



**McMaster Divinity College**  
**Fall 2017**

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**Course Designation: OT 6XP6 Hebrew Exegesis (Psalms)**

**Course Schedule**

<b><i>Class Time:</i></b>	Monday 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
<b><i>Course Begins:</i></b>	Monday Sept. 11
<b><i>Thanksgiving / Reading Week:</i></b>	Monday October 9 (No class)
<b><i>Final Week:</i></b>	Monday December 11 (Class will be in session)

## Course Description

The Psalms are artistic poems . . . the artistic capacity expressed in the psalms is indicated by the intensity and concentration of style, the appropriateness of the measures employed, the clarity and the beauty, the heights and depths of that which is spoken and sung in the presence of Yahweh” (Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 15).

Psalms are poetry in Hebrew lines and stanzas. Their confessional impact in praise and lament is best understood when they are read with some knowledge of the methods of the Hebrew poets. Select Psalms representative of the themes and genres of the psalter will be studied with careful attention to the parallel structures of cola and their combinations to form poems.

Psalms are eternal; psalms have been sung from Hebrew times to the present by Jews and Christians. Some churches have a tradition that only psalms from the psalter can be sung. The study of the psalter will also examine how psalms have been inspirational and influential throughout the centuries.

## Course Objectives

### **Knowing**

- The process of the formation of the psalter and its canonical forms
- The methods of Hebrew poetry used to create impact
- The use of psalms through the centuries
- The content of the psalter
- The theology of the psalms

### **Being**

- Knowing how to relate to God in praise, petition, and confession
- Knowing how to use psalms as worship
- Expressing praise and prayer through the poetic lines of the psalter
- Experiencing a spiritual intimacy possible through the emotional impact of the psalms

### **Doing**

- Practicing worship through the examples of psalms found in the psalter
- Using psalms in public and private prayer and music
- Living and teaching theology and ethics as expressed in the psalter.

## Course Texts

David Firth and Philip S. Johnston, *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity, 2005).

Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, Translated by Keith Crim, Fortress Press Minneapolis, 1992. (The English edition of 1986 or the original *Theologie der Psalmen* in the *Biblischer Kommentar Series*, Neukirchener Verlag, 1979 are equivalent.)



**2      *Theology of Psalms*      (15%; due Oct. 30; 1500 words)**

**Required Reading**

Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 11–235.

**Written Requirement**

Hymns have always been the means of teaching theology for people of faith. The psalter as a book consciously included the theological themes important to the faith of Israel. Choose five such themes and show how they are taught through the hymns of the psalter.

**3      *Exposition of Psalms*      (30%; Due Nov. 20; 2500 words)**

Psalms endure eternally but the way in which they are applied changes according to the times. The superscriptions of many of the Psalms are an indication of how they have come to be given particular applications at some point in time. Choose a psalm of significance for you and show from the content and structure of the psalm what sort of function it had, whether for an individual or for the community. Be sure to examine poetic technique and genre analysis in explaining the function and intention of the psalm. If the psalm has a superscription, particularly with historical information, show how this has placed the psalm in a particular interpretive context (e.g. a Psalm of Moses).

**4      *Supplemental Readings and Major Paper*      (40%; Due Dec. 11)**

**Additional Reading (5,000–6,000 pages)**

William P. Brown, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Oxford, 2014. 661 pages.

Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller, eds. *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*. VTSup 99. Brill, 2005. 680 pages.

These two volumes provide a comprehensive review of psalms studies. The student should pick an area of interest from the studies above and select an additional 4,000 pages of reading. The bibliography below may be of assistance, but readings chosen need not be limited to this bibliography. An appropriate reading list should be submitted.

**Major Paper (5000–6000 pages)**

From the readings chosen as an area of interest, the student should confirm with the professor a topic to be researched. This paper is to be presented in class as part of the assignment. Students will meet with the professor and other M.A. / Ph.D. students to discuss their research periodically throughout the semester.

## Course Policies

### ***Academic Honesty***

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

### ***Gender Inclusive Language***

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

### ***Style***

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

## Select Topical Bibliography

The following bibliography provides an introduction to the Psalms, naming a few important works that may direct one into the vast bibliography available for the psalms. B. S. Childs *in Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* provides a list of bibliographical surveys as well as a select bibliography on secondary literature.

### **1. Commentaries**

- F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 1871.
- C. A. Briggs, *International Critical Commentary*, 1906-7.
- A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1910.
- H. Gunkel, *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, 1926.
- H. C. Leupold, 1959.
- A. Weiser, *Old Testament Library*, 1962.
- M. Dahood, *Anchor Bible*, 1966-70.
- H. J. Kraus, *Biblischer Kommentar*, 1972. (English translation 1988-89)

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- A. A. Anderson, *New Century Bible*, 1972.  
D. Kidner, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*, 1975.  
J. Rogerson and J. W. McKay, *Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 1977.  
G. A. F. Knight, *Daily Study Bible*, 1982.  
P. C. Craigie, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1983.  
M. E. Tate, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1990  
L. C. Allen, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1983.  
E. Gerstenberger, *Forms of Old Testament Literature*, 1988, 2001.  
J. Phillips, *John Philips Commentary Series*, 1988.  
D. M. Williams, *Continental Commentaries*, 1986, 1989.  
W. VanGemeren, *Expositors Bible Commentary*, 1991.  
J. L. Mays, 1994.  
J. C. McCann, *New Interpreters Bible*, 1996.  
C. C. Broyles, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1999.  
J. Limburg, *Westminster Bible Companion*, 2000.  
K. Schaefer, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 2001.  
G. H. Wilson, *NIV Application Commentary*, 2002.  
R. K. Clifford, *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*, 2002–2003.  
S. Terrien, *Eerdmans Critical Commentaries*, 2003.  
J. H. Eaton, 2005.  
F. L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, 2005, 2011.  
J. Goldingay, *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms*, 2006.  
M. D. Futato, *Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis*, 2007.  
J. Grogan, *Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary*, 2008.  
H. N. Wallace, *New Bible Commentary*, 2009.  
A. P. Ross, *Kregel Exegetical Library*, 2010.  
C. C. Broyles, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series*, 2012.  
D. Bergant, *New Collegeville Bible Commentary*, 2013.  
J. Hilber, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 2013.  
W. Brueggemann and W. H. Bellinger, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, 2014.  
N. DeClaisseé-Walford, R. A. Jacobson, and B. L. Tanner, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, 2014.

## **2. Texts and Versions**

Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts with English translations*. Vol. 4a. *Pseudepigraphic and Non-masoretic Psalms and Prayers*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A, et al. *Qumran Cave 4*. Vol. 11. *Psalms to Chronicles*. DJD 16. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000.

Flint, Peter W. *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

García Martínez, Florentino, et al. *Qumran Cave 11*. DJD 23. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

Gauthier, Randall. *Psalms 38 and 145 of the Old Greek Version*. VTSupp 166. Leiden: Brill,

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2014.

Olofsson, Staffan. *As a Deer Longs for Flowing Streams: A Study of the Septuagint of Psalm 42-43 in its Relation to the Hebrew Text*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011.

Pajunen, Mika S. *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381*. Journal of Ancient Judaism 14. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013.

Rahlfs, Alfred. *Septuaginta: Societatis Scientiarum Gottingensis. Vol. X. Psalmi cum Odis*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1931.

Smith, Jannes. *Translated Hallelujahs: A Linguistic and Exegetical Commentary on Select Septuagint Psalms*. Leuven: Peeters, 2011.

Stec, David M. *Targum of Psalms*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004.

### **3.     **Introductions to Psalms****

Allen, Leslie C. *Psalms*. Word Biblical Themes. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.

Brown, William P., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Crenshaw, James L. *The Psalms: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Dawes, Stephen B. *The Psalms*. SCM Study Guides. London: SCM, 2010.

Estes, Daniel J. *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Futato, Mark D. *Transformed by Praise: The Purpose and Message of the Psalms*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002.

Hunter, Alastair G. *An Introduction to the Psalms*. New York: T & T Clark, 2008.

Johnston, Philip, and David G. Firth. *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.

Longman, Tremper, III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988.

Lucas, Ernest C. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

McCann, J. Clinton. *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

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Miller, Patrick D., Jr. *Interpreting the Psalms*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Sarna, Nahum. *Songs of the Heart: An Introduction to the Book of Psalms*. New York: Schocken, 1993.

Seybold, Klaus. *Introducing the Psalms*. Translated by R. G. Dunphy. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990.

Waltke, Bruce K., and James M. Houston. *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

#### **4. *Psalms and ANE Background***

Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

LeMon, Joel M. *Yahweh's Winged Form in the Psalms: Exploring Congruent Iconography and Texts*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2010.

#### **5. *Hebrew Poetry***

##### **Monographs**

Alonso Schökel, Luis. *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*. Subsidia Biblica. Rome. Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1988.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Berlin, Adele. *The Dynamics of Biblical Hebrew Parallelism*. Bloomington: Indiana University, 1985.

Collins, T. *Line Forms in Hebrew Poetry*. Rome: Pontifical Biblical, 1978.

Futato, Mark D. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.

Geller, Stephen A. *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry*, HSM 20, 1979.

Gray, G. B. *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, with Prolegomenon by D. N. Freedman*. Jerusalem: KTAV, 1972.

Grossberg, Daniel. *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*. SBLMS 39. Atlanta: Scholars, 1989.

Kugel, James L. *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, Yale University Press, 1981.

O'Conner, M. *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980.



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Petersen, David L. and Kent Harold Richards. *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Watson, W.G.E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, JSOTSup 26, 1984.

### **Articles**

Baker, A. "Parallelism: England's Contribution to Biblical Studies." *CBQ* 35 (1973) 429-440.

Craigie, P. "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *TB* 22 (1971) 3-31.

Geller, Stephan A. "Theory and Method in the Study of Biblical Poetry." *JQR* 73 (1982) 65-77.

Kugel, James L. "Some Thoughts on Future Research into Biblical Style: Addenda to The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 107-117.

Landy, Francis. "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 61-87.

Miller, Patrick D. Jr. "Meter, Parallelism, and Tropes: The Search for Poetic Style." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 99-106.

Stek, J. "The Stylistics of Hebrew Poetry," *Calvin Theological Journal* 9 (1974) 15-30.

Watson, Wilfred G. E. "A Review of Kugel's The Idea of Biblical Poetry." *JSOT* 28 (1984) 89-98.

## **6. Form Criticism**

### **Monographs**

Bellinger, W. H. *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOTSup 27, 1984.

Broyles, Craig C. *The Conflict of Faith and Experience: A Form-Critical and Theological Study of Selected Lament Psalms*. JSOTSup 52. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.

Gunkel, H. *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.

Langhe, R. de. *Le Psautier. Ses origines. Ses problemes litteraires. Son influence (Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia 4)*. Louvain: Universite de Louvain/Institut Orientaliste, 1962.

Mowinckel, S. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. 2 Vols. New York: Abingdon Press, 1967.

Westermann, C. *The Praise of God in the Psalms*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.

———. *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1987.

### Articles

Childs, B. S. "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms." In *The Mighty Acts of God. In Memoriam G.E. Wright*, 377-88. Edited by F.M. Cross. Garden City, N.Y., 1976.

Clines, D.J.A. "Psalm Research since 1955: I. The Psalms and the Cult." *TB* 18 (1967)103-25; "II. The Literary Genres" *TB* 20 (1969) 105-25.

Johnson, A.R. "The Psalms." In *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, 162-209. Edited by H. H. Rowley. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1951.

Longman, Tremper III. "Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical." *WTJ* 47 (1985) 46-67.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song." *JETS* 27 (1984) 267-274.

Murphy, R. "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" *VTSup* 9 (1962) 156-167.

Wevers, John. Wm. "A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms." *VT* 6 (1956) 80-96.

## 7. **Rhetorical/Literary Approaches**

Charney, Davida. *Persuading God: Rhetorical Studies of First-Person Psalms*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015.

Gray, Alison. *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading through Metaphor*. BINS 127. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Hecke, Pierre van, and Antje Labahn, eds. *Metaphors in the Psalms*. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

## 8. **The Psalter**

Collins, Terence. "Decoding the Psalms: A Structural Approach to the Psalter." *JSOT* 37 (1987) 41-60.

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Creach, Jerome F. D. *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. JSOTSup. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.

Day, J. *Psalms. Old Testament Guides*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.

deClaisse-Walford, Nancy L. *Reading from the Beginning: The Shape of the Hebrew Psalter*. Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1997.

deClaisse-Walford, Nancy L., ed. *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*. AIL 20. Atlanta: SBL, 2014.

Flint, P. W. *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms. Studies in the Texts of the Desert of Judah 17*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997.

Goulder, Michael D. *The Prayers of David*. JSOTSup 102. Sheffield: JSOT, 1990.

———. *The Psalms of the Return*. JSOTSup 258. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998.

———. *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*. JSOTSup 20. Sheffield: JSOT, 1982.

Howard, David M., Jr. *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*. Biblical and Judaic 5. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Keener, Hubert James. *A Canonical Exegesis of the Eighth Psalm: YHWH's Maintenance of the Created Order*. JTISup 9. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

McCann, J. Clinton, ed. *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*. JSOTSup 159. Sheffield, JSOT, 1993.

Sumpter, Philip. *The Substance of Psalm 24: An Attempt to Read Scripture after Brevard S. Childs*. LHBOTS 600. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.

Wilson, Gerald Henry. *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter. SBL Dissertation Series 76*. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985.

## **9. Doctrine in the Psalms**

Alexander, D. "The Old Testament View of Life After Death." *Themelios* 11/2 (1986) 41-46.

Burns, J.S. "The Mythology of Death in the Old Testament." *SJT* 26 (1973) 327-40.

Eaton, John. *Kingship and the Psalms*. London: SCM Press, 1976.

Fischer, B. "Zum Problem einer christlichen Interpretation der Psalmen." *TRevT* 61 (1971) 5-12.

Harmon, A.M. Aspects of Paul's Use of the Psalms. *WTJ* 32 (1969) 1-23.

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Howard, David M. Jr. "The Case for Kingship in the Old Testament Narrative Books and the Psalms." *TJ* 9 NS (1988) 19-35.

Jacobson, Rolf A., ed. *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011.

Kraus, H.J. *Theologie der Psalmen*. BKAT 15/3. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979.

Lewis, C. S. *Reflections in the Psalms*. London: Geoffrey Blas, 1958.

Mangano, Mark. *Power and Grace: A Theology of the Psalms*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011.

Smick, E. "The Bearing of New Philological Data on the Subjects of Resurrection and Immortality in the Old Testament." *WTJ* 31 (1968) 12-21.

Thordarson, T.K. "The Mythic Dimension. Hermeneutical Remarks on the Language of the Psalter." *VT* 24 (1974) 212-40.

Westermann, C. *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980.

## **10. Psalms in Liturgy**

Holladay, William L. *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Hustad, Donald P. "Christian Worship from the Second Century through the Reformation." In *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition*, pp. 95-119. Carol Stream: Hope Publishing, 1981.

## **11. Specific Genre Studies**

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.

Cheung, Simon Chi-Chung. *Wisdom Intoned: A Reappraisal of the Genre 'Wisdom Psalms'*. LHBOTS 613. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015.

Crew, Loren S. *The Songs of Ascents*. SBLDS 148. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996.

Kartje, John. *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107*. BZAW 472. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.

Westermann, Claus. *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

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Zenger, Erich. *A God of Vengeance? Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

**Disclaimer**

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