



### **Class Information**

**Day and Time:** Tuesday 8:00-10:30 am

**Room Number:** E208

### **Contact Information**

**Instructor Name:** Joel A. Reemtsma, Ph.D.

**Instructor Email:** jreemtsma@criswell.edu

**Instructor Phone:** 907-690-1423

**Instructor Office Hours:** No regular office hours, but students may schedule meetings on Monday/Tuesday.

### **Course Description and Prerequisites**

A study of the books of Job through Malachi on the nature and formation of the poetic and wisdom literature of ancient Israel, as well as the oracles of the Hebrew prophets and their message and contribution to Israel's history and faith.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of the course you should be able to:

1. Know the background and significance of Hebrew poetry, wisdom, and prophecy and their roles in Israel's history and theology;
2. Know the occasion, theme and structure of each book;
3. Describe the literary genres present and explain their significance;
4. Explain biblical theological themes that constitute each book and how they contribute to the theology of the Old Testament as a whole; and
5. Apply scriptural truths from these books to contemporary situations.

### **Required Textbooks**

The Holy Bible. Use any version as long as it is a translation, not a paraphrase.

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*, third edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009 (978-0310280958)

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### A. Bible Reading (15%)

You are responsible to read Job through Malachi in a Bible version of your choice. If you minister in another language, you may read the text in that language (e.g., Spanish, Korean, Russian). You will report the percentage of reading you have completed on the final exam. It is also acceptable to listen to an audio recording of the Bible, but you must do this while you are able to pay attention (not sleeping, watching TV, playing video games, reading/studying something else, etc.). You will need to develop a rather tight schedule for this since it is due by the final exam.

### B. Discussion Groups (10%)

On four separate occasions throughout the semester, students will gather in groups of 3–5 (no more, no less) to discuss what they are learning. Students are responsible to form their own groups, which cannot be the same every time. Each discussion will center on a specific question which students may choose from those found at the end of each chapter of Hill and Walton or from any others provided by the professor. Discussion must last at least 30 minutes, and must take place on different dates. Each discussion is worth 2.5% of a student's overall grade, and they are pass/fail assignments. Students will report the completion of discussions along with the date and time they took place, the names of people present, and the question discussed. Discussions must take place in person, not via device.

### C. Quizzes (30%)

There will be 13 quizzes over the reading from Hill and Walton (HW). The reading and quiz will help prepare you for class discussion. The format of the quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. There will be 12 questions on each quiz (6 in each format) and they will be worth 10 points each. Two of the questions are considered extra credit; however, 100 points will be the maximum allowable score for each quiz. The lowest three quiz grades will not be included in your average. Please refer to the course schedule for the assigned chapters of Hill and Walton (HW) in order to prepare for the quizzes.

### D. Exams (30%)

There will be two exams: a Mid-Term and a Final. They will be based primarily on the class notes and discussion rather than the textbook. A study guide will be provided on Canvas. The dates and content of the exams are as follows:

Mid-Term Exam	<b>Mar 5</b>	Intro. to Poetic and Wisdom—Song of Songs
Final Exam	<b>May 14</b>	Intro. to Prophetic Lit.—Malachi

### E. Life Application Paper (15%)

For this assignment, select one of the following topics for an application paper of 5-7 double-spaced pages. Your grade will be determined on the basis of the following points: 1) Identification of key biblical texts for the topic, 2) Explanation of the timeless principles one can draw from those texts (giving good hermeneutical reasons for drawing these particular principles from specific texts), and 3) Relating the principles to life experiences either in your own life or in those of other believers. You need not include any sources other than the biblical text itself. However, you need to do more than

include biblical references. In other words, quality is more important than quantity when it comes to citing biblical texts. I am more interested in discussing a few relevant texts rather than citing a large number of them without any explanation. **Due Thursday, April 23.**

1. Suffering in the Christian Life

How are Christians supposed to respond to suffering in their own lives? How should they respond to others who are going through times of suffering? Use the book of Job as your primary OT source to develop principles regarding suffering in the Christian life. You will also need to examine some NT texts (especially from Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter) in order to see how these concepts developed over the progress of God's revelation to us.

2. Praise and Prayer in the Christian Life

Develop principles from the book of Psalms for Christian worship and prayer. What is the relationship between praise and prayer in the life of a believer? How does human (i.e., our) response to God's character and acts contribute to our spiritual lives? You may select a few representative psalms for each of your principles. You might also include some NT texts that develop these principles.

3. Wisdom in the Christian Life

How does one live a godly life? What are the principles of practical godly living upon which one can base his/her life in order to please the Lord and to experience spiritual growth? Choose one practical area that is discussed in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Some examples are money, speech, human sexuality, friendship, and justice. (There are others so you do not need to limit yourself to this list.) Use Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to develop some principles for wise living in the area you have chosen.

4. The Serious Nature of Sin

Do we as modern evangelical Christians take sin seriously enough? How has our surrounding culture desensitized us to the serious nature of sin? Use the OT prophetic books to develop the problem of sin among God's people. How serious is this issue from God's perspective? Are we responsible to communicate this unpopular message to other Christians or simply leave it to those who are specially "called" or "gifted" in this area? Develop some principles that we as Christians can apply to our own lives and in our churches in order to address this issue.

5. Prophetic Promises as a Motivation for Godly Living

To what degree does God's plan for the future motivate us to live godly lives? How do the OT prophets use the message of future deliverance and blessing as a challenge to remain faithful and devoted to the Lord? Develop several principles from the OT prophets that you can use for your own life and the lives of other believers. What difference does it make to live a godly life? How do God's plan and purposes for the future relate to our lives today? Although the OT prophets included promises that have already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, there are a number of passages that still await fulfillment for us today. Focus especially on these texts in your discussion.

## **Class Attendance**

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

## **Grading Scale**

A	97-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	93-96	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	91-92	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	88-90	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	86-87	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	83-85	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	80-82	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	78-79	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	75-77	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	72-74	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	70-71	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-69	0.0 grade points per semester hour

## **Incomplete Grades**

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their professors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the grade was assigned, or the "I" will become an "F."

## **Academic Honesty**

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

## **Institutional Email Policy**

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

## **Disabilities**

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor at the beginning of the course, or if a student has a learning disability, please inform the professor so assistance can be provided.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the professor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

## **Resources and Support**

Canvas and CAMS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and CAMS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with CAMS should contact the Campus Software Manager at [bstifle@criswell.edu](mailto:bstifle@criswell.edu).

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or [studentservices@criswell.edu](mailto:studentservices@criswell.edu). Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students Jeff Campbell, at [jcampbell@criswell.edu](mailto:jcampbell@criswell.edu).

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, go to the library website, or email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu.

Writing Center: Students are encouraged to consult with writing tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence by practicing techniques of clear and effective writing. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Writing Center located on the first floor near the Computer Lab, or they can schedule an appointment by emailing writingcenter@criswell.edu or calling 214.818.1373.

## Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Topic/Event	HW Chapter(s)
Jan 22	Intro. to the Course, Syllabus	
Jan 29	Intro. to Poetic and Wisdom Lit., Job (Part 1)	20–21
Feb 5	Job (Part 2)	21
Feb 12	Psalms	22
Feb 19	Proverbs	23
Feb 26	Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	24–25
Mar 5	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
<b>MARCH 11-15, SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS</b>		
Mar 19	Intro. to Prophetic Literature, Isaiah (Part 1)	27 (omit 26)
Mar 26	Isaiah (Part 2)	28
Apr 2	Jeremiah, Lamentations	29–30
Apr 9	Ezekiel, Daniel	31–32
Apr 16	Hosea, Joel, Amos	33–35
Apr 23	Obadiah, Jonah, Micah	36–38
	<b>Application Paper Due</b>	
Apr 30	Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah	39–41
May 7	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	42–44
May 14	<b>Final Exam (Course Reading Due)</b>	

## Selected Bibliography

- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Archer, Gleason L., Jr. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. New edition. Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.
- Arnold, Bill T. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Bellinger, W. H. Jr. *The Testimony of Poets and Sages: The Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1998.
- Benware, Paul N. *Survey of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2004.
- Bullock, C. Hassell. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books: the Wisdom and Songs of Israel*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1979.
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- Caird, G. B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Chisholm, Robert B. Jr. *Handbook on the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Clifford, Richard J. *The Wisdom Literature*. Interpreting Biblical Texts, ed. Gene M. Tucker. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Craigie, Peter C. *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1986.

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Hoerth, Alfred J., Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, eds. *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.

House, Paul R. *Old Testament Survey*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007.

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Schultz, Samuel J. *The Old Testament Speaks*. 4th edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1990.

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VanGemeren, William A. *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990.

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