

Psalms
Austin Graduate School of Theology
OT 6305ia—Course Syllabus, Fall 2020

R. Mark Shipp
Austin Graduate School of Theology
7640 Guadalupe Street
Austin, TX 78752
(512) 914-4732

shipp@austingrad.edu

Office Hours: No office hours this semester; call or e-mail me.

Class Meeting Time: Thurs. 4:00–6:40 PM.

MATS Course Goal:

The student will interpret passages of the Old Testament in light of its literary, historical, and theological contexts.

Course Objectives and Requirements:

- 1) The student will acquire an in-depth knowledge of the book of Psalms in its literary, historical, and theological setting.
- 2) The student will acquire knowledge of and be able to discuss and debate the methods and arguments of the commentators listed in “required texts” below.
- 3) The student will learn how to write an exegesis paper on a passage from Chronicles, using appropriate library and technological resources.

Regular attendance at all class meetings and timely submission of all class assignments is a requirement.

All credit students are expected to write a 7-10 page, typed, double spaced exegesis paper over one of the psalms. Also, all credit students shall prepare a five page, typed, double spaced sermon on that same psalm, based upon your exegesis of it.

Grading:

Mid-term and final:	50%
Exegesis paper:	25%
Sermon:	25%

Exegesis Papers and Sermons:

We will be reading and doing exegesis of many of the psalms in the book of Psalms. The course will entail “hands on” experience with exegesis of the English text. Those who have had Hebrew or Greek, of course, are encouraged to use those abilities and tools in their exegesis.

Exegesis papers must use the proper research style as laid out in K. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (latest edition). Exegesis papers should pay careful attention to the literary context (extended and immediate), use of important terminology, and historical setting. Most importantly, students are expected to use Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, Whitaker’s NRSV Concordance, and/or a Hebrew concordance in order to determine the author’s use of words and phrases. For historical background, you will find John Bright, *A History of Israel* (4th edition) particularly helpful. Commentaries and other resources will be suggested throughout the semester (see select bibliography). While I am most interested in your own exegesis of the texts, you should be aware of and make use of important commentaries, dictionaries, word books, introductions, etc. Your final exegesis paper must have at least two other sources (articles, books, commentaries, etc.) which you found via the ATLA database in the library, which are not also textbooks for this class.

Also, see the AGST written guide for the preparation of exegesis papers, which you should follow in the preparation of your exegesis paper.

The sermon will be based upon the results of your exegesis paper. The sermon or Bible study itself is not an exegesis, but uses the results of exegesis to make practical application for the life of the church. A bibliography and aids for writing a sermon from the Old Testament will be provided.

Textbooks and Bible Search Software:

Required Texts:

Walter Brueggemann and William Bellinger, *Psalms* (New Century Bible Commentary; New York: Cambridge University, 2014).

Patrick D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).

R. Mark Shipp, ed. *Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today, vol. 1: In the Day of Distress, Psalms 1-41* (Abilene: ACU Press, 2011).

Recommended Texts:

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Augsburg Old Testament Studies; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984).

J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

Bible Search Software:

I will be using *Accordance* version 13 in this course. *Accordance* is a powerful Bible concordance and search engine, for the Mac or PC. If you do not already own Logos, BibleWorks, Olive Tree, or a previous version of *Accordance*, the purchase and download of *Accordance* or one of these other programs onto your computer is recommended. There is also a free download from the Internet called *StepBible*, which does many of the same functions as the others mentioned above, but for free.

Schedule:

Week 1 (8/27): Syllabus; General Matters; the Shape and Shaping of the Psalter
Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 1-12.
Miller, pp. 5-39.
Simpson (download), pp. 278-288.
Readings from McCann (download), pp. 13-50.

Other downloads on the Canvas page.

Week 2 (9/3): Torah and Wisdom Psalms

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 27-31; 100-103, 509-522 (Torah).

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 159-163; 180-186; 316-319; 558-560
(Wisdom).

Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms*, Psalm 1, pp. 81-86.

Shipp, pp. 19-30; 142-148; 225-230; 263-271.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 3 (9/10): The Book of Psalms and Royal Psalms

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 93-99; 212-215; 311-316; 478-481;
554-558 (Royal Psalms).

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 146-149; 401-404; 413-417
(Enthronement Psalms).

Mays, "The Lord Reigns," pp. 12-22 (download).

Shipp, pp. 31-36; 126-141; 149-161.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 4 (9/17): Laments: The Faithful Cry to the Lord

Brueggemann/Bellinger pp. 36-57; 62-67; 111-121; 202-207.

Brueggemann, *Message of Psalms*, pp. 50-122

Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*, pp. 55-134.

Shipp, pp. 37-69; 74-86; 162-169.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 5 (9/24): Communal Laments

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 71-75, 79-81; 319-324; 455-461; 572-576.

Shipp, pp. 94-98; 103-107.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 6 (10/1): "Give Thanks to the Lord": Thanksgiving Psalms of the Individual

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 149-154; 159-163; 167-171; 397-401;
481-484; 504-509.

Shipp, pp. 213-218; 241-247; 263-271.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 7 (10/8): "Give Thanks to the Lord": Thanksgiving Psalms of the Community

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 286-292; 449-455, 461-468; 534-536;
568-572.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

*Week 8 (10/15): "Enthroned on the Praises of Israel": Hymns of Praise
Mid-term Exam.*

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 417-430; 502-504; 611-614.

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 57-62, 126-130; 216-219.

Shipp, pp. 70-73; 177-183.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 9 (10/22): Psalms of Trust, Penitential Psalms

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 122-126; 186-190; 234-240; 394-397.

Shipp, pp. 37-54, 170-176; 273-281.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 10 (10/29): Psalms of Ascents: Psalms 120-122

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 523-529.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 11 (11/5): Psalms of Ascents: Psalms 123-125

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 530-537.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 12 (11/12): Psalms of Ascents: Psalms 126-128

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 538-547.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 13 (11/19): Psalms of Ascents: Psalms 129-131

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 547-554.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 14: November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15 (12/3): Psalms of Ascents: Psalms 132-134; final exegesis paper due

Brueggemann/Bellinger, pp. 554-562.

Other downloads on the Canvas webpage.

Week 16 (12/10): Final Exam; final sermon due