

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**BOT 540 Studies in Poetical Books: Psalms**

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**Summer II 2010**  
June, M-F, 8:00-10:00 AM

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An exegetical and devotional study of the Psalms with an emphasis on understanding them as Hebrew poetry in their cultural and theological context so that the student will be able to properly principle and effectively apply these texts to their lives as the Word of God and minister them to the church today.

**OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Summarize important characteristics of the psalms.
2. Recognize and deal with, properly, the important features of Hebrew poetry as they relate to interpreting the psalms.
3. Explain and apply the major themes and concepts expressed in the psalms, including messianic references.
4. Preach and minister effectively the theological principles underlying any psalm.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**Required:**

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of the Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. ISBN 0-8010-2245-2

Cotton, Roger D., ed. *BOT 540 Psalms Handouts 2010* (AGTS)

*The Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version*. New York: American Bible Society, 1995.

Gaebelein, Frank E., ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 5, *Psalms – Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991. ISBN 0-310-36470-1 (.v5)

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Tues	June 1	Introduction and Psalm 1
Weds	2	discussion of Psalm 2; have read Part 1, chapters 1-3, in Bullock
Thurs	3	Psalm 8
Fri	4	Hebrew poetry

Mon 7 TURN IN flow of thought diagram of chosen psalm; discuss Psalm 23, word studies  
Tues 8 Psalm 51  
Weds 9 Psalm 45  
Thurs 10 Psalm 16  
Fri 11 TURN IN word study from chosen psalm  
Mon 14 Psalm 110  
Tues 15 Psalm 22  
Weds 16 Psalm 69  
Thurs 17 Psalms 73  
Fri 18 Psalm 68  
Mon 21 Psalm 19  
Tues-Thurs 22-24 TURN IN or have scheduled the presentation of your exegetical project.  
Fri 25 Turn in and discuss the take-home essays  
*[There will be a chapel service as part of one of the classes, but chapel dates are still to be determined.]*

## **METHODOLOGY**

Lecture, discussion, readings, essays, and research writing project.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class attendance is expected

- Be prepared to discuss the passages assigned for each day including reading them in the CEV, checking other translations, reading the textbook commentary by VanGemen and whatever Bullock says on them, and any related handouts.
2. By the end of the course have read the handouts, Bullock for main points and significant understandings, and VanGemen on all the psalms covered in class and your project as well as the introduction and the appendices after the following Psalms: 1, The Ways of Wisdom and Folly; 3, Yahweh is My God; 5, Yahweh is King; 7, The Name of Yahweh; 46; Zion Theology; 89, The Messianic King; 98, Yahweh is the Divine Warrior; 132, The Ark . . . ; 137, Imprecations.
  3. TURN IN on Monday, June 7, a flow of thought diagram of your chosen psalm or significant part of one for the exegetically researched teaching or preaching project described in # 5 below. Instructions on this kind of diagramming are in the handouts and will be discussed in class but the recommended reading on it is Walter Kaiser, Toward An Exegetical Theology, chapters 4 and 8, on reserve. This is not expected to be your final understanding of the text but your beginning one. It will give an opportunity for feedback from the professor before proceeding further with the exegesis.

4. TURN IN on Friday, June 11, a 3-4 page word study of a significant Hebrew word in your chosen psalm following the instructions in the handouts and discussed in class.
5. A. Present in class or in the professor's office during the last week of the course a 3 or more page typed, researched, exegetical, biblical-theological, teaching (or preaching) outline on a psalm or significant part of a psalm of your choice, approved by the professor. "A" grade level requires the work and sources described below and in the handouts about doing good graduate level exegetical/biblical-theological study.

OR

- B. Turn in a 10-12 page typed exegetical/biblical-theological research paper on a passage approved by the professor, with the same basic instructions as above, turned in by June 24.

**Thorough, detailed, exegetical/biblical-theological research to me includes the following steps:**

- a. Understanding the language of the text through comparing translations and doing significant word studies, which include the use of: (New) Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (coded to Strong's) or Kohlenberger, John R., III, and James W. Swanson. The Hebrew English Concordance To The Old Testament With The New International Version or a computer program that searches the Hebrew words, and then reading the articles in the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.
- b. Understanding the significance of the historical and cultural references in the passage through background studies, including the Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, and scholarly, exegetical commentaries.
- c. Understanding the literary intent of the passage by outlining the flow of thought and studying the literary devices used by the writer. Be sure to turn in with your project your revised diagram incorporating suggestions from the professor and use it to make observations on the points of the passage. **NOTE:** each student must **turn in** a flow of thought **diagram** (instructions to be explained in class) of their choice of psalm or significant portion of a psalm on **Monday, June 7**.
- d. Understanding the theology intended through analyzing the significance of the images and the theological and thematic terms and ideas used in context of the book of Psalms and of the whole Old Testament, and determining the underlying principles intended as the message of the inspired writer. To qualify for an "A" grade the best commentaries (see the \* ones in bibliography and at least two more) must be consulted, as well as Old Testament theologies, including Waltke's, and the Dictionary of OT Wisdom, Poetry, & Writings edited by Longman and Enns, and any

other related, significant, theological, studies. Be sure to research journal articles and read at least one to qualify for an A grade. In or before the conclusion the student must suggest how the biblical theological message of the psalm can be applied to people today.

For either choice the student must follow the style in Turabian 7<sup>th</sup> ed. with your choice of citation method: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references. However, for a teaching outline not many quotations or other citations are expected, as long as you are not passing off someone else's ideas as your own. A bibliography listing all the sources you consulted, not just cited, is required for proper evaluation of your research. I greatly prefer (required for an A) to see any signed articles from multi-author works, such as NIDOTTE and encyclopedias, listed by author and title of the article rather than the editor of the book, (see Turabian 17.1.8). Commentaries should be listed by author and title (usually a book of the Bible) NOT by series editor and title (see Tur. 17.1.5). Also, the outline need not be double spaced throughout, but do **NOT** justify the right margin. Put your name, the course, and date in the upper right corner of the first page. If presented in class, copies must be supplied for each class member, but not necessarily the bibliography.

6. TURN IN on Friday, June 25, three take-home essays, of 2-4 pages each, over the principles brought out in the course and from the readings, involved in:
  - A. understanding Hebrew poetry for understanding psalms. What characteristics of Hebrew poetry must be kept in mind to properly understand the intent of the inspired writers? Use some specific illustrations from the psalms. Synthesize your own summary of this subject that you could use to teach people in our churches.
  - B. understanding the prophetic/messianic references in Psalms 2, 16, and 22, according to the New Testament writers. This essay must explain general principles as well as deal with a few specific points from these three psalms which demonstrate your understanding of how they can be related to Jesus. The reading for it must include the relevant handouts, especially the article by Moo, and two of the best scholarly, theological, commentaries on these three psalms, in addition to the textbook commentary by VanGemeren. The major issue is how did the Old Testament Psalmist understand what he or she wrote in the passages which the New Testament writers say speak of Christ? In what way or ways are these psalms passages prophetic? It may be that each was understood to relate in a different way, thus representing three different understandings of the inspired intent of different prophetic passages. Give your view on this.
  - C. understanding and explaining to people how to relate to the imprecatory passages in the psalms as God's Word.

Late work may be penalized 1 point per day late using a 12 point scale (12 = A, 1 = F).

## **FORM AND STYLE OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED TO ROGER COTTON**

All work for me must be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins and the right margin NOT justified, and be proof-read. Your writing should demonstrate good, formal, clear, writing style (see handouts and Strunk and White or *Getting the Words Right*). The format should follow Turabian 7th edition. Signed articles in books such as word books, encyclopedias, word books, or other multi-author works, must follow 17.1.8. If you need to cite a source you may choose which one of the three citation methods in Turabian you prefer to use: foot notes, end notes, or parenthetical. For assignments with specific readings, no bibliography is needed unless you want the professor to know about additional reading you did. If you need to cite a source that was assigned, just put the last name in parentheses with the page number. The length may exceed the limit by a page or so. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date or the grade begins to drop (see above for late work). If you do not have an assignment finished when it is to be discussed in class you must leave the class during the discussion of the assignment. Put the following information at the top of the first page or on a title page: Name, assignment, course, my name, date. Do not put anything but the page numbers at the top of the other pages. No title page is needed for work under 4 pages. Do not use a cover, just staple it.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Reading Assignments and class participation	10%
Word study	12%
Exegetical project	45%
Concluding Take-home essays	33%

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Roger D. Cotton, December 2009.