



McMaster Divinity
College



Where can

Wisdom be

Found?

Old Testament Wisdom

Literature and Its Relevance

for Christian Life and

Practice

OT 5XW5

This course begins online on April 21

Class meets in person: Thursday May 9: 9:00am-5:00pm; Friday May 10 9:00am-1:30pm

Course continues online until conclusion on June 8

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Course Description:

Where can Christian wisdom for living in modern society be found? What is wisdom and how can Christians learn it? This course explores these questions through a study of the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the book of Job. This course will examine these three biblical books as involved an inner biblical wisdom dialogue, but also as texts that seeks to draw its (modern and postmodern) readers into a dialogue about the way of wisdom. Important themes will be explored such as: the fear of the Lord; loving God for God's sake; theology as wisdom; and the wisdom of

worship and prayer in Christian life and ministry today. This course will facilitate critical reflection and examination of worldviews, professional practices, and missional activities and their potential for transformation through attention to Christian wisdom and its foundational role in human flourishing.

Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To know the place of wisdom in OT theology
- To gain an introductory knowledge of relevant Ancient Near Eastern Literature
- To know the content, historical contexts, and theological message of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
- To have a thorough knowledge of the contents and message of the book of Job and its role in inner biblical wisdom dialogue

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of Old Testament Wisdom Literature for the Church today
- To be transformed through attention to Christian wisdom
- To grow closer to God through study of the wisdom literature

Doing

- To be able to discuss the relation of the book of Job to discussions of theodicy and modern liberation theologies
- To be able to interpret Wisdom literature in its original contexts
- To be able to draw on Wisdom literature in service of critical reflection and examination of professional practices
- To be able to bring out the relevance of Wisdom literature for contemporary audiences

Required Texts:

- Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd. *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011.
- Ford, David F. *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love*. Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine; 16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON M9W 6H3: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

1. Pre-class Discussions (April 21 – May 4): Online

Due to this being a hybrid course, much of the class discussion will occur online on the Avenue to Learn course website. Students must actively participate in the online discussion and post minimum **two** discussion topics at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues). Student posts must be in regard to the posted lectures / assigned readings that week. As well, to further the online discussion all students must respond to minimum **two posts** every week. Since initial posts will be online in the first part of the week, there will adequate time for all students to respond to posts in a timely manner. Instructions on how to participate in the online classroom will be sent to each student via email before the course begins.

Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

2. 25% - Annotated Bibliography: Due May 4

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to the student's topic (related to wisdom) and write a 100-150 word annotation for each one. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. **This assignment will be approximately 2,000 words.**

3. In-Class Component (April 9–10): At McMaster Divinity College

The on-campus Modules will consist of some in-class lectures, Q&A, presentations, and student presentations. Attendance is mandatory.

Student Led discussion:

As part of the on-campus modules, each DPT student will lead the class in a 30-minute discussion of their research topic based upon their annotated bibliography. Students will introduce the topic to the class and give some of the contours of previous research, commenting on key texts and studies

4. 25% - *Critical Literature Review Assignment*. Due May

A formal paper will be prepared that summarizes the key learnings from the annotated bibliography and provides a cogent foundation for a theology and practice of *the student's topic*. **The paper will be approximately 3,000 words.**

5. Post-Class Component (May 12–June 8): Online**A. Online Discussion**

In the post-class component students must continue to actively participate in the online discussion but now only need to post **one** discussion topic at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues) and respond to **one other post** each week.

Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

6. 40% - Major Assignment. Due June 1. Approximately 8,000 words.

The paper should include four key sections. First a brief, but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach, second an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?) Third, a consideration of a foundational theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area. Fourth some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and also their ministry beyond the local church).

C. 10% - Class Presentation. Due June 1.

The student will offer a class presentation of their final paper and its findings to the class. Presentations may take one of the following formats:

- i. Video presentation (posted to YouTube or Vimeo)
- ii. PowerPoint along with pdf handout which will be uploaded to Avenue to Learn for the rest of the students to view and read.

**Class presentations will form the basis for the online discussion for the final week of classes (June 2–8).

College Style for Submission of Written Work

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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers to be submitted in electronic format only (a pdf file)—no hardcopies! Email to pevans@mcmaster.ca. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., evans.researchpaper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received before the end of the calendar day on which they are due (i.e., before midnight Eastern Standard Time).

Policy concerning late papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, holidays, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by **June 8** in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

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.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Research Paper Evaluation

Name: _____ Topic: _____

I. The next items are rated according to this scale: 1 = inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = superior.

Bibliographic consciousness	1	2	3	4	5
Range and Use of Sources	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity in Defining Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Strength of Argument	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of Exegetical Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy of Data and Assertions	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis /Critical Thinking	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction (Thesis Statement /Clear Issue)	1	2	3	4	5
Development of Thesis (focus)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Organization/coherence of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if so indicated

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified essay | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, Font size, Margins, Page numbers etc. need attention | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper needs balance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cite primary resources correctly/consistently (e.g., Gen 1:26; Gen 1; etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow MDC Style guide |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cite secondary resources correctly/consistently |

Bibliography

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