# Ph.D./M.A. Seminar: Critical Studies in Prayer PhD - CHTH G105 - C01 MA - OT 6ZC6 McMaster Divinity College Fall Semester 2023 Tuesdays 11:00am-12:50pm Fyfe Classroom

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# I. Description

This course focuses attention on recent research on prayer in the Old Testament and its associated communities. Key streams of research over the past few decades will be investigated with the opportunity for students to engage key passages utilizing new methodologies.

# II. Purpose

- **A. Knowing:** To have a thorough knowledge of critical studies on the history, sociology, literature, and theology associated with prayer texts in the Old Testament; to understand the key methodologies which have been used for study of these texts in the Old Testament and ancient Israel and Judah.
- **B. Being:** To gain a deeper appreciation for the theological potential of prayer texts for Christian believers; to be challenged to deeper personal faith in God by these prayer texts and their message.
- **C. Doing:** To be able to access the best resources for the study of prayer in the Old Testament; to employ recent methodologies for and engage recent topics on the study of prayer and its associated literature; to continue to increase Hebrew translation skills; to hone the ability to critically review literature and written papers in an oral setting

# **III. Reading Resources**

- Balentine, Samuel E. *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine–Human Dialogue*. Overtures to Biblical Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Millar, J. G. Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer. New Studies in Biblical Theology 38. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016.

Readings made available in A2L

#### IV. Schedule

# September

#### 12 Orientation

- Syllabus
- Critical Studies: Defining OT Prayer
- Assigned Reading: below

## 19 Class

- Primary Text: TBD by student praying
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Form Criticism
- Scholar: Mark Boda
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

#### 26 Class

- Primary Text: TBD by student praying
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Social Function
- Guest Scholar: Derek Suderman, University of Waterloo
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

#### October

#### 3 Class

- Primary Text: TBD by student praying
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer at Qumran
- Guest Scholar: Daniel Falk, Pennsylvania State University
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

# 10 No Class: Reading Week

# 17 Class

- Primary Text: TBD by student praying
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Scripturalization
- Guest Scholar: Judith Newman, University of Toronto
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

#### 24 Class

- Primary Text: TBD by student praying
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Ethics
- Guest Scholar: Robin Parry, Wipf & Stock
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

#### 31 Class

- Primary Text: Psalm 77
- Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Protest
- Guest Scholar: Richard Middleton, Northeastern Seminary
- Assigned Reading: choose from below

## **November**

#### 7 Class

Primary Text: TBD by student praying

• Critical Studies: OT Prayer and Religious Experience

• Guest Scholar: Rodney Werline, Barton College

Assigned Reading: choose from below

# 11 Seminar Paper due

14 No Class: ETS

21 No Class: SBL

28 Class: Seminar Paper reviews

#### December

5 Class: Seminar Paper reviews, Lunch afterwards (optional)

9 Biblical Theology of Prayer Paper due

#### V. Course Internet Resources

This semester we will be using Avenue 2 Learn for distributing course materials and papers. Papers will not be distributed in paper form, but only digitally.

# VI. Learning Experiences

## A. Class Experiences

This is a graduate seminar style class of collaborative learning in which professor and students are engaged in active learning together. Learning to critically (in its positive sense) engage material is essential to functioning in a graduate program and is expected of all students in our MA/PhD. It is expected that all students will not only attend these sessions (whether online or in person) and participate in discussions (whether online or in person), but also that they will assume responsibility for contributing to and learning from the experience. This means that readings will be completed prior to class and that student and presenter alike will pursue the acquisition of knowledge in the learning environment. It is expected that ALL members of the class will ask questions and contribute insights whenever opportunity is given, during and following presentations by professor or student alike. In this course each student will lead the opening prayer for class by quickly expositing a prayer from the Old Testament and then praying that prayer on behalf of the class. Weeks will be chosen at our first class session and a portion of that prayer will be translated by all members of the class prior to the class session.

**Value**: 10%

# **B. Seminar Preparation Notes**

- **1. Translation**: Each week students will translate the assigned portions in the Hebrew Bible (BHS) based on the prayer chosen by a student for that week. Each person in the class will provide a basic translation of their own with justification in footnotes of difficult elements: text critical, lexical, syntactical and discursive. Post these to A2L.
- **2. Reading**: Each week students will prepare for the seminar meeting by reading assigned secondary readings. Prior to the sessions with scholars students will post a minimum 2 page response to the A2L discussion which includes leading questions and critical interaction with the scholar's work for that week, also listing which articles/sections of books/books they read for that scholar.

**Value**: 20%

**Due**: The eve of the seminar, 11:59pm, then by the end of that week for

responses to fellow students.

Submission: PDF for translations to A2L Discussion; Reading response to A2L

discussion

# C. Critical Studies in Prayer Paper

For this assignment the student will write a minimum 25 page critical paper on prayer text(s)/themes in the Old Testament (hopefully but not necessarily relevant to their doctoral work) engaging the best in recent scholarship while showing awareness of the classic works in the field. These papers should provide a new perspective on the field, such as would be expected in a journal article. The hope is that this paper will be useful for conference presentations in the near future. Papers are due in .pdf format by 11 November 2023, 11:59 p.m. (submit to A2L in assignments as well as the discussion for Critical Paper to professor by email) to be posted on the course web site. Each member of the class will provide a 5 page review of one other member of the class. The paper will be presented in a 10 minute overview during our class times together on November 28 and December 5 and will be followed by a review by the assigned colleague and then by discussion by the entire class. The 5 page review is to be posted to the discussion in A2L immediately following the session. Papers can be revised after this session and are due in their final form

**Value**: 40% for paper, 10% for student paper reviews

Due: Paper: 11 Nov 2023 at 11:59 p.m.; Review: 28 November or 5 December

2023 orally in session and written within fifteen minutes following class

**Submission**: PDF to A2L in Assignments and Discussion

# D. Biblical Theology of Prayer Paper

After reading Millar's *Calling on the Name of the Lord* and Balentine's *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible* students will submit a final 15 page paper which provides insight into their own articulation of a biblical theology of prayer, identifying in the end the potential for these insights to shape the life of believers and church communities. Interaction with scholarship should begin with the works of Millar and Balentine and then draw in others as necessary.

Value: 20%

**Due**: According to the schedule, eve of the seminar, 11:59pm **Submission**: PDF to A2L in Assignments and Discussion

## VII. Format and Evaluation

So I can properly evaluate your work the following guide is to be used for papers in this class.

- Medium for Submission: All material in this class is to be submitted in .pdf format to Avenue 2 Learn.
- 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 <a href="https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/">https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/</a>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Title page, footnoting where appropriate and bibliography are not included in the length required. Material should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps an outline may accompany the "paper" but this is not included in the length of the "paper." Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.
- Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), NIV (20110, and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011). For policy see: <a href="http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations">http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations</a>.
- Citations: You must cite the source of your material very carefully using a consistent system, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum as I favour integration of secondary literature (footnoted).
- Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and

abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~

https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/

\*\*\*this is a special issue for those pursuing second and third degrees in theology. It is understood that students will be building on earlier ideas and work, but it is expected that students will not hand in material that is merely "warmed over" previous work. If there is reason for concern speak with the professor about this.

• AODA: In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

So I can properly evaluate your work and help you grow in your biblical and writing skills the following evaluation guide should be kept in mind as you write:

- **Presentation**: Is the spelling correct? Does the grammar/syntax reflect proper English? Is the paper laid out properly?
- **Argumentation**: Is there a good introduction and conclusion? Does the argument flow with ample support? Is the question answered
- **Content**: Are all the points considered? Is there proper documentation of sources used?

# VIII. Accountability

**Note on Timeliness of Submissions:** Since this is a seminar style course all participants must be timely in their submission of material. There are considerable penalties for late materials in this course. Each **DAY** a paper is late will mean the loss of half a letter grade (5%). Take this into account when planning out your semester.

**Note on Timeliness of Attendance:** From time to time you may find that you are late for class. Late arrivals, hereafter called "tardies," are unacceptable and will lead to a negative disposition in the professor and your classmates. Such "tardies," however, can be redeemed at the rate of Timbits for the entire class at the soonest in person session following the tardy as well as a coffee for the professor.

Rule of the Timbits (הלכה התמבתים): Because "tardies" raise the ire of the covenant community (bound by this covenantal syllabus document delivered here at the foot of the "Mountain"), those who are late for class must have a means by which to atone for such "accidental sins" (בְּשְׁנְגָּהְ , if they are defiant sins, בְּיָד רָמְה, then the offender will be "cut off" from the community, see Num 15:27-31).¹ which means anyone late for class will need to bring Timbits for the entire class (מִנְהָה) no later than the next in person class meeting plus a Tim Hortons coffee (נֶפֶדְ) for the professor (cream, no sugar). This שִׁנְּחָה and שְׁנָקְּ will function simultaneously as both a sin offering (תִּשְּׁמִת), Leviticus 4) atoning for the accidental sin of the offender and a peace offering (שְׁלָמִים) enhancing the fellowship of the covenant community. See the high professor for further details and any torah-rulings (see Haggai 2:10-14) regarding specific situations.

Especially important is to take seriously the cry of Joel of old in 1:13:

חִגְרֹוּ וְסִפְּדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים הֵילִילוּ מְשָּׁרְתַי מִוְבֵּח בָּאוּ לֵינוּ בַשַּׁלִּים מְשָׁרְתֵי אֱלֹהֵי בִּי נִמְנֵע מִבֵּית אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֵסֶךְ:

Gird yourselves with sackcloth
And lament, O priests;
Wail, O ministers of the altar!
Come, spend the night in sackcloth
O ministers of my God,
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.

And note his promise of a reward to those who repent in 2:14:

מֶי יוֹדֵע יָשִׁוּב וְנִחֱם וְהִשְׁאֵיר אָחֲרָיוֹ בְּרָכְּה מִנְחָה וָנֵסֶךּ לַיִּהוָה אֵלֹהֵיבֵם

Who knows whether He will turn and relent

And leave a blessing behind Him,

Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Of course, see the "definitive" work on this: Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 53-54. For specific torah ruling also see the fuller הלבה התמבתים.

# **Bibliography for Weekly Seminar Scholars**

Students need to read 100 pages from these scholars each week and record on their Response which is posted to A2L

## **Defining Prayer**

- Newman, Judith H. *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism.* Early Judaism and Its Literature 14. Atlanta: Scholars, 1999. (Introduction, esp. pp. 5-7)
- Balentine, Samuel E. *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine–Human Dialogue*. Overtures to Biblical Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. (Chapter 2, esp. 30-32)
- Millar, J. G. *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 38. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016. (Introduction and Chapter 1)

#### **Boda**

- Boda, Mark J. "A Deafening Call to Silence: The Rhetorical 'End' of Human Address to the Deity in the Book of the Twelve." In *Exploring Zechariah: Volume 1—The Development of Zechariah and Its Role within the Twelve*, 193–217. Ancient Near East Monographs 16. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017.\*
- ——. "Ascending to Zion: Shifting Contexts for Interpreting Psalms 120–134." In *Reading Scripture, Learning Wisdom: Essays in Honour of David G. Barker*, edited by Michael A. G. Haykin and Barry H. Howson, 39–57. Peterborough: Joshua Press/H&E Publishing, 2021.
- ——. "Chiasmus in Ubiquity: Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (1996) 55–70.\*
- ———. "Confession as Theological Expression: Ideological Origins of Penitential Prayer." In Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1—The Origin of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism, edited by Mark J. Boda et al., 21–50. Early Judaism and Its Literature 21. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.\*
- ———. "'Declare His Glory Among the Nations': The Psalter as Missional Collection." In Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, 13–41. McMaster New Testament Study Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010.
- ———. "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament, Sitz im Leben and Form." In Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1—The Origin of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism, edited by Mark J. Boda et al., 181–192. Early Judaism and Its Literature 21. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.\*
- ——. "From Complaint to Contrition: Peering through the liturgical window of Jer 14,1–15,4." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113 (2001) 186–97.
- ——. "From Fasts to Feasts: The Literary Function of Zechariah 7–8." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003) 390–407.
- ——. "Joyously Drawing Water from the Springs of Salvation: Praise as Structure and Goal of the Book of Isaiah." In Speaking with God: Probing Old Testament Prayers for Contemporary Significance, edited by Phillip Camp and Elaine Phillips Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, forthcoming.\*
- ——. "Lamentations, Book Of." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.
- ——. "Penitential Innovations in the Book of the Twelve." In *On Stone and Scroll: A Festschrift for Graham Davies*, edited by Brian A. Mastin et al., 291–308. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 420. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.
- ——. "Prayer." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, edited by Bill T. Arnold et al., 806–811. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.\*

-. "Prayer as Rhetoric in the Book of Nehemiah." In New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation, edited by Isaac Kalimi, 279-296. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.\* —. Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 277. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.\* "Recycling Heaven's Words: Receiving and Retrieving Divine Revelation in the Historiography of Judges." In Prophets and Prophecy in Ancient Israelite Historiography, edited by Mark J. Boda and Lissa Wray Beal, 43–67. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013. .. "The Priceless Gain of Penitence: From Communal Lament to Penitential Prayer in the 'Exilic' Liturgy of Israel." In Lamentations in Ancient and Contemporary Contexts, edited by Nancy Lee and Carleen Mandolfo, 81-101. Symposium Series. Atlanta; Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature; Brill, 2008.\* -. "'Uttering Precious Rather than Worthless Words': Divine Patience and Impatience with Lament in Isaiah and Jeremiah." In Why? How Long? Studies on Voice(s) of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry, edited by LeAnn Snow Flesher et al., 83–99. The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 552. London: Continuum, 2014.\* .. "Varied and Resplendid Riches': Exploring the Breadth and Depth of Worship in the Psalter." In Rediscovering Worship: Past, Present, Future, edited by Wendy Porter, 61–82. McMaster New Testament Studies 13. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015. -. "Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet?" In Yahwism After the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era, edited by Bob Becking and Rainer Albertz, 49-69. Studies in Theology and Religion 5. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003.\* Falk Falk, Daniel K. "4Q393: A Communal Confession." Journal of Jewish Studies 45 (1994): 184-. "Jewish Prayer Literature and the Jerusalem Church in Acts." In The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting, edited by Richard Bauckham, 267-301. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995. -. Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Leiden: Brill, 1998. -. "392-393. Introduction." In Qumran Cave 4.XX. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2, edited by Esther Chazon, Torleif Elgvin, Esther Eshel, Daniel Falk, Bilhah Nitzan, Elisha Qimron, Eileen Schuller, David Seely, Eibert Tigchelaar, and Moshe Weinfeld, 23–24. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999. -. "392. Works of God." In Qumran Cave 4.XX. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2, edited by Esther Chazon, Torleif Elgvin, Esther Eshel, Daniel Falk, Bilhah Nitzan, Elisha Qimron, Eileen Schuller, David Seely, Eibert Tigchelaar, and Moshe Weinfeld, 25-44, pl. II. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999. -. "393. Communal Confession." In Qumran Cave 4.XX. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2, edited by Esther Chazon, Torleif Elgvin, Esther Eshel, Daniel Falk, Bilhah Nitzan, Elisha Qimron, Eileen Schuller, David Seely, Eibert Tigchelaar, and Moshe Weinfeld, 45-61, pl. II. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999. "Biblical Adaptation in 4q392 Works of God and 4q393 Communal Confession." In The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues, edited by Donald W. Parry, and Eugene Charles Ulrich,

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——. "Worship." In *T & T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Daniel M. Gurtner, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, 2: 828–831. London: T & T Clark, 2019.

#### Middleton

- Middleton, J. Richard. *Abraham's Silence: The Binding of Isaac, the Suffering of Job, and How to Talk Back to God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2021.
- ——. "Does God Come to Bury Job or to Praise Him?: The Significance of Yhwh's Second Speech from the Whirlwind." *St Mark's Review* 239 (2017) 1–27.
- ——. "God's Loyal Opposition: Psalmic and Prophetic Protest as a Paradigm for Faithfulness in the Hebrew Bible." *Canadian-American Theological Review* 5 (2016) 51–65.
- Middleton, J. Richard. "Why the 'Greater Good' Isn't a Defense: Classical Theodicy in Light of the Biblical Genre of Lament." *Koinonia* 9 (1997) 81–113.

Responses to the above article:

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#### Newman

- Newman, Judith H. "Nehemiah 9 and the Scripturalization of Prayer in the Second Temple Period." In *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition*, edited by Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, 112–23. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 154. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 1998.
- ——. Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism. Early Judaism and Its Literature 14. Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1999.
- ——. "Into the Temple Courts: The Place of Synagogues in the Second Temple Period." Journal of Semitic Studies 48 (2003) 187–89.
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