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OT 612 Psalms

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Those interested is getting a head start are encouraged to work along two lines: 1) Review your understanding of IBS method, including your previous work and reading through Traina’s *Methodical Bible Study* and/or Thompson’s *Bible Study that Works* and 2) Reading through the Psalter. Gaining a working knowledge of the content of the Psalter will prove helpful for the term.

OT (IBS) 612 PSALMS
Asbury Theological Seminary – Florida Campus

Fall 2004
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“What other life can there be without the knowledge of the Scriptures, for through these Christ himself, who is the life of the faithful becomes known.” – Jerome

"Apply the whole of the text to yourself; apply the whole of yourself to the text." – Bengel

1. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION
A survey of the Psalter as a whole and a detailed, inductive study of examples of each of the major Psalm types, with special attention given to the interpretation of Hebrew poetic literature. The OT community's theology and worship are studied as they are reflected in the Psalter. This course seeks intentionally to incorporate the grammatical analysis of the Hebrew language into the overall inductive process.

**PER CATALOG GUIDELINES, THIS COURSE WILL REQUIRE A WEEKLY TIME COMMITMENT OF 7.5-9.0 HOURS OF OUTSIDE WORK. PLAN YOUR SCHEDULES ACCORDINGLY.**

* Significant portions of this syllabus reflect the influences of my IBS teachers at ATS (Profs. David Thompson and David Bauer) as well as their mentor in the method Robert A. Traina who taught IBS (then English Bible) at ATS from 1966-88. I am grateful and thankful for the role that the IBS department has played in my development as a person, teacher, and interpreter of Scripture.
Part of this course involves learning to work within time constraints. You could easily spend hundreds of hours on any of the assignments for this class, but in reality, for many of you, the time limits in this class will approximate the time available during "normal" weeks for sermon and teaching preparation.

Work diligently this semester to master the totality of this method and its application in the time available and you will have a rich resource to draw on for the rest of your ministry. Those whom you teach will be blessed!!!

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. **Methodology.** By the end of the course the student should be able evidentially and contextually to:
   1. Interpret books-as-wholes and any of their parts in light of the whole;
   2. Interpret poetic materials,
   3. Evaluate and apply passages thus interpreted;
   4. Correlate the theology of the passages studied to the teaching of other biblical materials, thus moving toward a biblical theology.

B. **Content.** The student shall be able to:
   1. Think through the contents of each psalm studied in the course without recourse to the printed text, identifying major passages and delineating major themes;
   2. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Psalter;
   3. Use a general knowledge of the historical and religious background of the Psalter in the interpretation of these books.
   4. Interact with major interpreters from throughout church history and around the globe.
   5. Reflect critically on the interface between the theology of the Psalter and Wesleyan-Arminian theological distinctives. In particular, give thoughtful reflection on how the theology of the Psalter informs and models our commitment to holiness of heart and life.

C. **Attitude.** The student should desire and intend to:
   1. Apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
   2. Make the Psalter the object of life-long study;
   3. Use the Psalter as a resource for prayers, preaching, teaching and living.

**PLACE IN CURRICULUM:**

IBS-2 courses serve an important role in the curriculum. First, they provide the opportunity for growth in exegetical aptitude and practice by building upon the foundation set in IBS-1. Second, they offer the student additional exposure to serious study of a part of the Christian Scriptures. Third, they focus on issues of evaluation and application/appropriation. This is important because it explicitly relates Scripture to wider theological and ethical concerns. Last, as the sub-title “from text to sermon” suggests, IBS-2 courses intentionally provide a bridge from
study of the text to issues of proclamation and teaching. As such, IBS-2 is a prerequisite to preaching courses.

CLASS RESOURCES

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

1. *RSV, NRSV, NIV,* or some other non-paraphrased version of the Bible. The best Bible for IBS is one that contains only the text without paragraph headings, study notes, etc. I found it profitable to buy a completely unmarked "pew" bible to use exclusively for IBS.


B. Recommended Texts:


C. On-line Class Resources

A First Class account is required for this class. Within First Class you will find:

- **OT612 (IBS) Psalter Class Folder.** This folder serves two purposes: (1) Course materials. Copies of all printed course materials are also here. View by left clicking on OT (IBS) 612 folder and opening the Course Center Icon; (2) Questions of a general nature can be posted here for all to view. All confidential matters (assignments, etc.) need to be sent directly to my email box, (3) We will “make up” the week that I will be physically absent by using the First Class technology.

D. Commentaries:

I have not placed any additional commentaries on reserve. Most are available in the Reference section (see below for best commentaries). I have done this for the sake of easy access. If I find that these volumes are being checked out and thus unavailable for in-house use, I will place all of them on reserve.

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES

A. Inductive Studies of the Psalms

The essential core of this class is your direct, individual study of assigned portions of the Psalter. To maximize your acquisition of the IBS methodology schedule your preparation time so that your assignments are done on-time and that you work on them in blocks. My own experience shows that blocks of 2-3 hours tend to be the most productive.
Your assignments will consist primarily of your work, not the work of other commentators. Bible dictionaries/background studies may be consulted in the midst of your study, but only after you have completed at least your contextual observations. Commentaries are to be consulted only after your own interpretive work has been completed and then clear documentation must be made of these sources. As you know, IBS is not about collecting the remarks of other sources. It is about gaining confidence through the application of a tested methodology to interpret the message of Scripture on your own. Believe me when I say that the IBS methodology will be one of the key assets that you acquire here at Asbury. It will serve you for the rest of your ministry.

B. Format.
1. Please place the following items on upper right-hand corner:
   a. Student’s name (please print, large “font”)
   b. Date due/Hours Worked, in that order (e.g., Sept. 21/4000 hours)

C. Evaluation and Feedback
1. Lessons. All lessons are due to be submitted, complete at class time as assigned. Selected lessons will be graded for written feedback. Due to the nature of this class, work turned in after the due date will earn a maximum grade of 70/100.

2. Classroom instruction and interaction. Once the review of method is complete, the majority of class time will be spent studying the texts under consideration.

D. Grade Components.
1) Completion of Lessons (95%).

   Module 1-2 10%: Introduction, Review of Method, Survey of Psalter
   Module 3-7  20%: Pss 1-2, 19, 36, 22, and Evaluation/Application
   Module 8-10 30%: 73, 77, and 118
   Module 11-12 35%: Pss 137 and 146-150

2) Brief 3-4 page (max) reflection on Achtemeier’s *Preaching the Old Testament*. Due Dec 5%. Students, who do a good job, will receive full credit. The goal of this reading assignment is the facilitation of a substantive discussion of the move from Psalm text to sermon. Engage the content of the text in your reflection.

Grades on all inductive studies will be based on the grading rubric available for downloading in the course folder. I continue to improve this instrument so that it may evolve in terms of clarity.

Assignments may be turned in either handwritten (provided it is legible) or typed. If you type your work, I would encourage electronic submission via the internet. This has a couple of advantages: 1) my comments are typed, 2) you receive your
assignment back via the internet moments after I grade it. All hard copies of papers will be returned via your SPO no later than one week after submission.

Statement of Grades (from Catalog):
Regarding the assignment of grades, let each one remember that the Seminary defines an "A" as "Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives." Grades in the B range are commendable and demonstrate typical graduate level achievement.

Incompletes (from Catalog)
A grade of "incomplete" will be given only in the case of an "unforeseeable emergency." This does not include church work or problems in other courses at ATS. (This is policy per Catalog).

F. Course Requirements
1. Completion and submission of assignments and lessons in writing as assigned.
2. Responsible prompt handling of difficulty with class content or requirements, of late work, of absences or other matters related to participation in the class.

VI. INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE PSALMS
*NINE HOURS IS THE MAXIMUM THAT IS EXPECTED TO BE SPENT ON EACH LESSON*

Suggestions:
1. Read through an entire assignment before beginning it.
2. Recall that items numbered separately are often interrelated and best considered together and done in light of each other.

Below is the calendar from the Spring term as well as the Psalms that were worked. These assignments are subject to change, but are representative of the work that will be assigned for the Fall term.

DUE DATES: Specific directions will be posted for each module. All work is due by 11:59 PM (EST) on the assigned day.
MODULE ONE Due Feb 17
MODULE TWO (SURVEY OF PSALTER) Due Feb 24
MODULE THREE (PSS 1-2) Due March 2
MODULE FOUR (PSS 19) Due Mar 13
MODULE FIVE (PS 36) Due Mar 20
MODULE SIX (PS 22) Due Mar 27
MODULE SEVEN (PS 36 and 22 Eval/App only) Due Apr 10
MODULE EIGHT (PS 73) Due Apr 17
MODULE NINE (PS 77) Due Apr 24
MODULE TEN (PS 118) Due May 1
MODULE ELEVEN (PS 137) Due May 15
Achtemeier Reflection Due May 8
MODULE TWELVE (PS 146-150) Due May 21