

GOT 544 Exposition of the Poetic Books

Fall 2022

Instructor Information

Dr. Jonathan Johnson

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Office Hours: Mon-Tue, Thu 8:00-10:00 am, Eastern Standard Time*

** Hong Kong is 11-12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard time - please arrange with Dr. Johnson ahead of connecting during office hours.*

The best way to connect with Dr. Johnson is through email. If you do not receive a response to your email after a day (remembering the change of time between HK & US), please send a follow-up email, or you may send a message to Dr. Johnson using the above phone number. *Dr. Johnson is happy to arrange a video or audio call for questions throughout the semester, given advance notice.*

Course Description: A study of the structure and content of the Books of Poetry & Wisdom, with emphases on the literary forms of the poetic genre, the role of wisdom literature in the Scripture, and attention to the central themes of each book. While introducing the student to Hebrew forms of poetry and wisdom writings, attention will be given to methods of interpretation for these distinct genres within the Bible. (3 credit hours)

Prerequisite: none

Textbook Information:

Required Texts/Materials:

Daniel J. Estes. *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

*Students joining the class virtually must have a computer, internet connection, video camera, and a headset with a microphone.

MBU Institutional Outcomes supported by this course:

1. **Biblical Interpretation:** Students will interpret Scripture using the historical-grammatical method with careful attention to the immediate and board biblical context.
2. **Doctrinal Defense:** Students will defend the historical biblical faith.
3. **Historical Understanding:** Students will analyze the influence of philosophical ideas on societal trends throughout history.
4. **Written Communication:** Students will write correctly and cohesively with compelling argumentation.

Course Goals: By the end of this class, I desire the student to...

1. Understand the unique genres of poetic and wisdom literature, identifying shared themes as well as distinct contributions of each book.
2. Articulate the basic content and themes of each of the Poetic Books.
3. Form Biblical and logical positions on key issues of interpretation.
4. Develop relevant applications of the Books of Poetry to believers living under the dispensation of the church.
5. Demonstrate options for preaching either topically or holistically in a Poetic Book.

Course Objectives: By the end of this class the student will be able to...

1. Explain the central themes of each of the Poetic Books.
2. Articulate Biblical positions on key issues of interpretation.
3. Respond to current philosophical and cultural challenges relating to the Poetic Books.
4. Develop expository sermons from the Poetic Books with appropriate application to the current dispensation.

Course Requirements

Lectures

Most weeks there will be at least one short video to introduce that section's materials and readings, and to introduce students to some of the related topics. These videos will be short, averaging less than 30 minutes per week. Students should watch the videos ahead of the discussion forums and weekly quiz, as these may help your contribution to the discussions – and there will be a yes/no question on the quiz about watching the video lecture.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given over portions of the reading. Expect a mixture of essay and short answer questions based on the textbook study guide and core data. Quizzes are closed-book, closed-notes and are taken out of class. For dates of quizzes, see **course schedule** (below).

Reading

1. Read *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms* according to the **course schedule** (below).
2. Read through Psalms at least once. Read through Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs twice each.
Note: failure to complete the three Bible readings will result in a letter grade deduction from the final grade.
*Due Dates: To help students keep track, they will report on their reading first in **Week 7**, and then before final projects are due (**before Jan.15**). By Week 7 students should have read through Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs at least once; by the final project deadline all Bible readings should be done.*
3. Read 300 pages of outside reading (non-textbook) related to the Books of Poetry & Wisdom.
 - Most of this reading will be accomplished during your research for sermons and projects.
 - Make sure to read high quality sources from a variety of types (expositional and exegetical commentaries, journal articles, scholarly monographs). The quality of your sources comprises 20% of your outside reading report grade (see below).

A note on sources...

- You may always ask Dr. Johnson for advice on sources for a particular topic or issue, but please also refer to the course's selected bibliography (*separate document on class page*), and the references listed within our textbook: Daniel J. Estes. *Handbook on the Wisdom*

Books and Psalms.

- Note that the references in *Estes' Handbook* are found at the *end* of each individual book's chapter, not at the end of the textbook!
- Additionally, you may search the [MBU library](#) or [Galaxie Theological journals](#) – both of these links may require you to log-in to use these services.

Discussion Forums

Most of the weeks will have one discussion forum question. Students will answer the instructor's discussion question, and should then go on to respond to 2 other student's responses. Although these posts and responses do not have a set length, and do not need to be very detailed, they will be graded on the quality and thoughtfulness of the contribution. Please note the following details about posting times, and see the **course schedule** (below) for which weeks have discussion forums:

4. Initial Post: Due on **Thursdays, before midnight** Central Time.
5. Responses/Comments: Due on **Saturdays, before midnight** Central Time.
6. Occasionally a synchronous Zoom session may replace a discussion forum, and students who participate in these can replace forum participation with Zoom participation.

Sermon/Lesson Projects (Due 11/20 & 12/4, see below)

Students have two projects that focus on creating sermons, or lessons, which would be used for preaching or teaching. Each may be on a topic, a passage, or a series (*see description below*). Selecting from these three options, students will create two different three to four-page sermons/lessons for this course. Please choose a different option for your second project (*e.g., if you chose topical for your first, choose single-passage or series for your second*).

Each sermon/lesson must have the following: title, text, timeless proposition (full sentence), introduction paragraph, conclusion paragraph, two-level outline with timeless main points that clearly support the proposition, paragraph of explanation/exegesis under each main point and subpoint, at least one paragraph of concrete application, and one brief illustration.

Due Dates: The first project is due on **Nov. 20th**; the second project is due on **Dec.4th**.

Format: 1 inch margin, single-spaced, 11-point Calibri (Body) font

Please use the sermon template and the sermon series template on the Course Handouts page for all the sermon/lesson projects.

Descriptions:

1. Topical sermon/lesson:
 - a. Choose from the following topics: wisdom, worship, devotion, or a characteristic of God. (*Students who wish to do a different topic may ask the teacher early in the course*)
 - b. This sermon/lesson is a subject study on your topic. Your main points and subpoints must be supported by passages from at least two Books of Poetry & Wisdom.
2. Single-passage sermon/lesson
 - a. Choose from the following passages: Ecclesiastes 3 or 12; Psalm 1, 19, or 51; Proverbs 1, 18, or 31.
 - b. This sermon/lesson should connect the passage to the theme/message of the book and explain the main details of the text even.
3. Sermon/lesson Series Scope & Sequence
 - a. Map out an 8-to-10-week sermon/lesson series from the Books of Poetry & Wisdom.

This series can be topical, cover a book, or cover related books in the genre.

- b. Fill out the sermon/lesson series scope & sequence template on the Course Handouts page (see also the example scope & sequence). Each sermon/lesson in the series must have: a theme, text, proposition, basic outline (at least two main points), and general direction for application.

Projects (Due 1/15 or earlier)

This course contains two research projects.

1) Interpretation Research Paper (8 pages)

a) Requirements

- i) Write an argumentative paper on the assigned question of interpretation (see coursework page for sign up). Topics include the dating of Job, the nature of the Sons of God in Job, the possibility of resurrection in Job & Psalms, NT use of Psalms, Messianic prophecy in Psalms, the personification of Wisdom in Proverbs, the relation of philosophy and wisdom in Ecclesiastes & Proverbs, the identity of the narrator in Ecclesiastes, the Problem of Evil in Job & Ecclesiastes, the interpretation & application of Song of Songs.
- ii) Bibliography should have at least 8 academically credible sources such as scholarly monographs, commentaries, theological dictionaries, or journal articles.

- b) Format: 8-page, Turabian paper with headings and footnotes. The title page/table of contents and bibliography do not apply toward the page count. **(Use modified template on course handouts page)**

c) Content:

- i) Introduction (½ –1 page): introduces the issues, raises key questions, and outlines plan for discussion.
- ii) Main Body (6–7 pages): discusses key questions and/or views while evaluating the strengths and weaknesses. You should state and defend your interpretation within this section.
- iii) Conclusion (½ –1 page): summarize your arguments and the key issues involved. Restate the importance of the issue of interpretation.

- d) Class Presentation: the classroom presentation is 25% of the paper grade. You will have 20 minutes to present your paper to the rest of the class. Your presentation should include:

- i) A revised version of your paper as a class handout
 - (1) Incorporate comments from grading of paper.
 - (2) Email to instructor the day before you present.
- ii) A discussion of the key ideas and issues involved in your topic
- iii) A clear statement and defense of your conclusion
- iv) A brief 2-to-5-minute time for class questions

2) Book Theology of Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes – Choose One (10 pages)

A book theology defines the primary message and/or theme of a book, explains how key words or passages demonstrate the theme, breaks down the theme into subthemes, and demonstrates the significance of the book to the New Testament believer. Students will choose either Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes for this project. *As will be addressed in class, poetry and wisdom books are written in narrative and poetic language, and their book's theologies must be drawn from the whole work, especially conclusions (e.g. Job & Ecclesiastes).*

a) Requirements:

- i) Read Job at least 4 times, or Proverbs at least 8 times, or Ecclesiastes 10 times before writing the paper (include a statement at the end of the paper saying that you have read the book the required number of times).
- ii) Bibliography should have at least 8 academically credible sources such as Old Testament theologies, commentaries, theological dictionaries, or journal articles.
- b) Format: 10-page, Turabian paper with headings and footnotes. The title page/table of contents and bibliography do not apply toward the page count. **(Use modified template on the course handouts page)**
- c) Content:
 - i) Introduction (½ –1 page): It should introduce the book with relevant historical information before focusing on the book’s message and/or theme. *Note: a theme is a general topic while a message involves how the book expects one to respond to the theme. For example, the theme of Leviticus is “holiness” while the message of Leviticus is “a relationship with the Holy God requires holiness.” Not every book lends itself to a concise and accurate message, but every book will have a theme.*
 - ii) Main Body (8–9 pages): the structure of the main body will vary from student to student and from book to book. It will likely include a discussion on the key words/passages that carry the book’s theme as well as subthemes that support the overall theme.
 - iii) Conclusion (½ –1 page): The conclusion should summarize the paper, bring the reader’s focus back to the book’s message/theme, and briefly discuss the value of the book’s theology to the New Testament believer.

Final Exam (Due 12/18)

The final exam is a closed-book, close-notes, cumulative test over course notes, textbook study guide, and core data. The final exam will be taken during open-finals week. Virtual students are responsible for finding an approved proctor or for lining up a virtual proctor through MBU.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Sermon Summaries (Due 1/15 or earlier)

Students will listen to two, instructor-selected sermons from the Books of Poetry and write a 200-word evaluation of each of the sermons – 400 words for both sermons. Students are encouraged to identify (if possible) the title, theme, and outline of the sermon. Please listen to the sermons both for your own edification and also with a view as to how the speaker organized and conveyed the message of the passage(s). Please ask the instructor ahead of the last week of the course – the two evaluations will be **due before or by Jan. 15th**.

Grading Policy

1. Grading scale:

94–100	A	90–91	B+	81–82	C+	64–72	D
92–93	A–	85–89	B	75–80	C	0–63	F
		83–84	B-	73–74	C-		

2. Grade weighting:

Reading 15%

Reading/Lectures.....	20%
Discussion Forums	15%
Research Paper	25%
Sermons/Lessons.....	25%
Quizzes & Final Exam.....	15%

3. Late work policy: All reading reports and projects will receive a 4% late penalty per day after the due date. Extensions will be given on a case-by-case basis. *No late penalties will be forgiven if the student does not communicate with the instructor before a due date.*
4. Program Grade Requirements: In order to graduate, a student must earn a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (including a maximum of two Cs) in any MA program, or a minimum grade point average of 2.5 in the MDiv program.
5. Attendance Expectations: Students in traditional or virtual classes are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of the class sessions. Failure to attend 80% of the class sessions will result in a failing grade for the course.

Makeup Policies

Quizzes/Tests must be taken when scheduled or in advance of an absence. Quizzes missed due to absences will be assessed the standard seminary 4% per day late penalty.

Course Schedule

	READING in Estes, <i>Handbook...</i>	Sermons/Projects	Discussion Forum/Zoom	Quiz/Test	Week Dates
Week 1	Preface and 1 st half Job Ch.		Introductory Posts	<i>none</i>	10.26-10.30
Week 2	2 nd half of Job Chapter		Discussion Topic	<i>none</i>	10.31-11.6
Week 3	Psalms Chapter		<i>none</i>	Quiz 1	11.7-11.13
Week 4	Proverbs Chapter	1 st Sermon Project	Discussion Topic	<i>none</i>	11.14-11.20
Week 5	1 st half Ecclesiastes Chapter		Discussion Topic	Quiz 2	11.21-11.27
Week 6	2 nd half of Ecclesiastes Ch.	2 nd Sermon Project	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>	11.28-12.4
Week 7	Song of Solomon Chapter	1 st Reading Report	Discussion Topic	Quiz 3	12.5-12.11
Week 8			Discussion Topic	Final Exam	12.12-12.18
Final Projects	2 nd Reading Report (Bible + Textbook) Interpretation Paper Book Theology Paper Extra Credit 😊				Due by or before 1.15

Appendix A

Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, and it can exist in many forms. For example, the following would be considered a sample of academically dishonest activities that might occur in this class:

- ◆ Sharing advance information regarding the content or answers for a test or quiz.
- ◆ Receiving advance information regarding the content or answers for a test or quiz.
- ◆ Using a previous student's old tests or quizzes as a study guide for this semester's tests and quizzes.
- ◆ Handing in the same paper or substituting a similar paper in more than one class without permission.
- ◆ Plagiarism. Representing the words or unique thoughts of another as your own.
- ◆ Submitting as your own, materials that have been enhanced by another.

Academic penalties for academic dishonesty range from an F grade on the particular evaluation to an F grade in the course. Also, a range of serious disciplinary penalties may apply.

Academic Success Center. Once source for academic help in any course is the Academic Success Center. If you require specific targeted academic help for any reason, contact the Academic Success Center located in the Cedarholm Library. If you would like more information regarding targeted academic help, please contact the Academic Success Center director at academicsuccess@mbu.edu.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, the law requires that all students with disabilities be given a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Success Program Director, in the Library, (ph. 920/206-2340) or email academicsuccess@mbu.edu.

Library Services. The Maranatha Cedarholm Library is committed to providing services to distance education students that are equivalent to residential students. Read about the library services that are available to you through Cedarholm Library. You can search the library resources by clicking on the Library link found under Quick Links on the sidebar in MyMaranatha.

Netiquette: Netiquette refers to the standards of behavior for online communication.

- All communication in discussion forums and through email should be respectful and professional.
- If someone asks you a question in a discussion forum, take the time to respond.
- If a coursemate or the instructor sends you an email, acknowledge that you received it by responding with a quick email.
- Your posts should be related to the course content. If you would like to chit-chat with someone, use email or the Virtual Café
- found on the Collaboration page.
- Don't type your posts in ALL CAPS. This makes the reader think you are yelling.

Technology Problems:

Technology problems are not an acceptable excuse for missing an assignment. Technology will break down and fail at some point. Its failure is a normal process life, not an emergency. As you plan ahead

and manage your time, assume that technology will fail, especially if you wait until the last minute to do an assignment!

When you have a problem with MyMaranatha or any other MBU website, please contact support@mbu.edu. If you are having difficulties navigating this course or have questions about how to use technology required for this course, please send me a quick email (Jonathan.Johnson@mbu.edu).