

**Course Syllabus**  
**(Previously WYB5436H) – The Psalms in the Christian Tradition**  
**Wycliffe College**  
**Toronto School of Theology**

**This class will be offered by remote access. Students will be expected to log in to regularly scheduled Zoom sessions.**

**Class attendance and participation in remote or synchronous online learning classes.**

The same expectations for student engagement and participation which applies to in-class learning also apply to remote or synchronous learning situations. Students who log into the Zoom site but do not contribute during discussion times and are not visible through live video will not be counted as participating in the class. Please see information at <https://wycliffecollege.ca/remoteteaching>

Before proceeding you will require a webcam and microphone. Laptops have these by default. If you have a desktop you may need to purchase a webcam (webcams come with built in microphone).

**Notice of video recording and sharing (Download and re-use prohibited)**

*Remote courses, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor.*

***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Christopher Seitz, Mark Elliot  
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***Course Identification***

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Course Number: Course Code WYB3414/6414HS  
Course Format: Remote  
Course Name: The Psalms in the Christian Tradition

***Course Description***

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This course introduces the student to the Psalms in the history of interpretation. It begins with a description of modern critical reading of the Psalms, including 'canonical reading', and then examines in weekly seminars the older history of interpretation, including the School of Antioch, Augustine, Aquinas, Rashi, Luther, Calvin and others.

## Course Resources

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### Recommended Course Texts/readings

- Gordon Wenham, "Towards a canonical reading of the Psalms, in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation, Volume 7. (The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series.)* edited by Craig G. Bartholomew (Paternoster 2006), Ch.13.
- Gordon Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed* (Crossway, 2013) and *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Baker, 2012).
- Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries, Volume Two: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1 - 72* (Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries), New Malden, 2018.
- Susan Gillingham, *A Journey of Two Psalms: The Reception of Psalms 1 and 2 in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2013).

### Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask the assistant registrar for assistance ([jhocking@wycliffe.utoronto.ca](mailto:jhocking@wycliffe.utoronto.ca)).

## Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

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### BD Level

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes. Students:

- (A) will consult the history of interpretation and its wide bibliography to use that base of knowledge in future exegesis in the church or the academy.
- (B) will recognize different exegetical approaches to the Psalms so that they are able to address interpretive differences in leading a group study.
- (C) will discuss interpretative problems in the modern period and issues related to translation
- (D) will appraise modern approaches to the psalms that deal with them as a canonical collection in a given form

### Graduate Level

Each graduate program has detailed statements of "degree level expectations" (goals and outcomes) found in the respective program Handbooks. The harmonized course goals and outcomes (below) describe the level of knowledge and skill that will be characteristic of a typical graduate of the program. Instructors

are required to develop a statement of learning outcomes for each course. These outcomes will provide benchmarks for course evaluation/grading and program assessment. Doctoral students are typically required to demonstrate higher levels of ability or expertise.

GRADUATE "DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS"	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
<b>EXPECTATIONS:</b> <i>In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:</i>		
<b>1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</b> is defined as a set of increasing levels of understanding within a student's area of specialization, methodologies, primary & secondary sources, historical developments and inter-disciplinarity.	Students will employ close textual analysis of select Psalms and evaluate interpretative examples through a selection of historical commentaries and readings, so as to demonstrate knowledge of exegetical approaches.	review paper, major paper
<b>2. Research and Scholarship</b> is defined as the ability to identify a new or unresolved question, to locate that question within a corpus of scholarly research & assess critically the relevant literature, to adopt a methodology(-ies), and to then formulate a thesis and reasoned argument(s) on the basis of the evidence.	Students will appraise exegetical approaches in the context of the Psalms and demonstrate a deep knowledge of premodern interpretive strategies, enabling them to construct a scholarly work such as a book review or lecture on the topic.	Seminar discussion, review paper, major paper
<b>3. Level of Application of Knowledge</b> is defined as the ability to engage in self-directed or assisted research, and the ability to produce innovative or original analysis within the context of graduate seminars and courses. In some cases this includes the application of a research language.	By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze a variety of exegetical approaches in order to appraise past, current, and future interpretive strategies and be able to apply them to the Psalms and wider Old Testament Scriptures.	Seminar discussion, review paper, major paper
<b>4. Professional Capacity or Autonomy</b> is defined as the ability to translate the		

GRADUATE “DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS”	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
knowledge gained in other research or professional settings, e.g., to undertake further studies in their area of concentration; or to enter or return to other professional vocations for which an advanced understanding of Theological Studies is necessary or beneficial.		
<b>5. Level of Communication Skills</b> is defined as clear and effective communication in both oral and written forms; the construction of logical arguments; the making of informed judgments on complex issues; and facility with standard conventions of style for scholarly writing. Cohort formation is a component of all graduate programs.	Students will be able to illustrate the contrasts in exegetical approaches to Hebrew scripture in order to be able to enter scholarly discussion on the topic.	Seminar discussion, major paper
<b>6. Awareness of the Limits of Knowledge</b> is defined as the recognition that Theological Studies is a complex discipline, comprising: a broad array of subject areas; methods and sources; various ecclesiastical traditions and social contexts; and, insights from other disciplines.		

## ***Evaluation***

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### Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas:

Basic Degree Students:

(1) Participation (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to...

(2) Seminar papers (50%) – Students are expected to submit papers for all four of the seminars...

(3) Final paper (40%) – A substantial scholarly paper (3500 words)

Graduate Students:

(1) Participation (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to...

(2) Seminar papers (50%) – Students are expected to submit papers for all four of the seminars...

(3) Final paper (40%) – A substantial scholarly paper (**6000 words**)

For all AD students, furthermore, the student will demonstrate awareness of issues in the Hebrew text, show they can handle technical annotation in the BHS and its divergent readings, and deal with secondary literature in French and German. For a secondary-literature aware paper on a topic in the psalms, around 6000 words, due the first day of the Winter Term.

#### Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

#### Grading System - Graduate Degree Students

5000, 6000 and 7000 level courses use the following alpha grading scale;

A+	(90-100)	Profound & creative
A	(85-89)	Outstanding
A-	(80-84)	Excellent
B+	(77-79)	Very Good
B	(73-76)	Good
B-	(70-72)	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level
FZ	(0-69)	Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Late work (Graduate).** The prima facie deadline for the completion of work in a course is the last day of the examination week for the trimester in which the course is taken. Students are expected to meet the course deadlines of the instructor offering the course and are advised to plan their research projects accordingly. Students who find themselves unable to meet deadlines for completing coursework can, under certain conditions, receive extensions for completing the work after the dates set by the college in which the course is offered.

The authority to grant an extension for the completion of work in a course beyond the original TST or college deadline (whichever is earlier) for that course rests with the student's college Graduate Director, not the instructor of the course. Nevertheless, the instructor's signature is required for course extension requests to be processed. Students will petition their college Graduate Director for extensions, using a standard form provided by TST on its website. See Section 7.11 of the Conjoint Graduate Degree Handbook.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional,

and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges [https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library\\_archives/theological\\_resources/theological\\_guides/avoiding\\_plagiarism.html](https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library_archives/theological_resources/theological_guides/avoiding_plagiarism.html)

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>.

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

## **Course Schedule**

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Session 1: Introduction: Syllabus; Introductory Issues: Psalms in the History of Interpretation: Patristic and Medieval.

Pre-class preparation: take notes to present (2-page handout) on one of

- a. Marie- Joséphe Rondeau, *Les Commentaires patristiques du Psautier (IIIe-Ve siècles)*, vol. II : *Exégèse prosopologique et théologie* (Rome, Pont. Institutum, 1985).
- b. Michael Fiedrowicz, *Vox Totius Christi Studien Zu Augustins "Enarrationes in Psalmos"* (Freiburg: Herder, 1997).

- c. Ronald Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford:Clarendon, 1995).
- d. Paul C. Burns. *A Model for the Christian Life: Hilary of Poitiers' Commentary on the Psalms*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012.
- e. P. Maraval(ed.), *Le Psautier chez les Pères*, edited by, 55–72, Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 4 (Strasbourg: Centre d'analyse et de documentation patristique, 1993).

Session 2 : Psalm 1-3: Pre-modern Interpreters (Antioch; Augustine; Calvin, Luther)

Reading: Childs, IOTS entry on the Psalms; Childs on Psalm Titles. Gillingham, *A Journey of two psalms*.

Session 3: Psalm 8: The Epistle to the Hebrews; Calvin; Erasmus

Reading: Childs in Biblical Theology in Crisis

Session 4: Psalm 22: Aquinas, Calvin, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Rashi

Reading: Martens, JECS

Session 5: Psalm 34: Augustine, Calvin, Rashi, Luther

Reading: Seitz, in Childs volume (2013)

Session 6: Psalm 40

Reading: A. Lincoln, Silva/Jobes, Seitz (2011)

Session 7: Psalm 45: Antiochenes, Augustine, Calvin.

Reading: D. G. Hunter 'The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church' *Church History* 69 (2000):281-303. Sujin Pak, *Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; New York: OUP, 2009).



Session 8 : Psalm 89/90: Luther, Calvin, Augustine, Rashi

Reading: G. Wilson's Work on the Psalms

Session 9 : Psalm 110: Luther, Rashi, Calvin, Jerome

Reading: Helmer, *Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic*

Session 10: Psalm 137: Calvin, Victorians,

Reading: F. Watson on Perlocution; Goldingay on Psalm 137

Session 11 (11 December): Reformation, Renaissance

Reading: Brian German, *Psalms of the Faithful: Luther's Early Reading of the Psalter in Canonical Context* (Lexham, 2017.) Herman Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Texts and Studies in Reformation and PostReformation Thought; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

Session 12: Early Modern French. Bibliographical Source: Bernard Chédozeau, "Les grandes étapes de la publication de la Bible catholique en français. Du Concile de Trente au xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle." In *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible, Bible de tous les temps* 6, edited by Jean-Robert Armogathe, Paris: Beauchesne, 1989. 341–360.

Also: 'theological interpretation of the Psalms'.

## **Select Bibliography**

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### ***Primary Sources***

Origen, Hilary, Diodore of Tarsus, Basil of Caesarea, Jerome, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Cassiodorus, Aquinas, Rashi, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Bellarmine

### ***Basic Sources***

Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007; Herder, German original, 1994)

Alan J. Hauser and Duane E. Watson, *A History of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009)

Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1951)

Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Vol 2; The Patristic Age; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998)

### ***Modern Studies***

Sue Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries* (Blackwell Bible Commentaries, 2008)

W. Holladay, *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996)

Jason Byassee, *Praise Seeking Understanding: Reading the Psalms with Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007)

G. Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter," *JSOT* 35 (1986) 85-96; *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS, 1985)

C. Seitz, *The Character of Christian Scripture* (2011).

### ***Theological Exegesis and History of Interpretation***

John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea* (St Vladimir's Press, 2001)

Paul Blowers, "The Rule of Faith," *Pro Ecclesia*

Brevard S. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *JSS* 16 (1971) 137-50.

———, "Sensus Literalis: An Ancient and Modern Problem" (FS W. Zimmerli, 1977)

———, "Psalm 8 in the Context of the Christian Canon," in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 151-63

———, "Allegory and Typology within Biblical Interpretation" (in Seitz/Richards, ed., *The Bible as Christian Scripture*) 299-311

Christine Helmer, "Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic and the Old Testament," *Modern Theology* 18 (2002) 49-73

Karen Jobes/Moises Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (2009) 195-99.

Andrew Lincoln, "Hebrews and Biblical Theology," *Out of Egypt* (2004) 313-38

Peter W. Martens, "Revisiting the Allegory/Typology Distinction," *JECs* 16 (2008) 283-317

Bradley Nassif, "The 'Spiritual Exegesis' of Scripture: The School of Antioch Revisited," *ATR* 70 (1993) 437-70

John O'Keefe, "The Letter Killeth"

Morweena Ludlow, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, *IJST*

Rolf Rentorff, "The Psalms of David: David in the Psalms"

Kavin Rowe, "Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics," *Pro Ecclesia* 11 (2002) 295-312

C. Seitz, "Psalm 34 and Mistake-Making," *The Bible as Christian Scripture* (2013) 279-98

Kendall Soulen, "YHWH – The Triune God," *Modern Theology* 15 (1999) 25-54

Francis Watson, Essay on Psalm 137 and Perlocutionary Acts, in *Text and Truth* (1997)

David Yeago, "The New Testament and Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994) 152–64

Frances Young, "Proverbs 8 in Interpretation: Wisdom Personified," in David Ford and Graham Stanton, eds., *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom: Scripture and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 102–15

———, *Biblical Exegesis and the Emergence of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: University, 2001).