



On-Campus Course Syllabus

OTS 315 L1

Topics in OT Studies: Fear of the Lord

Spring 2024

Class Information

Day and Time: Thu 7:30–10:00

Room Number: E205

Contact Information

Instructor Name: James W. Knox

Instructor Email: jknox@Criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: NA

Instructor Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description and Prerequisites

A study of selected topics related to the languages, history, background, hermeneutics, or theology of the Old Testament. This course will focus on the Fear of the Lord as an Old Testament topic. It will survey the history of how the Fear of the Lord was understood from the Church Fathers up to the 20th century, how the concept radically changed during the 20th century, and the various ways the “Fear of the Lord” is interpreted today. It will then explore the meaning of the “Fear of the Lord” within the context of the Old Testament.

(This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs; Prerequisites OTS 101, OTS 201; Other prerequisites may be required.)

Course Objectives

- A. Be familiar with the basic development of scholarship regarding the “Fear of the Lord” from pre-20th century, through the 20th century, and up to current discussions;
- B. Be able to discuss different methods for describing the “Fear of the Lord” along with their strengths and weaknesses;
- C. Be able to discuss important passages where the “Fear of the Lord” occurs. This includes articulating different methods of interpretation and how they impact the theology of the passage;
- D. Be able to define the concept of the “Fear of the Lord” and provide scholarly as well as exegetical support for the definition;
- E. have a more robust appreciation for the “Fear of the Lord” and its significance for the study of the Old Testament and OT theology.

Required Textbooks

1. Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*. Translated by John W. Harvey. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950. ISBN-13 978-0195002102
2. The course will have additional reading that will be provided to the students.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- A. **Participation — (20%)** The classroom experience is an essential element of the learning process. This includes engaging with the instructor, class materials, and fellow students. As such, it is expected and required that the student attends and participates. Failure to perform (e.g., through unexcused absences) will result in a reduction in the participation grade which amounts to 20% of the course grade.
- B. **Reading Sheets — (30%)** Beginning with Week 2, the student is expected to fill out a reading sheet for that week's class reading assignment. Each reading sheet will include summarizing the assigned content as well as noting questions and observations the student found while reading. There are 13 class sessions with required reading. The reading sheets include the class' reading requirement and count for 30% of the course grade.
- C. **Fear of the Lord Article — (20%)** The student will write a 1000-word summary on the "Fear of the Lord" in the style of a dictionary article. It will include a brief definition, a discussion with scholarly support, and a selective bibliography with annotations of 7–10 sources. The summary article will count for 20% of the course grade.
- D. **Topic Paper — (30%)** The student will be required to write an 8–12 page doubled-spaced research paper on an issue related to study of the "Fear of the Lord. The Paper will count for 30% of the course grade. The paper will be submitted in stages (each stage is due prior to the class date marked on the Course Outline/Calendar).
 - Paper Topic (5%) — The student will submit a research topic and receive approval by the instructor. It will count for 5% of the paper's grade.
 - Thesis Statement (5%) — The student will submit a thesis statement and receive approval by the instructor. It will count for 5% of the paper's grade.
 - Annotated Bibliography (10%) — The student will submit a working bibliography of 10 sources. This will include 3 journal articles and 7 scholarly works (e.g., books, monographs, and commentaries). **Bible translations, dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexica, and web sources will not count.** The bibliography will include brief (2–3 sentence) annotations defending the selections. It will count for 10% of the paper's grade.
 - Outline (10%) — The student will submit a working outline of the paper. The major sections and sub-sections will be labeled with a clear articulation of the paper's argument. It will count for 5% of the paper's grade.
 - Research Paper (70%) — The student will submit a well-written research paper in the Turabian style. It will be 8–12 doubled-spaced pages long. It will count for 70% of the paper's grade.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Submission of Assignments

The various assignments allow for the student's progress to be evaluated and graded. Students must upload their assignments onto Canvas prior to the start of class for that respective due date.

Late Submissions

Late submissions will be accepted but with a penalty. 5% will be deducted per day once the due date has passed. After one week, the assignment will no longer be accepted with an automatic 0 registered for the assignment.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. 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. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

NOTE: Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

NOTE: A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-59	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 instructors 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 close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, 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 Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

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

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

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

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS 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 SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@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. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call (214) 818-1373 or email at tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Outline/Calendar

Week		Class Topic	Reading
1	Th–Jan 18	Syllabus and Introduction on the “Fear of the Lord” <i>Due: “Fear of the Lord” Definitions</i>	Packet 1
2	Th–Jan 25	Pre-20th Century Interpretations: Theological, Lexical, and Philosophical Theories	Packet 2
3	Th–Feb 1	Early 20th Century Interpretations 1: Rudolf Otto	Otto: Chs 1–6, 10
4	Th–Feb 8	Early 20th Century Interpretations 2: <i>Numinous</i> Fear; Theory and Critique <i>Due: Paper Topic</i>	Packet 3
5	Th–Feb 15	“Fear of God” Scholarship in the 20th Century	Packet 4
6	Th–Feb 22	Lexical Studies on ירא in the 20th Century <i>Due: Thesis Statement</i>	Packet 5
7	Th–Feb 29	“Fear of the Lord” within OT Wisdom Studies	Packet 6
8	Th–Mar 7	Wisdom 1: “Fear of the Lord” in Psalms and Proverbs <i>Due: Summary Article</i>	Packet 7
9	Th–Mar 14	Spring Break	
10	Th–Mar 21	Wisdom 2: “Fear of the Lord” in Job and Ecclesiastes <i>Due: Annotated Bibliography</i>	Packet 8
11	Th–Mar 28	Torah 1: “Fear of the Lord” in Genesis and Exodus	Packet 9
12	Th–Apr 4	Torah 2: “Fear of the Lord” in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy <i>Due: Outline</i>	Packet 10
13	Th–Apr 11	“Fear of the Lord” in the Historical Books	Packet 11
14	Th–Apr 18	“Fear of the Lord” in the Prophets	Packet 12
15	Th–Apr 25	“Fear of the Lord” in Intertestamental and the NT Literature <i>Due: Research Paper</i>	Packet 13
16	Th–May 2	Paper Presentations	

Selected and Classified Bibliography

Major Works from the First Half of the 20th Century

Hänel, Johannes. “Die Ehrfurcht vor Gott.” In *Die Religion der Heiligkeit*, 106–34. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1931.

Hempel, Johannes. “Die Furcht vor Jahve.” In *Gott und Mensch im Alten Testament: Studie zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit*, 4–33. 2nd ed. Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament 38. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*. Translated by John W. Harvey. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950.

van der Leeuw, Gerardus. "The Avoidance of God." In *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 463–71. Translated by J. E. Turner. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

General, Theological, and Philosophical Studies

Astell, Ann W., ed. *Saving Fear in Christian Spirituality*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2020.

Berthold, Fred, Jr. *The Fear of God: The Role of Anxiety in Contemporary Thought*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959.

Carruthers, Mary. "Terror, Horror and the Fear of God, or, Why There Is No Medieval Sublime." In *'Truthe is the beste': A Festschrift in Honour of A.V.C. Schmidt*, edited by Nicolas Jacobs and Gerald Morgan, 17–36. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014.

de Villiers, Pieter G. R. "Fear as dread of a God who kills and abuses? About a darker side of a key, but still forgotten biblical motif." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 69, no. 1 (2013): 1–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.2018>.

Dyrness, William. "Piety." In *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, 161–69. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977.

Fout, Jason A. "What do I Fear when I Fear My God? A Theological Reexamination of a Biblical Theme." *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (2015): 23–38.

Schüz, Peter. *Mysterium tremendum: Zum Verhältnis von Angst und Religion nach Rudolf Otto*. Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 178. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.

Stern, Marc D., ed. *Yirat Shamayim: The Awe, Reverence, and Fear of God*. Orthodox Forum Series. New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2008.

ANE Backgrounds

Derousseaux, Louis. "Religions et crainte de Dieu: l'expérience humaine de la rencontre avec la Puissance divine." In *La crainte de dieu dans l'ancien testament: Royauté, alliance, sagesse dans les royaumes d'Israël et de Juda; Recherches d'exégèse et d'histoire sur la racine yâré'*, 13–66. Lectio Divina 63. Paris: Cerf, 1970.

Gruber, Mayer I. "Fear, Anxiety and Reverence in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and other North-West Semitic Languages." *Vetus Testamentum* 40, no. 4 (1990): 411–22.

Pfeiffer, R. H. "The Fear of God / יראת האלהים." *Eretz-Israel* 3 (1954): 59–62.

Strawn, Brent A. "The Iconography of Fear: Yir'at Yhwh (יראת יהוה) in Artistic Perspective." In *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, edited by Izaak J. de Hulster and Joel M. LeMon, 91–134. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014.

-----, "The Fear of the Lord' in Two (or Three) Dimensions: Iconography and Yir'at Yhwh." In *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: An Introduction to Its Method and Practice*, edited by Izaak J. de Hulster, Brent A. Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio, 295–311. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

OT General/Theological Studies

- Arnold, Bill T. "The Love-Fear Antinomy in Deuteronomy 5–11." *Vetus Testamentum* 61 (2011): 551–69.
- Bamberger, Bernard J. "Fear and Love of God in the Old Testament." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 6 (1929): 39–53.
- Brongers, H. A. "La crainte du seigneur (Jir'at Jhwh, Jir'at 'Elohim)." *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 5 (1948): 151–73.
- Castelo, Daniel. "The Fear of the Lord as Theological Method." *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 21 (2008): 147–60.
- Cate, Robert L. "The Fear of the Lord in the Old Testament." *Theological Educator* 35 (1987): 41–55.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. "Wisdom Theology and the Centre of Old Testament Theology." *Evangelical Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (1978): 132–46.
- Oosterhoff, Berend Jakob. *De vreze des Heren in het Oude Testament*. Utrecht, NL: Kemink & Son, 1949.
- Vreekamp, Hendrik. *De vreze des Heren: Een oorsprongswoord in de systematische theologie*. Utrecht, NL: Rijksuniversiteit, 1982.
- . *Eerbied: De vreze des Heren als bron van leven*. Kampen, NL: Kok, 1984.

Wisdom Studies

- Barré, Michael L. "'Fear of God' and the World View of Wisdom." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 11, no. 2 (May 1981): 41–43.
- Blocher, Henri. "The Fear of the Lord as the 'Principle' of Wisdom." *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977): 3–28.
- Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. "The Fear of the Lord/God: A Thematic Key to the Unity of the Wisdom Books." In *A Forthcoming Festschrift dedicated to Duane A. Garrett*, 1–33. Unpublished manuscript, 2019.
- Ellis, Etienne. "Reconsidering the Fear of God in the Wisdom Literature of the Hebrew Bible in the Light of Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige*." *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 1 (2014): 82–99.
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- Gemser, Berend. "Jir'at Jahwè (vreze des Heren) in de Psalmen." *Nieuwe Theologische Studiën* 22 (1939): 140–52.
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Scobie, Charles H. H. "The Place of Wisdom in Biblical Theology." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 14, no. 2 (May 1984): 43–48.

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Fuhs, Hans F. "יָרֵא jāre'." In *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, translated by David E. Green and Douglas W. Stott, vol. 3, 869–93. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1982.

Jindo, Job Y. "On the Biblical Notion of Human Dignity: 'Fear of God' as a Condition for Authentic Existence." *Biblical Interpretation* 19 (2011): 433–53.

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