BIBL 5230 OLD TESTAMENT 3: WISDOM & ISRAEL'S PRAISE
North Park Theological Seminary Course Syllabus
Spring 2027 – Hybrid Hyflex Format
(1) Thursday evenings 5:45 – 7:15 p.m. Central Time: synchronous class session
(2) Weekly asynchronous video lectures

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
J. Nathan Clayton, PhD
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Office: Nyvall Hall 321 – Office Phone: (773) 244-5226

Email & Phone Communication
During the semester, you are welcome to email or call Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Central Time. I typically respond to email and voicemail within 24 hours on weekdays.

Meeting with the Professor
Students are encouraged to schedule a meeting if needed. If you encounter any difficulties in the course, please reach out early so we can address concerns and problem-solve together.

Use this Bookings Link to schedule a meeting online or in person.

Office Hours (Spring Semester)
Office hours are scheduled in 30-minute increments:
- **Online (Teams):** Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Central Time
- **In Person (Nyvall 321):** Thursdays, 1:00–2:00 p.m. Central Time

If you are unable to find a time within these slots that works for your schedule, please email me and we will arrange an alternative time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will explore the historical books and the poetic traditions of psalms and wisdom, beginning with Israel's origins and continuing through the united monarchy, exile, and return. The course will also include an introduction to Biblical Hebrew (consonants, vowels, and some key words). The Old Testament books covered include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes. The power and passion of the books we will examine together are essential parts of the Scriptures to which 2 Timothy 3:16 refers. As such, affirming these 16 Old Testament books as a fundamental part of God's revealed and authoritative Word represents a key value in the approach of this course. The ultimate focus of the course is to prepare students to faithfully and effectively teach and preach from this portion of the Old Testament Scriptures within the ministry of the Church.

REQUIRED TEXTS
An English **Bible** (your preferred translation).
Estes, Daniel J. *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011. (433 pages)

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Historical Books.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001. (430 pages; the chapters on 1-2 Kings are *not* required reading for this course, as 1-2 Kings is covered in the Old Testament 2 NPTS course)

Options (including e-books) for purchasing the textbooks are available at this North Park textbook link.

Several chapters/essays are also required reading—these are available as PDFs posted on Canvas:
Two chapters from:
Pratico, Gary D., and Miles **Van Pelt**. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar.* 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019. (25 pages)
Chapter 1: "Hebrew Alphabet."
Chapter 2: "Hebrew Vowels."

Two chapters from:
Philip E. **Satterthwaite** & J. Gordon **McConville**. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Historical Books.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007. (68 pages)
Chapter 1: "What are the Histories? A Survey of Recent Scholarship."
Chapter 2: "The Ancient Near East, 1550-63 BC."

One essay from:
D. Brant Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr. *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1995.
Ronald L. **Giese**, Jr., "Literary Forms and the Old Testament." (28 pages)

4 short essays from:
Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe. *Women's Bible Commentary*. Expanded ed. with Apocrypha. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998. (24 pages)
Danna **Nolan Fewell**, "Joshua," and "Judges." Amy-Jill **Levine**, "Ruth." Renita J. **Weems**, "Song of Songs."

2 short essays from:
Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. *Women's Bible Commentary*. 3rd Edition. Revised and Updated. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012. (12 pages)
Kathleen M. **O'Connor**, "Lamentations." J. Cheryl **Exum**, "Song of Songs."

Two essays from:
Howard, David M., and Andrew J. Schmutzer, eds. *Reading the Psalms Theologically*. Studies in Scripture & Biblical Theology. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. (27 pages)
May **Young**, "The Art of Lament in Lamentations."
J. Nathan **Clayton**, "Perceptions of Divine Presence in the Levitical Psalms of Book II: The Paradox of Distance and Proximity."

Important notes on course reading & instructional format:
For a 3-hour course at NPTS, the general standard is 1,000 pages of required reading, which the above represents approximately.

Students do not have any *required* Bible reading, but it is *strongly* recommended that students also read through the Old Testament books covered in this course, as we progress through these OT books.

This hybrid & hyflex course usually includes both synchronous (1.5 hours) and asynchronous (1.5 hours) instruction on a weekly basis. Additionally, students should plan to devote about 3 hours each week per credit hour for coursework *outside* of instructional hours. See further the select annotated bibliography posted on Canvas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
The major North Park Theological Seminary degree learning outcomes this course intends to address are:
MACF: "Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity in relation to Christian formation."
MACM: "Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity in relation to one's ministry."
MATS: "Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity for diverse communities and contexts."
MDIV: "Interpret Scripture with historical and theological integrity for diverse churches, communities, and contexts."

***IDEA* OBJECTIVES**

North Park University uses the IDEA course rating system to measure student progress towards learning objectives and to measure student satisfaction with their overall learning experience. These course evaluations are administered at the end of the term, and you will be notified by email when they are ready for you to complete. The results of these evaluations are very important to us, and we use them for ongoing efforts to improve the quality of our courses. The IDEA objectives for this course are as follows:

1. Knowledge & Comprehension

By engaging with course lectures and required readings, students will be able to recognize, recall, and identify:

- the main historical periods,
- the key geographical areas,
- the basic literary structures,
- the central people, places, and events, and
- the major interpretive issues of the Old Testament books covered in this course.

Students will prepare using the midterm and final exam study guides and demonstrate their learning through the corresponding examinations. Students will also be responsible for Hebrew vowels, consonants, and 30 key Hebrew words.
[Knowledge, Comprehension]

2. Application & Analysis

Through the exegetical paper, students will describe, summarize, and explain the key exegetical issues and principal scholarly views of a selected text from the OT books covered in this course, and apply these insights to their current or anticipated ministry setting.
[Analysis, Application]

3. Analysis & Synthesis

With the exegetical paper, students will carefully analyze and synthesize contrasting scholarly perspectives on a chosen text from the OT books studied, integrating textual evidence, secondary sources, and theological reflection.
[Analysis, Synthesis]

4. Evaluation

With the exegetical paper, students will evaluate differing scholarly interpretations of a selected OT passage and articulate a concise, well-reasoned personal position that engages both the academic discussion and the theological/pastoral implications for today.
[Evaluation]

GRADING

The final grade for this course will be computed according to the following percentages:

1. Midterm Exam: 15%
2. Final Exam: 15%
3. Exegetical Paper (30% in total):
   a. *Paper topic & bibliography* *2%*
   b. *Exegetical issue essay* *5%*
   c. *Submitted exegetical paper* *20%*
   d. *Summary outline & presentation* *3%*
4. Two Reading Reports: 25%
   (weighted equally)
5. Two Video Lecture Reports: 15%
   (weighted equally)

Late turn-in policy for the exegetical paper:
The final exegetical paper is due on Canvas by **Wednesday 4/28**, 11:59 p.m. Central Time. I will accept the exegetical paper, with a late penalty, up until **Wednesday 5/5**, 11:59 p.m. Central Time. For each day that the paper is late after 4/28 (and up until 5/5), I will deduct two percentage points per calendar day from the paper's grade. I will **not** accept the paper after 5/5.

Note: even if students decide to turn in their exegetical paper late, they still need to submit their exegetical paper's summary outline by 4/28 (before the student paper presentations on 4/29).

Attendance policy:
Only two synchronous class sessions can be missed without penalty to your final grade. The impact of three to four missed sessions is at my discretion as the course instructor. Five absences will result in failure. As such, **attendance** at the Thursday evening sessions will be taken. *Students should notify the instructor in advance when possible. All absences beyond two may impact the final grade.*

North Park Theological Seminary grading scale:

A	95-100	C	80-83
A-	93-94	C-	78-79
B+	91-92	D+	76-77
B	88-90	D	72-75
B-	86-87	D-	70-71
C+	84-85	F	0-69

Unless otherwise indicated, the following criteria apply:
A to A- *Exceptional work.* The quality achieved through excellence of performance, not merely the fulfillment of the course requirements.

B+ to B- *Above average.* This grade applies to meritorious work, above average, applied to more than the fulfillment of requirements.

C+ to C- *Average.* This grade applies to average work that still fulfills the course requirements.

D+ to D- *Unsatisfactory.* This grade, while indicating the student has completed a course, is to be understood as reflecting below average work. Course work receiving this grade will not be counted toward a degree.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS
Midterm Exam and Final Exam:
Midterm Exam: 15% of final grade
A midterm exam study guide is posted in the Canvas Week 1 module. The study guide covers the lecture material from the first half of the course: Lectures 2-12.

The midterm exam will be available on Canvas at the Week 9 module at 8 am Central Time on Tuesday 3/16. The completed midterm exam is due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on Thursday 3/18, posted on Canvas.

The midterm exam will consist of objective questions: short answer, matching, fill-in-the-blank. The test will be out of 100 points. Every question will flow directly from the study guide. Please take the time to carefully work through the midterm exam study guide in preparation for this exam. The midterm exam will be closed book (students will be asked to sign a brief statement to this effect at the top of the exam). There is no time limit for taking the exam, but it should be done in one sitting.

Final Exam: 15% of final grade
A final exam study guide will be posted at the Canvas Week 10 module. This study guide will cover the lecture material from the second half of the course: Lectures 13-20

The final exam will be available on Canvas at the Week 16 module at 8 am Central Time on Monday 5/3. The completed final exam is due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday 5/5 posted on Canvas.

The final exam will also consist of objective questions: short answer, matching, fill-in-the-blank. The test will be out of 100 points. Every question will flow directly from the study guide. Please take the time to carefully work through the final exam study guide in preparation. The final exam will be closed book (students will be asked to sign a brief statement to this effect at the top of the exam). There is no time limit for taking the exam, but it should be done in one sitting.

Exegetical Paper: 30% of final grade
For detailed instructions on the exegetical paper, please see the separate course handout and overview video, posted at the Home Module on Canvas. A detailed bibliography is also provided on Canvas.

Reading Reports: 25% of final grade
Students should keep a record of the completion of their weekly reading requirements, using the reading reports. See below for copies of the reading reports, and the instructions for filling them out. Blank digital copies of the reading reports are posted at the Week 1 and Week 10 Canvas modules.

The completed reading report is due in two stages: the first one (for weeks 1-7) is due posted at the Week 7 Canvas module by class time that week; the second one (for weeks 10-14) is due posted on Canvas at the Week 14 module by class time that week.

Asynchronous Video Lectures: 15% of final grade
This course is delivered in hybrid/hyflex mode, as noted above: most weeks consist of 1.5 hours of weekly live *synchronous* lectures and class discussion time, and also, about 1.5 hours of weekly *asynchronous* lecture time. So, many of the course lectures will be delivered *asynchronously* via recorded videos posted on Canvas, according to the schedule below. Students will receive credit for carefully working through these video lectures.

Blank video lecture reports are posted on Canvas at the Week 1 and at the Week 10 Canvas modules (and included below in the appendices). Video lecture report #1 is due posted on Canvas by class time on Week 7. Video lecture report #2 is due posted on Canvas by class time on Week 14.

HYFLEX FORMAT GUIDELINES
In hyflex classrooms, our learning community combines in-person students and students joining the classroom live online. Toward cultivating a respectful, accessible environment for mutual learning, we observe the following: All students come prepared for active, informed participation. Students joining live online: think of your physical space as an extension of the classroom. Ensure that you are in a private, stable location that is free of visual and audio distractions. It's important that we all respect the integrity of classroom discussion. (For this same reason, please do not record class sessions.) Please keep your camera and microphone on through the class session. Consider purchasing a quality microphone or headset to improve the quality of your sound. (Attendance in class assumes that you are present in this way.)

Students joining in the classroom: Remember that the class and classroom extend to colleagues joining by live online; it's important to remain visible as well. Please engage the full learning community. Registering for the campus section entails a commitment to joining the class in person. If you are too sick to come in person, or if you have an unavoidable scheduling conflict, please use one of your excused absences for the semester.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet. Copying another's answers on an examination. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments. For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25–26.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, **please email the Disability Access Specialist (ada@northpark.edu) or contact by phone (773) 244-5662**. Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes accommodations. This is the webpage for Disability Resources.

TITLE IX
Students who believe they may have experienced sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773) 244-5664 or TitleIX@northpark.edu to learn more about reporting options, resources, and support services.
As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty members are private resources meaning we are legally obligated to share information about the behavior reported above with the University's Title IX coordinator. If you are unsure whether you want your concerns disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator, we encourage you to contact Counseling Support Services at (773) 244-4897 or counseling@northpark.edu.
Please refer to North Park's Safe Community site for reporting, contact information, and further details.

INCOMPLETE GRADES
If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see page 15 of the Seminary Academic Catalog.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1—1/14: Course Introduction

By Thursday class time:

Read:
Satterthwaite & McConville, "What are the Histories? A Survey of Recent Scholarship,"
"The Ancient Near East, 1550-63 BC"
Giese, "Literary Forms and the Old Testament"

Thursday synchronous session:
Lecture 1: Course Introduction & Overview
Interactive Discussion

Note: ***no class on Thursday, 1/21 Midwinter conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church***

Week 2—1/28: Some Biblical Hebrew Basics

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 2: Hebrew Vowels & Consonants

Read:
Pratico & Van Pelt, "Hebrew Alphabet," "Hebrew Vowels."

Thursday synchronous session:
Interactive Discussion
Lecture 3: 30 Biblical Hebrew Key Words

Week 3—2/4: Backgrounds and Joshua

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 4: The World Behind the Text

Read:
Hamilton, "Joshua"

Thursday synchronous session:
Lecture 5: Joshua—Beginning Life & Worship in the Land

Week 4—2/11: Joshua and Ruth

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 6: Joshua—Literary Structure & Key Themes

Read:
Hamilton, "Ruth," "Judges"
Nolan Fewell, "Joshua,"
Levine, "Ruth"

Thursday synchronous session:
Interactive Discussion
Lecture 7: Ruth

Week 5—2/18: Judges and Samuel

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 8: Judges

Read:
Hamilton, "1 Samuel," "2 Samuel"
Nolan Fewell, "Judges"

Thursday synchronous session:
Interactive Discussion
Lecture 9: 1-2 Samuel

Week 6—2/25: Chronicles

By Thursday class time:

Read:
Hamilton, "1-2 Chronicles"

Thursday synchronous session:
Lecture 10: 1-2 Chronicles
Interactive Discussion

Week 7—3/4: Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 11: Ezra-Nehemiah

Read:
Hamilton, "Ezra-Nehemiah," "Esther"

Post:
Reading report #1
Video lecture report #1

Thursday synchronous session:
Interactive Discussion
Lecture 12: Esther

Week 8—3/8-12: Reading Week

No Class

Week 9—3/16-18: Midterm Exam

No Thursday evening synchronous class session this week.

Tuesday, 3/16, 8 am, Central Time:
Midterm exam posted on Canvas.

Thursday, 3/18 (11:59 p.m. Central Time):
Completed midterm due, posted on Canvas

Students should also be working on their **exegetical papers** during this week.

Week 10—3/25: Poetry and Job

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 13: Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

Read:
Estes, "Job"

Post:
Your paper passage choice and your annotated bibliography as a PDF at the Canvas Week 10 module.

Thursday synchronous session:

Interactive Discussion
Lecture 14: Job

Week 11—4/1: Psalms

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 15: Psalms in General

Read:
Estes, "Psalms"
Clayton "Perceptions of Divine Presence"

Post:
Your exegetical issue essay as a PDF at the Canvas Week 11 module.

Thursday synchronous session:

Interactive discussion
Lecture 16 Supplement: Reading the Psalms as a Book

Week 12—4/8: Psalms & Proverbs

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 16: Psalms—Types & Canonical Shape

Read:
Estes, "Proverbs"

Thursday synchronous session:

Interactive Discussion
Lecture 17: Proverbs

Week 13—4/15: Lamentations & Ecclesiastes

By Thursday class time:

Watch online videos for:
Lecture 18: Lamentations

Read:
O'Connor, "Lamentations"
Young, "The Art of Lament in Lamentations"
Estes, "Ecclesiastes"

Thursday synchronous session:

Interactive Discussion
Lecture 19: Ecclesiastes

Week 14—4/22: Song of Songs

By Thursday class time:

Read:
Estes, "Song of Songs"
Weems, "Song of Songs,"
Exum, "Song of Songs,"

Post:
Reading report #2
Video lecture report #2

Thursday synchronous session:

Lecture 20: Song of Songs

Week 15—4/28-29: Exegetical Paper & Student Presentations

By Wednesday 4/28, 11:59 p.m. Central Time:

Post on Canvas:
Exegetical paper
Summary outline of exegetical paper

Thursday 4/29 synchronous session:

Student exegetical paper presentations

Week 16—5/3-5: Final Exam

Monday 5/3, 8 am Central Time:

Final exam posted on Canvas.

Wednesday 5/5, 11:59 p.m. Central Time:

Completed final exam due, posted on Canvas
Last day that the exegetical paper can be turned in *late* (see late policy stated above)

APPENDICES:

READING REPORTS

OT3 Reading Report #1: Weeks 1-9

Student Name:

Raw score: **/ 28 points**

For the following weeks of the course when readings are due, please record a number between 0 and 4, according to this scale:
4 = 100% completed
3 = 75-99% completed
2 = 50-74 % completed
1 = some, but less than 50%, completed
0 = none of the readings completed

Students are encouraged to make up late readings, but **please note** that for the purposes of grading, readings **cannot** be made up for credit (i.e., please don't go back and change your reading completion number after the due date for a given week)

Weeks:	Completion (0-4):
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	*No reading due: reading week*
9	*No reading due: midterm exam*

OT3 Reading Report #2: Weeks 10-16

Student Name:

Raw score: **/ 20 points**

For the following weeks of the course when readings are due, please record a number between 0 and 4, according to this scale:
4 = 100% completed
3 = 75-99% completed
2 = 50-74 % completed
1 = some, but less than 50%, completed
0 = none of the readings completed

Students are encouraged to make up late readings, but **please note** that for the purposes of grading, readings **cannot** be made up for credit (i.e., please don't go back and change your reading completion number after the due date for a given week)

Weeks:	**Completion (0-4):**
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	*No reading due: student presentations*
16	*No reading due: final week*

VIDEO LECTURE REPORTS

OT3 Video Lecture Report #1: Weeks 1-9

Student Name:

Raw score: **/ 20 points**

For the following weeks of the course when video lectures are due, please record a number between 0 and 4, according to this scale:
4 = 100% completed
3 = 75-99% completed
2 = 50-74 % completed
1 = some, but less than 50%, completed
0 = none of the videos completed

Students are encouraged to make up late lecture videos, but **please note** that for the purposes of grading, lecture videos **cannot** be made up for credit (i.e., please don't go back and change your lecture video completion number after the due date for a given week)

Weeks:	Completion (0-4):
1	*No lecture videos due: class intro*
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	*No lecture videos due*
7	
8	*No lecture videos due: reading week*
9	*No lecture videos due: midterm exam*

OT3 Video Lecture Report #2: Weeks 10-16

Student Name:

Raw score: / 16 points

For the following weeks of the course when video lectures are due, please record a number between 0 and 4, according to this scale:
4 = 100% completed
3 = 75-99% completed
2 = 50-74 % completed
1 = some, but less than 50%, completed
0 = none of the videos completed

Students are encouraged to make up late lecture videos, but **please note** that for the purposes of grading, lecture videos **cannot** be made up for credit (i.e., please don't go back and change your lecture video completion number after the due date for a given week)

Weeks:	**Completion (0-4):**
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	*No lecture videos due*
15	*No lecture videos due: student presentations*
16	*No lecture videos due: final week*