



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number: WYB52263HS
Course Name: Preaching from the Psalms
Campus: St. George

Instructor Information

Instructor: Glen Taylor
E-mail: glen.taylor@utoronto.ca
Telephone: O: (416) 946-3541; H: (416) 944-2546 before 10 pm only
Office Hours: Normally, following class (never before!). My office is numbered 218; ask for directions!
Time and Place: Conference room, Thursdays 11–1

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

A prior course at this level (BD-Master's) in Old Testament, Preaching or both.

Course Description

Interactive investigation of the Book of Psalms that includes seminars, drama, and exegetical workshops in addition to standard lectures. Emphasis will be placed on expository¹ preaching and teaching the psalms within the church.

The main purpose of the course is to instill in the student:

- understanding of the psalms, including their historical and theological significance
- confidence (partly through acquisition of specific skills) at exegeting and theologically interpreting a psalm
- skill and practice at preaching the psalms competently, i.e. with exegetical precision, theological sensitivity, hermeneutical acumen and in a manner that is relevant, edifying and genuinely engaging to the hearer.

¹ As an adjective applying to Christian preaching, “expository” means to me a sermon in which the central theme is derived from and directly dependent upon an idea or dynamic that is at the heart of the Psalm or Psalm collection as determined on the basis of historical, grammatical exegesis and with sensitivity to and appreciation of the centrality of Jesus Christ, and the Christian “rule of faith”.

- a vision for the importance of both the psalms and biblical exposition in the life of the individual and of the church.

Course Methodology

Seminars, assignments (translation, readings, possible occasional quizzes), class presentation(s), appropriate participation, term paper

Course Outcomes

Wycliffe College has developed detailed statements of “learning outcomes” for the MDiv and MTS programs. They are available on the College website. “Learning outcomes” have to do in part with the level of knowledge and skill that will be characteristic of a typical graduate of the program. In accordance with this overall statement, instructors are required to develop a statement of learning outcomes for each course. These outcomes will provide one of the benchmarks for evaluation and grading.

| COURSE OUTCOMES | COURSE ELEMENT | PROGRAMME OUTCOMES |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| By the end of this course, students | This outcome will be achieved through these course elements: | This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe’s statements of outcomes (MDiv, MTS) |
| • will have greater familiarity with several individual psalms and the shape of the book as a whole. | Lectures, assignments, readings | M.Div. 1.1; 3.1 a MTS 1.1 |
| • will understand basic features of Hebrew poetry and have a basic appreciation of its theological significance | Lectures, exegetical workshop | M.Div. 1.1. 2.1 MTS |
| • will be able to preach several different types of psalms effectively (exegetically and hermeneutically sound, relevant, and engaging) | Lectures and readings, delivery and evaluation of sermons; evaluation of sermon preparation | M. Div. 2.2 a, c MTS 2.1 a, 2.3 a |

Required Course Texts

W. H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms: A Guide to Studying the Psalter*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

An accurate modern version of the Bible. Because of the excellent quality of the study notes on Psalms I recommend the *NIV Study Bible*.

Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

A week-by-week schedule is difficult to provide without knowing how many students are enrolled in the class (each of whom must deliver an in-class sermon). As well, I like to determine students' knowledge, needs, and interests before apportioning space for various subjects. The following topics are nonetheless sure to be covered:

History of scholarship and meditation on the Psalms

Practical hermeneutics for preaching the Psalms

The cultic setting of the Psalms

The Psalms as poetry—features and theological significance

The canonical shape and shaping of the Psalms

Approaches to preaching specifically from Hebrew poetry and the Psalms

The problem of vengeance and imprecation in the Psalms

Exegesis workshops for understanding the meaning(s) of a psalm

The Christology of the psalter in times past and present

Evaluation

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Two sermons (including exegesis [8% each]) | 40% |
| 2. Class assignments, readings, participation | 40% |
| 3. Devotional reflection on five Psalms | 10% |
| 4. Trial exercises on preaching | 10% |

An optional extra credit of up to 1% is available for each sermon that a student evaluates, so long as the sermon is vetted by the Professor— up to a maximum of three.

The penalty for written work submitted late will be 2% per calendar day. However, under no circumstances will either the exegesis or manuscript component of the in-class sermon be accepted after the due date.

More on the Assignments Noted Above:

1. Two Sermons

Each student is expected to preach one in-class sermon on the psalms. Times will be arranged soon after the class begins. The student is required to submit his/her exegesis one week prior to the sermon date and a full manuscript of the sermon the Tuesday before the sermon date. The sermon will be recorded, and evaluated by peers and by the instructor.

A guideline for exegesis will be made available in class; an acceptable guideline is available already on the College website or from the Graham Library. (N.B. The exegesis for the in-class sermon must include a one-page word study based on skills learned in class.)

The second sermon may be preached out of class. For those sermons to be preached in settings outside the college, it will be necessary to record the message on a VHS tape.

Note 1: If the recording of the second sermon fails, the sermon must be preached again; a manuscript alone will not suffice.

Note 2: Sermons must be fresh; a psalm on which you have preached before disqualifies the psalm from use!

2. Weekly Assignments, Readings, Participation

Each week the student will be expected to do work in the form of completing readings or assignments. This work done outside of class constitutes a major component of the course. Students wishing to work ahead may consult with the professor about readings to come later in the course.

3. Devotional Psalms

Students are required to complete a devotional reflection on five psalms. Though devotional the reflection should be based on good theological exegesis (in other words, the psalm's core meaning must anchor and direct the content of the reflection). Length: one page d.s. per psalm.

4. Trial Exercises on Preaching

I like to give students, in advance of their actual sermon, practice at speaking and effective communication by giving an assignment geared to this end. Details will follow.

Optional Sermon Analyses for Extra Credit

For bonus credit, students may evaluate up to three sermons from the Psalms. In completing this assignment, please use the sheet at the end of this syllabus. Consult the professor for a selection of sermons. The due date for this is the end of class.

Grading System

| Letter Grade | Numerical Equivalents | Grade Point | Grasp of Subject Matter |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| A+ | 90–100% | 4.0 | Profound & Creative |
| A | 85–89% | 4.0 | Outstanding |
| A- | 80–84% | 3.7 | Excellent |
| B+ | 77–79% | 3.3 | Very Good |
| B | 73–76% | 3.0 | Good |

| | | | |
|----|--------|-----|--------------|
| B- | 70–72% | 2.7 | Satisfactory |
| FZ | 0–69% | 0 | Failure |

Grades without numerical equivalent:

| | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CR | Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value |
| NCR | Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation |
| SDF | Standing deferred (a temporary extension) |
| INC | Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value |
| WDR | Withdrawal without academic penalty |
| AEG | May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value |

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

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. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. 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* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the

University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), which is available at Crux Books.

Selected Bibliography

On, Specifically, Preaching and Teaching the Psalms

Bateman, Herbert W. and Brent Sanday, eds. *Interpreting the Psalms for Teaching and Preaching*. St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2010.

*Mays, James Luther, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*. Edited by Patrick Miller and Gene Tucker. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

McCann, J. Clinton, Jr, and James C. Howell. *Preaching the Psalms*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001.

On the Psalms More Generally

In addition to commentaries on the Psalms, including those by Allen, *Broyles (see before), DeClaisse-Walford, Goldingay, Hosfeld & Zenger, *Kidner, Delitzsch, Kraus, *Mays, *Perowne, Leupold, Kirkpatrick, Anderson, Weiser, *Craigie, Tate.

Anderson, Bernard. *Out of the Depths*. Second ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983.

Broyles, Craig. *The Psalms*. New International Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984).

_____, *Praying the Psalms*. Winona: St. Mary's, 198).

Calvin's Commentaries Psalms. 5 vols. Reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949.

*Day, J. *Psalms*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.

Eaton, John. *The Psalms Come Alive*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980.

_____. *Kingship and the Psalms* 2d. ed.; Sheffield: JSOT, 1986.

*Gillingham, S. E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Griggs, Donald L. *Praying and Teaching the Psalms*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1984.

Guthrie, Harvey H. *Theology as Thanksgiving* (New York: Seabury, 1981).

Hayes, J. *Understanding the Psalms*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1976.)

Ker, John. *The Psalms in History and Biography*. New York: Robert Carter, 1886.

Kraus, H. -J. *The Theology of the Psalms* Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986).

Lewis, C.S. *Reflections on the Psalms*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1958.

Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Vols. 10–14. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955-74

*Mays, James Luthé, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook of the Psalms*. Louisville: W/JKP, 1994.

Miller, Patrick Jr., *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Mowinckel, Sigmund. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962.

*Prothero, R. E. *The Psalms in Human Life*. London: John Murray, 1904.

M. H. Shepherd, *The Psalms in Christian Worship: A Practical Guide*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1886.

Westermann, Claus. *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980.

_____. *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1973.

_____. *The Living Psalms*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

Questions on Sermons Heard

Prior to hearing/watching the sermon, read the psalm carefully. Do a quick exegetical probe and also think hard about how *you* might preach this psalm. This will give you an important frame of reference for hearing the sermon.

Please write your answers to the following questions on no more than two sheets of paper.

1. Who preached the sermon and on what Psalm was it based?
2. What was the central theme of the sermon? Was this theme easy or hard to determine? What made it so?
3. Was there a structure or flow to the sermon that was easy to follow? If you had been an “average congregant” would you have been able to discern the structure or flow? If possible, please write out the basic outline.
4. What were the shortcomings of the sermon (if any) and what could have been done to avoid them?
5. What are the most important things you learned from reading/hearing the sermon that you can apply to your own prospective preaching ministry? (Comment both on homiletic method and on the spiritual significance of the sermon.)
5. Are there any other comments you wish to make about the sermon?