OT 650 Tutorial in the Old Testament

John A. Cook

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OT 650 Tutorial in the Old Testament  
(Focus: Exegesis of Psalms) 

Spring 2008, W/F 1:00–2:15, M 307  
Office hours: T/Th 9:30–10:30; W 2:30–3:30

Instructor: John A. Cook  
john_cook@asburyseminary.edu  
BC 336; 859-858-2292

3 credit hours  
enrollment limit: 30  
prerequisites: IBS–1, OT520, OT501

Description
This course explores exegetical issues in the book of Psalms, and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to select poems in the book. Particular attention is given to poetic analysis, theological themes in the book, and the history of theological interpretation and the liturgical role of the Psalms in the life of the Church.

Goals
1. Learn the literary characteristics of Hebrew poetry and analyze the poetry in the book of Psalms.  
2. Become familiar with the major theological themes in the book of Psalms and the theological character of the book as a whole.  
3. Understand the hermeneutical challenges to theological reflection and appropriate of the psalms in the Christian church.

Procedures
1. Studying extensive portions of the book of Psalms in Hebrew and/or English.  
2. Practicing historical and theological exegesis on selected passages in the book of Psalms.  
3. Reading relevant secondary literature (especially early commentaries) and discussing the interpretive issues and theology of the book of Psalms.

Requirements
1. Resources:  
   a) Hebrew Bible and lexicon required (as in OT 501)  
   b) Required textbooks:  
   c) Access to commentaries and supplementary readings (Info Commons)
2. Assignments and evaluation:  
   a) Study and discussion of psalms in class (10%)  
   b) Praying through the book of Psalms (10%)
c) Midterm and final exam: April 11 and May 22, 1pm (25% ea.)

d) Paper on topic of choice (30%); sample paper topics include (topics must be approved by instructor by Feb. 27; paper is due on May 2):

- the enemy in Psalms
- the poor in Psalms
- the Psalms and the cult
- violence in the psalms
- kingship and messiah in the psalms
- the enthronement psalms
- wisdom ideas in Psalms
- historical recital in the psalms

Expectations

1. Read through the book of Psalms devotionally twice during the semester in language of your choice.

2. Prepare for class discussion as per the schedule:
   a) By studying the psalm in Hebrew (using whatever exegetical aids are necessary)
   b) By reading Augustine’s exposition on the psalm and consulting a modern commentary where necessary (see bibliography)
   c) By being ready to give an oral recitation of a psalm of your choice (once during the semester, to be scheduled)
   d) By reading the assigned secondary literature and being prepared to discuss the ideas therein.

Schedule (tentative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/13</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
<td>Holladay 1–14, 359–71</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/15</td>
<td>Reception history—Part 1</td>
<td>Holladay 95–190; Williams 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/20</td>
<td>Reception history—Part 2</td>
<td>Holladay 191–284; Aurelius 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/22</td>
<td>Reception history—Part 3</td>
<td>Holladay 17–91; Williams 2006; Brueggemann 1980</td>
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<td>02/27</td>
<td>Praying the Psalms</td>
<td>Holladay 287–303, 330–58</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/29</td>
<td>Singing the psalms — Guest lecturer: Prof. Bill Goold</td>
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**Week 1–3**

**Backgrounds**

**Week 4–14**

**Interpreting the Psalms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>03/05</td>
<td>Biblical poetry of Psalms</td>
<td>Holladay 304–29; Alter 1987; Berlin 1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/07</td>
<td>Psalm 1–2</td>
<td>Augustine 1.1–8</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/12</td>
<td>Psalms of prayer — תפלה</td>
<td>Kraus 125–76; Brueggemann 1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/14</td>
<td>Psalm 22</td>
<td>Augustine 1.149-66</td>
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<td>03/19</td>
<td>Psalm 51</td>
<td>Augustine 2.366-87</td>
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<td>03/21</td>
<td>Good Friday — No Class</td>
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<td>03/26</td>
<td>Psalms of praise</td>
<td>Kraus 11-49; Brueggemann 1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/28</td>
<td>Psalm 103</td>
<td>Augustine 5.34-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/19</td>
<td>Psalm 51</td>
<td>Augustine 2.126-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/09</td>
<td>Psalm 40</td>
<td>Augustine (to be provided)</td>
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<td>04/11</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>04/16</td>
<td>People of God</td>
<td>Kraus 51-71</td>
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<td>04/18</td>
<td>Psalm 78</td>
<td>Augustine 4.42-82</td>
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<td>04/23</td>
<td>Zion psalms</td>
<td>Kraus 73-106</td>
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<td>04/25</td>
<td>Psalm 47</td>
<td>Augustine 2.275-86</td>
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<td>04/30</td>
<td>Psalm 48</td>
<td>Augustine 2.286-301</td>
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<td>05/02</td>
<td>Royal psalms</td>
<td>Kraus 107-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/07</td>
<td>Psalm 89</td>
<td>Augustine 4.240-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/09</td>
<td>Didactic psalms</td>
<td>Kraus 168-75; Brueggemann 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/14</td>
<td>Psalm 73</td>
<td>Augustine (to be provided)</td>
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<td>05/16</td>
<td>Psalm 119:1-32</td>
<td>Augustine 5.312-53</td>
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**Supplementary readings (additional resources on virtual campus class site)**

Alter, Robert  

Augustine, St.  
{vol. 1: [http://tiny.cc/zsWDF](http://tiny.cc/zsWDF); vol. 2: [http://tiny.cc/udzp7](http://tiny.cc/udzp7); vol. 4: [http://tiny.cc/Ye6Ub](http://tiny.cc/Ye6Ub); vol. 5: [http://tiny.cc/sGspx](http://tiny.cc/sGspx); vol. 6: [http://tiny.cc/SbulZ](http://tiny.cc/SbulZ)}

Berlin, Adele  

Braulik, Georg P.  

Brueggemann, Walter  
1980 Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function. *Journal for the*
Study of Old Testament 17: 3–32. {available from ATLA via Asbury Scholar: http://tiny.cc/mKXFb}


Williams, Rowan
2004  Augustine and the Psalms. Interpretation 58: 17–27. {available from ATLA via Asbury Scholar: http://tiny.cc/mKXFb}

Williams, Tyler F.
n.d.  A Form–Critical Classification of the Psalms according to Hermann Gunkel. {http://tiny.cc/R4Q79}