OT 612 Psalms

Brian D. Russell
This is a draft of the Fall 2004 syllabus. The books are correct as listed.

Those interested in 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 – Virtual Campus

Fall 2004
Instructor: Brian D. Russell, Ph.D.
Brian_Russell@asburyseminary.edu
Office Phone: 407.482.7660 (I check messages daily)
Additionally, I check e-mail at minimum once per day (including weekends in most cases).

Preliminary Statement:
“The development of this extended learning syllabus and all course materials is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (Brian D. Russell).” Thanks for honoring these instructions.
“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

I love teaching this class! My own personal mission as a member of the biblical studies area may be stated as follows: My passion is teaching, preaching, and writing about God's word. It is my goal to help men and women reach their full potential as a competent, confident, and inspiring interpreters of Scripture for our contemporary world.

I look forward to a great semester with all of you.

LET US COMMIT TO PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER DAILY THROUGHOUT THIS TERM.

I. 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.
THIS COURSE WILL REQUIRE A WEEKLY TIME COMMITMENT OF UP TO 9-12 HOURS OF WORK PER WEEK. I ARRIVE AT THIS NUMBER BY ASSUMING 3 HOURS OF "IN CLASS" TIME AND THEN USING THE CATALOG'S EXPECTATION OF 2-3 HOURS OF OUTSIDE WORK FOR EACH HOUR IN CLASS. PLAN YOUR SCHEDULES ACCORDINGLY.

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 book of the Psalter 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 prayer, 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 subtitle “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.

iii. 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.

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.

Your assignments will consist primarily of your work, not the work of other commentators. 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.
The best format is simply to paste your work into a FirstClass email. Such items open much faster and our easier to cut and paste for dialogue
Use .rtf (rich text format) for all submissions. Additional suggestions for formatting IBS assignments to the on-line environment will be provided in the actual modules.
Use the following format for naming a file to be submitted to me: module# followed by your initials, e.g., mod1br

C. Evaluation and Feedback
1. Modules. All modules are due to be submitted by the assigned dates and times. Selected lessons (6, 8-12) will be
letter graded. All lessons will receive feedback in terms of strengths and weaknesses. I expect that you will do your best on all lessons regardless of whether they are "graded" or simply marked with feedback. I evaluate in this manner because I expect you to work out your "bugs", shake off the rust, and begin to master new skills during the first part of the terms. Work hard from day one and you should be happy with your final grade. In other words, don't worry about messing up at the beginning of the term! You should be running near peak efficiency within a few lessons.

2. Virtual instruction and interaction. Once the review of method is complete. The majority of class time will be spent studying the texts under consideration. I will be posting my presentation and we will then engage in discussions of our exegetical work.

3. Late Work. Due to the nature of exegetical courses – all work received after the deadline will be eligible to earn a maximum grade of 70/100.

D. Grade Components.

1) Class Participation - 20%
The ExL environment requires the active participation of all of us. However, I do not want you to post statements just for the sake of posting, but I envision a lively debate/discussion among budding biblical interpreters. This part of the evaluation covers your postings in both your team folders and class discussion center. Just to let you know, I am not going to grade by counting the number of questions/responses that you post. I am going to grade by the consistency of participation and by the quality of the
comments. By consistency, I mean regular, on-going engagement with the class through each module including working within the time limits of the module. By quality, I mean: a) raising of key questions, b) evidence of critical thought, c) evidence of substantive reflection. This is not meant to sound intimidating. Rather I want to grade as fairly as possible. Occasionally, I will post explicit instructions regarding expectations of dialogue between class members.

2) Modules – 75 %

Module 1-2 10%: Introduction, Review of Method, Survey of Psalter
Module 3-7 15%: Pss 1-2, 19, 36, 22, and Evaluation / Application
Module 8-10 25%: 73, 77, and 118
Module 11-12 25%: Pss 137 and 146-150

3) Brief 3-4 page (max) reflection on Achtemeier's *Preaching from the Old Testament*. (Due May 8) 5%

****All written course materials are to use Times New Roman font (size 12) with 1" margins on all sides. All course assignments must be submitted in electronic format as a .rtf document (Rich Text Format). If you have questions about how to do this, contact the ExL Director or Coach.*****

One of the challenges of IBS on ExL is the display/production of charts. If charts play a major
role in your IBS style, I want to encourage you to continue producing them but do not spend an inordinate amount of time attempting to translate your charts into computer files. If you desire to turn a chart in with your work, you may mail it to me: Brian Russell; Asbury Seminary-FL; 8401 Valencia College Lane; Orlando, FL 32825.

All of you are free to submit work by mail, but here are the ground rules: 1) the envelope must be postmarked by the due date, 2) you send me an email "to office" informing me that your work is being submitted via the USPS, and 3) Realize that your work will not be returned to you as quickly as electronic submission because of the speed of the US Postal service.

Except in cases of emergency or by previous arrangement with the instructor, work submitted after the due date will be penalized one full letter grade (A to B) for each day that the assignment is late.

I take grading very seriously. It is my responsibility to evaluate your work and give you a letter grade. I hope to do this in the spirit of Ephesians 4:15-16 "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."
Grading Criteria (I will attempt to be as clear as possible regarding expectations for each assignment)

*Note that all of these criteria are not immediately applicable* It will be clear in each module the specific criteria for each assignment.

1) Legibility
2) Use of induction
3) Systematic application of the method.
4) Use of applicable determinants (At minimum, "seminary" level interpretation will include significant contextual observations at the main unit, Psalm unit, and book level and interaction with the history of interpretation.) The highest achievable grade without one of these elements is "C."
5) Depth of observations and inferences
6) Clear demarcation between interpretation and evaluation/application
7) Critical use of secondary sources.
8) Integrated interpretation of the "big-picture", not merely of fragments or answers to unrelated questions.
9) Evaluation that utilizes the full canon (when applicable). At minimum, this will include interaction with at least one text (beside our target passage) from each Testament.
10) Evaluation that deals substantively with the "truth" under consideration.
11) Applications that engage seriously the contemporary culture and are context specific.

**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."

**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.

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

**V. Basic Orientation:**
**Beginnings ….**
Our course will begin (the flag will drop) on Feb 10, 2004. Sometime during the day, our course icon will appear on your FirstClass desktop.

**Modules ….**
A new module will be accessible as scheduled in the syllabus by 12 noon (ET). Upon opening each module, you will find detailed instructions pertaining to the particular focus of the study. As was stated previously, these modules will consistently be found within the Course Center. In addition to posting each module on Monday of each week, I will be on-line throughout each week to answer any of your questions and respond to your comments.
Windows and Icons ....
While I am sure that each of you are aware of the function of each of the items which appear in the OT (IBS) 612-BR folder, let me summarize the manner in which I intend to use them this semester:

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and me, you should post to the Discussion Center. Also, this is where our conversations for each module will take place.

The Student Lounge Folder is for sharing concerns, joys and needs with your classmates. It is also for posts about what is going on in your life: summer trips, neat experiences, ministry updates, etc. This is our folder for community building.

The Team Folder will be the area where group projects will occur. Our class will be broken up into three "teams."

The To Office icon is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly.
The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. Private chats between students will have no affect on one's participation grade unless a particular module requires the use of the Chat Center.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the Services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer (which you can use to view my overheads) as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to take advantage of all these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary's on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

Endings ....
Our course will officially and (i.e., communication will come to a close) on Dec , 2004 at 11:59 PM. You will receive an exit correspondence from me on that day. In terms of ExL jargon, we are turning the lights out in our class on May 21 2004 at 11:59 PM (ET). All course materials must be received by this time.
For general questions regarding the ExL program, contact Kevin Osborn at ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu or Extended_Learning@asburyseminary.edu.

For technical support, contact Jared Porter at ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu.

For library research support, contact Information Commons at Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu.

For interlibrary loans, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu.

Library/Information Commons Resources
Link: [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/library](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/library)
Email: Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu
Toll-Free: 1-866-454-2733

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries, if possible. However, library services are always available to students through the Asbury Seminary Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be made online by going to the following link: [http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html](http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html).

Advanced Research assistance is available by contacting Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu), which includes
using various online databases, or doing research on a specific topic.

To request material from the Asbury Seminary Library, please follow the instructions on the library loan page (http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html). Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) if the materials are not available in electronic format; however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (5 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!

**Final Comment:**

Remember the goal of this class: acquiring the tools and skills necessary to be a responsible (and hopefully profound) interpreter of God's word.

Reaching this goal will require hard work. Persevere and you will be happy with the competency and skills that you have attained.
I take an incarnational view of my role as a teacher. I am here to serve you. Do not hesitate to contact me for help. Biblical interpretation is both taught and caught. Thus, all parts of the course (my presentation, discussion, and your individual work) are vital. This class is very much hands-on. I think that interpretation is best learned by actually engaging oneself in it -- if we wait until each of us feels "ready" to interpret the Scriptures for God's people, we may never do it. I will be actively involved in all discussions, etc. to make sure that we all stay on course.

I look forward to working with all of you this semester. Let us pray for one another.

Let me say this one more time: Do not hesitate to ask for clarification or help.

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 for the 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