complete three peer reviews of Experiencing a Psalm presentation.** The requirements of this assignment are the same as the Psalm presentation above. You will pick a Psalm that a student has presented for the previous week and you will use that as your text for your own review. You are not expected to repeat everything the first student presented, but you should add things you have found or that the first student missed. The intent here is for you to learn a little more about the Psalm and its application to your life and for the original student to be lead deeper into the Psalm. While you may not find anything to offer for a specific section of the original presentation (historical context for instance), you should strive to find something new, different or additional in sections 3-6 above. **For instance, if the original students didn't mention or missed an image, poetic device, or piece of structure that you think is significant, note that in your review and reflect on why what you noticed is important as well as how it has an impact on interpretation.** The peer review will

probably be somewhat shorter than the original experience of the Psalm. Again, if I were writing one of these, it would probably be 2-4 pages. **These are due by the end of the third, fifth and seventh class.**

- **Complete 8 Weekly Exercises.** The format and content of these exercises will vary from week to week. Specific instructions and grading rubric will be included in Sakai for each individual exercise. **The exercises are due by the end of each class week.** Note that there are two exercises due by the end of week 1.
- **Complete 7 Weekly Discussion forums.** Each week, one question will be offered up for group discussion. The student must answer the questions with at least a 200 word response by the fourth day of the class week. In addition, each student must respond to another student's answer using at least 150 words. **"I agree," is not an appropriate response. It is wonderful to affirm someone's answer, but you need to advance the discussion.** We are all in the forum to help each other. Add something new to the discussion so we can all learn. "I agree," answers will not receive any credit. **All forum entries must be completed by the end of each class week.**

	Learning Activities	Graded Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to the Psalms – The Soundtrack of the Old (and New) Testament	
	Reading and Videos	
	<p>Read the Psalms 1-22</p> <p>Read Part 1, 'The Psalms Then and Now (chs. 1-5) in <i>How to Read the Psalms</i> by Longman</p> <p>Read ch. 1, 'Appreciating the Poetry' in <i>Interpreting the Psalms</i> by Futato</p> <p>Read "How to experience a Psalm" on PointLearning and be ready to discuss how to use it in the first class.</p> <p>View the Welcome video from your professor</p> <p>View the Introduction to the Psalms video</p> <p>View the "How to Experience a Psalm" Video</p> <p>View "Experiencing Psalm 1" Video</p>	
	Assignments	

	Attend the online class introduction and Q&A session during preview week	Preview Week
	Introduce yourself to the class by completing an entry in the "Introduction forum."	Week 1, day 7
	Post your exercise – "Media Example" in the Exercise 1 Media Example Forum	Week 1, day 7
	Post your exercise – "Pre-course Understanding of a Psalm" in the Exercise 2 Pre-course Understanding of a Psalm forum	Week 1, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	
Week 2	Psalms 23-44 – Poetry and Worship	
	Reading and Videos	
	Read the Psalms 23-44	
	Read Part 2, 'The Art of the Psalms', chs. 6-8 in <i>How to Read the Psalms</i> by Longman	
	Read ch. 2, 'Preparing for Interpretation' in <i>Interpreting the Psalms</i> by Futato	
	View "Experiencing Psalm 23" Video	
	View "The Power of Rhythm, Music and Experience" video	
	Assignments	
	Post your exercise - "Psalms Worship Examples" in the Psalms Used in Worship forum	Week 2, day 7
	Post your presentation - "Experiencing a Psalm" in the Week 2 Experiencing a Psalm forum	Week 2, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 2, day 7
Week 3	Psalms 45-66 – Images and Poetry	
	Reading and Videos	
	Read Psalms 45-66	

	<p>Read part 3, chs. 9-11, 'A Melody of the Psalms', in <i>How to Read the Psalms</i> by Longman</p> <p>Read chs. 3-4 of 'Interpreting the Categories' in <i>Interpreting the Psalms</i> by Futato</p> <p>Read Morris, John H. <i>An Honor and Shame Analysis of Psalm 22</i>. Presented at a regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, 2004.</p> <p>View "Experiencing Psalm 22" Video</p>	
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	Assignments	
	Post your exercise - "Images in the Psalms" Exercise in the Images in the Psalms forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your peer review of one Psalm from last week in the Week 3 Peer Review forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 3, Day 7

Week 4	Psalms 67-88 – Laments	
	Reading and Videos	
	<p>Read Psalms 67-88</p> <p>Read chs. 5-6 of 'Interpreting the Categories' in <i>Interpreting the Psalms</i> by Futato</p> <p>View "Experiencing Psalm 98" Video</p>	
	Assignments	
	Post your exercise - "Laments" in the Laments forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your presentation - "Experiencing a Psalm" in the Week 4 Experiencing a Psalm forum	Week 3, day 7

	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 3, Day 7
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Week 5	Psalms 89-110 – Laments	
	Reading and Videos	
	Read Psalms 89-110	
	Assignments	
	Post your exercise - "Bob Marley and the Modern Lament" in the Modern Laments forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your peer review of one Psalm from last week in the Week 5 Peer Review forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 3, Day 7

Week 6	Psalms 111-132 – Praise and Worship	
	Reading and Videos	
	Read Psalms 111-132	
	View "Experiencing Psalm 118" Video	
	Assignments	
	Post your exercise - "A Personal Psalm" in the Personal Psalm forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your presentation - "Experiencing a Psalm" in the Week 6 Experiencing a Psalm forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 3, Day 7

Week 7	Psalms 133-150 – Are You Experienced?*	*With apologies to Jimi Hendrix. Five points added to your "Experiencing a Psalm" Paper for this week if you email your
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		professor and explain the Jimi Hendrix “Are You Experienced” reference. Remember that Google is your friend.
	Reading and Videos	
	Read Psalms 133-150	
	Assignments	
	Post your exercise – “Post-course Understanding of a Psalm” in the Exercise 2 Post-course Understanding of a Psalm forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your peer review of one Psalm from last week in the Week 7 Peer Review forum	Week 3, day 7
	Post your answer and response in the Weekly Discussion forum	Week 3, Day 7

GRADING POLICIES

Course Evaluation Plan

An assessment instrument (checklist, rubric, quiz, etc.) will accompany each major graded assignment. See the instructions for specific assignment criteria and accompanying grading instruments.

Points Distribution

Graded assignments will be distributed as follows:

Graded Assignments	Points Possible
Weekly Exercises (8)	300
Weekly Forum Discussion (7)	100
Experiencing a Psalm Presentation (3)	300
Experiencing a Psalm Presentation Peer Review (3)	300
Total Points:	1000

Final Grades

The following scale will be used when calculating final grades:

A	90-100%	D	60-69%
B	80-89%	F	0-59%
C	70-79%		

Final grades will be posted according to the Academic Calendar:

<http://point.edu/academic-calendar/>

COURSE LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

TIME REQUIREMENTS & COMMITMENTS

This course is 3 credit hours. Regarding time on task, students can expect to spend approximately 16 hours per week for an undergraduate course.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	
Goal 1: Describe the historical and literary context of Psalms and demonstrate how they fit into the overall context of the Old and New Testament.	
	Objective 1.1: Students will define, describe and employ social, historical, literary and religious backgrounds to the understanding of Psalms.
	Objective 1.2: Students will identify key persons, places, themes, events in the history of the Psalms and their use in the New and Old Testament.
Goal 2: Examine the different literary and narrative features of the Psalms and evaluate how they contribute to the overall purpose and interpretation of the Psalms.	
	Objective 2.1: Students will define and discuss how the literary and narrative structures of the Psalms contribute to its original meaning and its correct interpretation for the Psalms original audience and context.
	Objective 2.2: Students will evaluate and analyze the Psalms in order to create theologically accurate modern interpretation and application of the Psalms.
Goal 3: Interpret the Psalms in a Biblically appropriate fashion. Evaluate the meaning of the Psalms in their original context and create an application for a modern setting.	
	Objective 3.1: Students will formulate presentations to demonstrate how they have learned how to “experience” a Psalm in its Old and New Testament setting, as well as a modern personal application.
	Objective 3.2: Students will demonstrate the ability to create modern day Psalms.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Point University is committed to providing qualified students with disabilities an equal opportunity to access a Point education through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations and support services. Accordingly, Point complies with Title IX (<https://point.edu/title-ix>) of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the subsequent reauthorization of that act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and subsequent amendments to that act. For more information about Disability Support Services, see the “Consumer Information” section of the website

(<http://point.edu/disclosures>) and the “Student Services” section of this catalog, or contact the Director of Disability Services and College Section 504 Coordinator, at disability.services@point.edu.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

A student is expected to actively participate in each week of the class in which he or she is enrolled. Active participation each academic week includes submitting classwork in one or more of the following activities within the course during the week they are due: discussion forums, assignments such as (but not limited to) projects, papers, presentations, case studies, quizzes, or exams. Students may be absent up to 25% of the class. After absences exceed 25% of the session or term’s total – in either consecutive or cumulative days – the student will be withdrawn from the class roster and assigned a grade on the basis of work completed at the time of withdrawal unless, because of exceptional circumstances, prior arrangements have been made with the professor and the Chief Academic Officer.

Students representing the university, such as student-athletes, remain responsible for submitting work online within the week it is due to be counted present. No student will be disadvantaged while representing the university. However, the responsibility is on the student to notify faculty no later than one week before missing class for any reason, to ensure time for content to be made available to them and for make-up work to be considered and arranged. It is expected that students will limit their absences outside of these required absences, as they will be dropped if they overcut the allowed number of absences.

The full attendance policy is found in the catalog (<https://point.edu/catalogs/>).

Etiquette & Netiquette

Students are expected to be respectful and well-mannered towards the instructor and their peers, whether in the physical classroom or the online course site. For guidance on meeting this expectation, particularly in the online environment, please see the materials provided during student orientation or reach out to advising.center@point.edu.

Policies

For academic policies governing attendance, late assignments, and student support, please refer to the Academic Catalog directly (<https://point.edu/catalogs/>).

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