



CENTER FOR
DISTANCE EDUCATION
IN BIBLE AND MINISTRY
AT HARDING UNIVERSITY

BOLD 3040 ISRAELITE POETRY & WISDOM LITERATURE
SYLLABUS FALL TERM 2020
NOV. 2 – DEC. 18
3 hrs credit

Instructor: Lawrence Rodgers
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Office Location: Distance
Course location: Distance
Method of contact: Email

Course Communication Protocols

All official course communication should occur via the Canvas messaging system. This allows for both class-wide as well as individual messages to be sent in a uniform way and to be stored in a single place. Please check your Canvas messages daily for updates and information from your instructor. This should also be the means by which you contact your instructor with questions or with updates regarding your status in the course. Canvas messages automatically forward to your Harding email accounts for your convenience. Class-wide communication will typically occur via Canvas Announcements. Communications between the instructor and individual students will typically occur via the Canvas Mail Inbox. During the week, your instructor will typically respond to emails within 24 hours. During the weekends, responses will typically take 48 hours.

Mission Statements

Harding University Mission Statement

Harding's mission is to provide a quality education that will lead to an understanding and philosophy of life consistent with Christian ideals. This involves the following goals:

1. **Generally, the integration of faith, learning, and living** - developing the whole person through a commitment to Christ and to the Bible as the Word of God, an emphasis on

lifelong intellectual growth, and the encouragement of Christian service and world missions through a servant-leadership lifestyle.

2. **Specifically, the development of Christian scholarship** - while acknowledging dependence on God, stressing Christian commitment to intellectual excellence through a strong liberal arts foundation and effective professional preparation.
3. **The promotion of Christian ethics** - creating an atmosphere that emphasizes integrity and purity of thought and action.
4. **The development of lasting relationships** - fostering personal and social relationships through interaction among faculty, staff, and students; and stressing a lifelong commitment to marriage and the Christian family.
5. **The promotion of wellness** - emphasizing that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that lifetime health habits contribute to a better quality of life.
6. **The promotion of citizenship within a global perspective** - developing a Christian understanding of and respect for other cultures through an emphasis on liberty and justice.

COBAM Mission Statement

The College of Bible and Ministry of Harding University seeks to lead all students to know, live, and share God's Word and to understand, love, and serve God's World through and beyond their chosen vocation.

Course Description & Rationale

Catalog Description

Selections from the Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Job. Their historical backgrounds, especially the poetic and wisdom literature of the ancient Near East. The importance of their message for that period and present times. Credit Hours: 2, 3. (This online course is only available for 3 credit hours.)

Instructor's Comments

Students will learn the basic features of Hebrew poetry with special emphasis on parallelism, metaphor, and poetic structures as a means of analyzing and comprehending the theology and relevance of these texts for our contemporary situation. Students will also be introduced to the imagery, iconography, and ideology of the ancient Near East as it is vital to grasping this literature and is a prerequisite to appreciating how it speaks to our contemporary situation.

Integration of Faith and Learning

Poetry is an especially powerful medium of human communication capable of plumbing depths of human emotion and experience that normally defy language. It is especially appropriate therefore that something as mysterious and comprehensive as God, his activity in the world,

and his self-disclosure to human beings should generate a wealth of poetry. The mechanics of Hebrew poetry studied in this class serve merely as a basis for entering into this great mystery, for learning the discipline of meditation required by this elevated register of language that resists reduction and analysis. God chose to speak to us in poetry as well as prose in order that God might engage the whole person, illumine the heart as well as the mind, and communicate his love as well as his law. The ultimate goal of this course, therefore, far exceeds a mere intellectual familiarity with the content and character of biblical poetry. It aims at nothing less than a (trans)formative encounter with the triune God of Christian confession who was first revealed to Israel as YHWH, inspiring prayers, songs, and poems that transcend time, place, ethnicity, and gender.

Course Rationale

Approximately 27% of the Christian Bible is written in poetry the vast majority of which is in the Old Testament. Therefore, without some rudimentary understanding of the mechanics and devices of Hebrew poetry, Christians are deprived of a significant amount of the content of their faith. Furthermore, the poetic content of the Bible is vitally important to Christian spirituality as it promotes meditation and prayer in a far more direct manner than do the prosaic, legislative, historical, and paraenetic sections of Scripture. A deeper understanding of and appreciation for biblical poetry, therefore, is critical to the cultivation of a robust and resilient faith that equally engages head and heart. The need for ministers who are competent in and comfortable with poetic literature has never been greater as Christians navigate an increasingly complex post-pandemic, racially charged, and politically divided world. A church equipped with the healing and uniting effects of biblical poetry stands the greatest chance of both experiencing and facilitating renewal.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks

Each student should have access to an English Bible with which the student feels comfortable. Committee translations (e.g. ESV, NIV, TNIV, NRSV, CSB, CEV, NKJV, NLT) are preferred over single translator versions and paraphrases (e.g. The Living Bible Paraphrase and The Message) though these may certainly be consulted and are of great value as secondary literature. Students are strongly encouraged to read assigned Scriptures in more than one translation for the sake of comparison and to raise awareness of interpretive issues.

In addition to an English translation of the Bible, students will be required to read the following book.

Berry, Donald K. *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Though this volume is a little bit dated, it remains the best and most comprehensive single-volume introduction to the poetry and wisdom of the Old Testament aimed at the undergraduate level.

Required Supplemental Readings

Due to the somewhat dated nature of the required textbook, the following supplemental readings will be required to bring students up to speed regarding recent developments in the interpretation of Hebrew poetry and wisdom texts as well as their application to recent events and cultural concerns.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/14/opinion/george-floyd-psalms-bible.html>

<https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/how-and-why-we-should-read-the-poetry-of-the-old-testament-for-public-life-today/>

Desnitsky, Andrei S. “Classifying Biblical Parallelism” a paper presented at the Triennial Translation Workshop organized by the United Bible Societies in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, in June 2003. (This resource will be posted on Canvas).

Learning Objectives

University Learning Outcomes

To promote a culture of accountability, continual growth, and progressive refinement of our mission, Harding University has developed the following learning outcomes (ULO’s) as a means of measuring progress toward our goals. These goals are achieved as a result of the aggregate effect of HU’s entire curriculum. Therefore, not every ULO will be represented in every course and many courses will emphasize only one or two.

Title	University Learning Outcome
Biblical Knowledge and Application	ULO 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of Biblical content and interpretation and their applications in ethical decision-making.
Communication	ULO 2: Students will demonstrate effective communication (e.g. written, non-written, spoken).
Critical Thinking	ULO 3: Students will examine issues, ideas, artifacts, and/or events in order to formulate or assess an opinion or conclusion.
Global Citizenship	ULO 4: Students will exhibit cultural knowledge, communicative and interpersonal skills, and other-centered dispositions necessary for responsible interaction with cultures different from their own.
Historical Perspective	ULO 5: Students will demonstrate a broad perspective on the context of the past and the development of ideas that enables them to understand and evaluate current issues.
Creative Perspective	ULO 6: Students will appreciate and produce work characterized by originality, imagination, or elegance in design or construction.

Scientific Perspective	ULO 7: Students will identify and apply the principles and processes of scientific reasoning.
Wellness Perspective	ULO 8: Students will exhibit knowledge and skills that lead to high-level personal wellness (e.g., spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, social).

BOLD 3040 emphasizes ULO's 1, 4, & 5 with its strongest emphasis on ULO 1. Some attention, however, is also given to ULO's 4 & 5 as the course emphasizes a culturally and historically sensitive approach to reading these sacred texts.

COBAM Learning Outcomes (PLO's)

Harding's culture of accountability, assessment, and improvement permeates every level of the university. For this reason, every college on the university's campus has developed its own learning outcomes aligned with those of the university. The College of Bible and Ministry has developed and adopted the following college-level student learning outcomes.

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the content and contexts of Scripture. (ULO 1)
2. Students will adopt the values of Jesus as reflected in Christian Scripture. (ULO 1)
3. Students will demonstrate skills in sharing God's Word. (ULO 2 & 4)
4. Students will analyze major challenges facing a diverse world from a Christian perspective. (ULO 3 & 4)
5. Students will acquire skills for holistic ministry which contribute to the mission of God in the world. (ULO 8)
6. Students will document a record of service that reflects Christian values and acquire skills for competent church ministry and/or for graduate study in related fields. (ULO 4 & 5)

Course Level Learning Outcomes (CLO's)

1. Students will learn how to analyze biblical poetry in terms of its tropes and devices while retaining a sense of its transcendent beauty. (ULO 1, PLO 1)
2. Students will learn how to decipher the poetic imagery of the Bible in terms of its ancient Near Eastern cultural context. (ULO 1, PLO 1)
3. Students will become skilled at translating the poetic imagery of the Bible into comparable contemporary images that are meaningful and relevant to their own cultural context. (ULO 2 & 4, PLO 3)
4. Students will learn to appreciate the theological significance of biblical poetry in terms of both its form and content and thus deepen their understanding of God. (ULO 1, PLO 2)

5. Students will learn to appreciate the devotional and formative value of meditating on the Bible's poetic and wisdom texts and will be encouraged to incorporate biblical poetry into their spiritual practices (ULO 1 & 8 PLO 2 & 5)

6. Students will learn how to share the aesthetic, theological, and spiritual value of biblical poetry with others with a view to promoting more harmonious and just ecclesial and societal cultures. (ULO 2 & 4, PLO 3)

Grading and Assignment Details

Assignments

Due to the nature of online learning, the students are expected to replace classroom time with reading, writing, and frequent class participation online. Please look at each requirement below carefully. All assignments must be completed on time to avoid grade reductions of up to one letter grade per day late.

1. Online Discussions (CLO's 1, 3, 5, & 6)
 - a. A prompt question designed to provoke class discussion will be posted on Canvas at 10:00 am each Thursday
 - b. Comment on the discussion question posted for each of these weeks with a response that ranges from 350 – 550 words.
 - c. Respond to at least two comments posted by classmates AND be sure to respond to any comments left by the instructor related to your response to the discussion question. Responses should range from 75 – 120 words. These discussions take the place of face-to-face classroom interaction which is a crucial part of the learning experience. Therefore, be sure to participate regularly and to give well thought out, well-written responses since we each bring an important and unique perspective to the subject matter, and thus we all contribute to each other's education.
 - d. Comments are due the Friday after the prompt questions are posted by 11:59 pm and responses to student and instructor comments are due the Saturday after the prompt questions are posted by 11:59 pm.

Note: Your grade comes in two parts. You receive half your grade for answering the question and the other half for responding to a classmate. This means that as I go through and grade the discussions, you may see 50% in the grade book. A 50% can mean one of three things: I have not finished grading the discussions, you posted your own response to the discussion question but have not responded to classmates and instructor, or that the total grade for your efforts that particular week added up to 50%. Comments & responses will be graded according to the following rubric.

CRITERION	CRITERION DESCRIPTION	POINT VALUE
Relevance	The student's comments and responses to other students' and the instructor's comments are consistently on point, rarely straying from the proposed topic, and avoiding tangents, hobby-horses, and axe-grinding. Familiarity with assigned readings and other course content is readily apparent via a judicious sprinkling of references throughout comments and responses.	___/25
Clarity	The student expresses herself/himself clearly, using appropriate syntax, grammar, and punctuation. There is a traceable progression of thought leading to a salient point accessible to all participants in the course. A clear position emerges that invites agreement, disagreement, qualification, or extension.	___/25
Insightfulness	The comments and responses make genuine contributions that advance the dialogue and further discussion for everyone's benefit. Students avoid stating the obvious or merely restating what they've read or heard and actually formulate their own new ideas based on their exposure to and interaction with course content.	___/25
Respect/Helpfulness	Comments and responses reflect appropriate regard for one's fellow students and instructor. Both vapid agreement and gratuitous contradiction are avoided as are ad hominem arguments and offensive language or inappropriate humor. It is clear that all communication is offered in love and intended to stimulate sharper thinking, clearer articulation, and tighter argumentation.	___/25

2. Reading Exams (CLO 2 & 4)

- a. Students will be held accountable for assigned readings by means of reading quizzes which will be posted on Canvas. Reading Exams will open every Tuesday at 8:00 am and will close every Wednesday at 11:59 pm, except for the last week of class.
- b. Students are permitted to consult textbooks or notes made while reading textbooks while taking Canvas quizzes. Note, however, that a strict 25-minute time limit will be imposed by Canvas. It is imperative, therefore that the texts be read prior to taking the quizzes.

- c. Students may also take any Canvas quiz a second time in an attempt to improve their grade provided it is done within the allotted time frame during which the quiz is open. In such cases, Canvas will average the two and replace the initial grade with the new average of the two attempts.
3. Poetic Analyses or PA's (CLO's 2, 4, 5, & 6)
- a. Students must submit four poetic analyses during the course of the semester according to the following types and dates
 - i. PA1 on a psalm of at least ten verses and no more than 28 verses (Due 11/18. Submit on Canvas by 11:59 pm)
 - ii. PA 2 on a poem from a wisdom book (A poem from Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes) that is between 10 and 28 verses. Due 12/2 on Canvas by 11:59 pm.
 - iii. PA 3 on a section from one of the five laments in Lamentations that is between 10 and 28 verses (Due 12/9 on Canvas by 11:59 pm)
 - iv. PA 4 on a love poem from Song of Songs that is between 10 and 28 verses (Due 12/16 on Canvas by 11:59 pm)
 - b. A sample PA is posted on Canvas and should be used as the template for the four analyses completed and submitted by students. Each of the following elements must be present to receive full credit.
 - i. Classification of the different kinds of parallelism exhibited by the poem based on the categories covered in class.
 - ii. A brief discussion of the kind of poem that is the focus of your analysis based on the types discussed in readings
 - iii. An analysis of the various metaphors employed by the poem based on the method covered in the readings and discussions in class. A summary of this method for analyzing biblical metaphors is posted on Canvas. Follow this step by step procedure in this part of your analysis.
 - iv. Summary of the key theological ideas expressed by the poem and how their poetic expression deepens or alters your understanding of or appreciation for these ideas.
 - v. A reflection on the spiritual impact of the poem. What effect does the poem have on you spiritually? How does it impact the way you pray? How does it impact the way you relate to others?

Assessment

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percentage of Course Grade</i>
Reading Exams	35%
Poetic Analyses	35%
Discussions	30%

A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69

Class participation

Participation in class comprises the heart of online learning. All students are expected to participate in the discussions in addition to the quizzes and exams. When students refrain from contributing to the class discussion, they not only learn less, but their grade also reflects their absence. Make sure you budget enough time this semester to join in the discussions and group activities.

In alignment with face-to-face attendance policies, any student who misses more than 20% of class discussions and/or quizzes (equal to three weeks/modules) will be dropped from the course with a WF (withdraw-fail). WFs appear on student transcripts, which becomes a permanent part of the student records. If a student falls behind, it would be better to drop the course than to receive a WF.

Also, for us to have a pleasant learning experience, we must have a certain culture in our discussions. Please read over the online etiquette. We must commit to respectful treatment of each post, remembering that although the course is online, the person submitting the post has flesh and blood and real feelings. Additionally, keep in mind that your posts become part of the history of this course. I would refrain from saying anything that you would not want to be held against you in the future.

Time Management Expectations

In on-ground classes, for every hour spent in the classroom, the typical student should expect to spend at least two clock hours problem-solving, reading, reviewing, organizing notes, preparing for coming exams/quizzes, and other activities that enhance learning. As an online student in an eight-week class, you should expect to spend about 22-23 hours per week on this class.

Here is a suggestion of how much time to spend **each week** on course preparations and engagement:

Textbook and online resource readings/videos = 6 hours

Online Discussions = 4 hours

Reading Exams = 4 hours

Poetic Analysis = 5 hours

Grievance Procedures

If a student has a grievance, discuss this with the instructor. If that discussion does not suffice, contact Tim Westbrook at the Center for Distance Education in Bible and Ministry (501) 279-5290.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Honesty and integrity are characteristics that should describe each one of us as servants of Jesus Christ. As your instructor, I pledge that I will strive for honesty and integrity in how I handle the content of this course and in how I interact with each of you. I ask that you join me in pledging to do the same.

Academic dishonesty will result in penalties up to and including dismissal from the class with a failing grade and will be reported to the Associate Provost. All instances of dishonesty will be handled according to the procedures delineated in the Harding University catalog.

Assessment: Harding University, since its charter in 1924, has been strongly committed to providing the best resources and environment for the teaching-learning process. The board, administration, faculty, and staff are wholeheartedly committed to full compliance with all criteria of the Higher Learning. The university values continuous, rigorous assessment at every level for its potential to improve student learning and achievement and for its centrality in fulfilling the stated mission of Harding. Thus, a comprehensive assessment program has been developed that includes both the Academic units and the Administrative and Educational Support (AES) units. Specifically, all academic units will be assessed in reference to the following Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose: **The University provides programs that enable students to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions in their academic disciplines for successful careers, advanced studies, and servant leadership.**

Disability Statement

Students with Disabilities: It is the policy for Harding University to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Therefore, any student with a *documented disability* condition (e.g. physical, learning, or psychological) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disabilities Office at the *beginning* of each semester. (If the diagnosis of the disability occurs during the academic year, the student must self-identify with the Disabilities Office *as soon as possible* in order to get academic accommodations in place for the remainder of the semester.) The Disabilities Office is located in **Room 205** in the **Student Center**, telephone (501) 279-4019.

NETIQUETTE

As servants of Christ, we must know how to address each other via all methods of communication - whether online or on-ground. We realize that in an online classroom, students may be across the globe - all the more reason to state what to expect when communicating online. When it comes to our communication, let's remember the following: Harding University is a Christian university and expectations are that the relationship and communication style between one another should reflect Harding's Christian mission. Therefore, please keep the following in mind in all of your electronic correspondence related to this course.

1. Remember your place. A Web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are likely to be inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your instructor and your fellow students with respect.
2. Brevity is best. Be as concise as possible when contributing to a discussion. Web-based courses require a lot of reading, and your points might be missed if hidden in a flood of text. If you have several points that you want to make, it might be a good idea to post them individually, in several more focused messages, rather than as a single, lengthy, all-encompassing message.
3. Stick to the point. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Don't waste others' time by going off on irrelevant tangents.
4. Read first, write later. Don't add your comments to a discussion before reading the comments of other students unless the assignment specifically asks you to do so. Doing so is tantamount to ignoring your fellow students and is rude. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.
5. Post correctly. Make sure your postings are located in the correct thread.
6. Netspeak. DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS OR USE EXCLAMATION MARKS!!!!!! :-)) This is regarded as shouting and is out of place in a classroom. Given the absence of face-to-face clues, the written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language. If you feel particularly strong about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then review it, before posting, in order to remove any strong language.
7. The recorder is on. Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Also, although the grammar and spelling of a message typically are not graded, they do reflect on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. It is a good practice to compose and check your comments in a word processor before posting them. However, unless grammar and spelling are graded components of the course do not obsess. Never criticize or comment on others' grammatical or spelling errors, unless doing so is part of your assignment.

8. Test for clarity. Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be perfectly obtuse to your reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.

9. Keep a straight face. Humor is important in an online course as it can add to the enjoyment and the personality of the course. However, avoid humor and sarcasm directed toward others. These frequently depend either on facial or tone of voice cues which are absent in text communication. Keep your humor directed either at yourself or at no one in particular. Also, remember this is a Christian environment and our humor should reflect our respect of each other and Christ. If you have a good clean joke to share, feel free. Humor gives us a glimpse into your personality.

10. Be forgiving. If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the instructor. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion may be new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can best be cleared up by the instructor.

Many of these netiquette tips were taken from the University of Wisconsin's Online Etiquette at <https://online.uwc.edu/academics/how-online-education-works/online-etiquette>.