Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential to the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Degree Program Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook, including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information

Professor: Joseph Coleson, Ph.D.  
Email: jecoleson@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5482
Office Hours: By appointment

Catalog Description

Following a brief introduction to Hebrew poetry and the development of the Psalter, exegetical studies of selected Psalms and an overview of other Psalms not selected for close study.

Course Narrative & Rationale

The church historically has viewed the Bible as the word of God written, mediated through human agency. That is, we have seen the Bible as originating in both divine and human authorship. Nowhere in the canon is it more important to focus on the human authorship of the Bible than in the section of which the Psalter is the first and most prominent part. A useful contrast, if not pressed too far, is to think of the Torah and the Prophets as God’s word to ancient Israel (and through them, to the human race), and the Writings, especially Psalms, Job,
Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations, as ancient Israel's response (and through them, that of all humanity) to God's gracious initiative in redemption.

Israel's response is recorded in many and varied forms. The Psalter may be thought of as an individual and corporate hymnbook for all occasions. Is one lonely? Depressed? Anxious? Overwhelmed? Joyous? Triumphant? Nostalgic? Contented? Desiring knowledge and wisdom? Thankful? Worshipful? The Psalter has a song for all these states and more, whether the community of faith is gathered, or an individual is isolated from fellowship.

For theology, which also comforts, and for inspiration, which also teaches, the Psalter has been a close companion of individual believers and of the community of faith gathered, for well over two millennia. The Psalter contains rich treasure for believers today, as well, whether we experience its help at any given moment as the community gathered or as individual members dispersed. Expressing as it does human response to God at all levels, the Psalter is an inexhaustible resource for the believer. For the pastor/teacher-still-in-formation-and-already-in-ministry (that is, for all of us), the Psalter is a resource beyond price, both for our own well-being and for our ministry to others.

To know this treasure in all its aspects, to make it our own through study and incarnation, is our goal together in this course this semester.

**Degree Program Objectives**

This course addresses particularly the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- **MDiv Objective 2**: Articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
- **MACFD Objective 1**: Appropriate and enhance the student’s ecclesial understanding of the Word of God, the heritage of the faith, the doctrines of the church, and the fellowship of believers, sufficient to enable him or her to deepen a personal commitment to God and the Church and to inform a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry
- **MAICS Objective 4**: Graduates will articulate, communicate, and contextualize the essential affirmations of the Christian faith in a cross-cultural setting
- **MA(TS) General Academic Track Objective 1**: Students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships
- **MA(TS) General Academic Track Objective 2**: Students will demonstrate the ability to use the theological disciplines to reflect on and engage the world as informed, thinking, Christian persons
- **MA(TS) Research Track Objective 1**: Students will gain specialized knowledge in designated theological disciplines as a basis for further graduate studies
- **MA(TS) Research Track Objective 2**: Students will develop skill in academic research and writing as a basis for further graduate studies.


**Course Outcomes**
Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss the process and timing of composition of the Psalter, generally, and of some individual psalms specifically, insofar as these may be discovered
   (Accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; written assignments 1, 2)
2. Discuss the use of the Psalter in ancient Israel, both corporately and individually
   (Accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; written assignments 1, 2)
3. Identify selected themes within the Psalter, and discuss their contributions to Israelite/Jewish/Christian theology
   (Accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; written assignments 1, 2)
4. Exegete any psalm with appropriate confidence
   (Accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; written assignments 1, 2)
5. Express apt views on uses of the Psalter in corporate and individual worship, in other spiritual expression(s), and in the living out of the Christian faith in the world
   (Accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; written assignments 1, 2).

**Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies**
The following competencies will be enhanced through your participation in this course:

- **CN 1** Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament
- **CN 2** Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre(s)
- **CN 3** Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament
- **CN 5** Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament
- **CN 7** Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament
- **CN 15** Ability to describe how the Bible came into being, up to contemporary translations
- **CN 16** Ability to identify the steps of historical, literary, and theological analysis used in exegesis
- **CN 17** Ability to exegete a passage of Scripture using the steps referred to above
- **CN 21** Ability to demonstrate understanding of the sources of theological reflection, its historical development, and its contemporary expressions
- **CN 22** Ability to articulate the distinctive characteristics of Wesleyan theology
- **CN 23** Ability to identify and explain the Doctrine of Holiness from a Wesleyan perspective
- **CP 1** Ability to communicate publicly through multiple methods (oral, written, media, etc.) with clarity and creativity for the sake of fostering meaning
- **CP 2** Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner in the modes of discourse used in the ministry
- **CP 10** Ability to synthesize, analyze, and reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving, and to live with ambiguity
- **CP 11** Ability to analyze the validity of arguments and to identify their presuppositions and consequences
- **CP 22** Ability to prepare, organize, and deliver biblically sound sermons using appropriate techniques and skills in culturally appropriate ways
  (Variously accomplished by reading; class attendance/participation; assignments 1, 2).
**Required Texts**

**Course Outline**

**Sept 10** – The art and science of Hebrew poetry  
  17 – Psalms 1-15; first exegetical paper due, on Psalm 1  
  24 – Psalms 16-30; second exegetical paper due, on Psalm 23  

**Oct**  
  1 – Psalms 31-45; third exegetical paper due, on psalm of choice  
  8 – Psalms 46-60; fourth exegetical paper due, on psalm of choice  
  15 – Psalms 61-72; fifth exegetical paper due, on psalm of choice  
  22 – No class session (Reading and Research Week)  
  29 – Psalms 73-89; sixth exegetical paper due, on Psalm 73  

**Nov**  
  5 – Psalms 90-106; seventh exegetical paper due, on Psalm 100  
  12 – Psalms 107-119; eighth exegetical paper due, on Psalm 110  
  19 – Psalms 120-134; ninth exegetical paper due, on psalm of choice (except 121)  
  26 – Psalms 135-145; tenth exegetical paper due, on Psalm 137:7-9  

**Dec**  
  3 – Psalms 146-150; eleventh exegetical paper due, on Psalm 148  
  10 – In-class summaries and discussions of final exegetical papers  

**Course Written Assignments**

1. Seven, 600-word exegetical (or other) essays constitute 70% of the course grade.  
   Eleven essays will be assigned; for each student, the seven essays with the best letter grades will be factored into the course grade.  
   (Course Outcomes: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, variously)  
2. A final exegetical paper constitutes 30% of the course grade.  
   A 3,500-4,000-word exegetical paper is the culminating course assignment. The psalm for exegesis is to be cleared with the professor by **October 29**. The paper is due **December 10**.  
   (Course Outcomes: Primarily numbers 3, 4, 5)  

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Hours</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>144</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Submitting Assignments; Posting Grades**
All assignments are to be submitted in the “Assignments” section(s) of our Moodle course. All grades will be posted as letter grades in the “Grades” section of our Moodle course. Grade descriptions are included in the *NTS Student Handbook*.

**Form and Style Expectations**
All written work is to exhibit best practices for graduate-level academic writing. The NTS faculty have adopted Turabian as the Seminary standard; each student should own a copy of the latest edition of Turabian, and should use it conscientiously. A convenient summary of some of the more common issues of concern is included in the course materials in Moodle.

**Inclusive Language**
NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people often have used language to imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in writing. All written work presented to meet requirements of this course will use gender-inclusive language.

**Policy Regarding Late Work**
In justice to all students, no written work submitted late can earn an A grade. Weekly essays and the final exegetical paper are due at class time on their respective due dates.

**Additional Costs**
The professor does not anticipate additional costs for this course, beyond NTS tuition and fees, and the cost of textbooks.

**Course Grading**
Written work for the course is set forth in the section, “Course Written Assignments.” In addition, class attendance will affect the course grade, as noted below in the section, “Class Attendance.”

**Reasonable Modifications**
In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodation(s) should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact
the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs, and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial in the past.

**Class Attendance**

Class attendance is essential for realizing maximum benefit from this educational experience. If a student is absent for more than the equivalent of two full class sessions, the course grade will be lowered. Absences totaling more than the equivalent of three full class sessions may cause a student to fail the course. Prior notification of the professor for any absence is expected, when possible; the professor is to be notified of the reasons for/circumstances of all absences as soon as possible.

Attendance records must be reported for those obtaining Veterans Administration and/or Department of Education benefits. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the professor if attendance is to be reported.

**Course Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading of “Introduction” in Brueggemann, and in Kidner, v 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on psalm of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on psalm of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on psalm of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reading and Research Week; no written assignment due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psalm for final exegetical paper to be cleared with professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on psalm of choice (except Psalm 121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 137:7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Exegetical essay on Psalm 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course evaluations to be released by Dean’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final exegetical paper due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>