COVID19 UPDATE: We will be meeting remotely for this course due to Covid19. We will start each class session with Morning Prayer, followed by checking in on zoom. Each day I will post two audio lectures: one for the morning session and one for the afternoon session. The lectures will be approximately 1 hour and 15 min. in length. We will meet on zoom each morning from 10:45-noon to discuss the morning audio lecture, and each afternoon from 3-4:15pm to discuss the afternoon audio lecture. We’ll end class each day with evening prayer.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Unlike many other Old Testament books which are ignored by the Church (when was the last time you heard a sermon or attended a Bible study on the book of Obadiah?), since the church’s inception, the Psalms have been treasured. They have been recognized, appreciated and utilized as a deep repository for developing our appreciation of worship postures, languages, and practices that are pleasing to the Lord. Why have the Psalms perennially remained a treasured portion of Old Testament Scripture for Christians throughout the ages? In the preface to his Psalms commentary, Calvin sagely underscores two aspects of the Psalter that account for its enduring appeal. First, “I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, ‘An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;’ for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.” Psalms speak to us where we are at, no matter what our emotional location (exuberant joy, grief, perplexity, deep sorrow…). Luther expressed similarly: “The Psalter is the favorite book of all the saints…. [Each saint], whatever his circumstances may be, finds in [the book] psalms and words which are appropriate to the circumstances in which he finds himself and meet his needs as adequately as if they were composed exclusively for his sake, and in such a way that he himself could not improve on them nor find or desire any better psalms or words.”
Despite the distance of time (the Psalms were written more than two millennium ago), culture (the Psalms are the product of ancient Near Eastern thinking and poetic conventions) and theology (before the Incarnation), the Psalms speak to our innermost feelings and emotions, including those typically ignored in contemporary Christian poetry and song. Because the Psalter provides us with numerous examples old covenant saints’ responses to God’s unfailing love towards them, the Psalter is a primer for us to develop similar vocabulary and postures for our own responses to God. By becoming more familiar with the Book of Psalms we can gain a greater appreciation for the place worship (private and corporate) ought to have in our lives. The New Testament authors’ recognized the importance of the Psalter for the life of the church as evidenced in their quoting the Psalter more than any other Old Testament book.

In this course we will study types of Psalms, their formation and interpretation, their historical setting and function in Israel, their canonical setting and function in the New Testament, major theological themes, and their messianic nature in order to better interpret and understand the implications of the Book of Psalms for Christian faith and the life of the Church. Our interaction with the Book of Psalms is intended not only to increase knowledge, but also encourage spiritual growth and skill in understanding how the Book of Psalms continues to function as Scripture for us today.

II. COURSE GOALS: By the end of this course students will, Lord willing:

1. Understand the historical setting and development of the Psalter
2. Analyze the various forms, contents, and settings of the Psalms
3. Identify the characteristics of Hebrew poetry evidenced in the Psalms
4. Acquire the ability to interpret the figures of speech found within the Psalms as a means of understanding the Psalms
5. Appreciate the messianic nature of the Psalter
6. Demonstrate the implications of the Psalms for the Church today

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES: In order to achieve these goals, students will:

1. Read, summarize, and evaluate several books on the Book of Psalms.
2. Develop the skill to identify major theological themes, genres, and trajectories in the Book of Psalms.
3. Develop the ability to communicate the richness of the Book of Psalms to a diversity of people in diverse ministry settings.

IV. COURSE OUTCOMES: Because of this class, students will:
1. Be able to identify major themes, trajectories, and genres in the Book of Psalms.

2. Preach and teach from the Book of Psalms with biblical-theological sensitivity and clarity, with an emphasis on how the various psalms point to and find their fulfillment in the person, work, and teachings of Jesus.

NB: It is my hope that this week’s intensive study of the Psalms will increase in each of us a lifelong desire to read, meditate and study the book of Psalms.

The Masters Level learning outcomes for Trinity School for Ministry are:

1. The student will recognise and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.

2. The student will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology.

3. The student will be able to communicate effectively the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.

4. The student will be prepared to lead effectively in a variety of Christian communities.

M.Div.: The student will be prepared to lead effectively in a variety of Christian communities.

MAR: The student will be equipped to apply scholarship to the life of the church in his or her chosen theological discipline.

This course furthers all four of these goals, but it will make a particular contribution in helping students to articulate a biblical theological understanding of this portion of the OT (1) and effectively communicate well beloved portion of Scripture to a diversity of people in diverse ministry settings (3,4).

Along with the objectives related to knowledge and skill that will be assessed through your written work, there are other objectives that are worth mentioning, even though your development in these areas will not be formally assessed. Seminary education is not just a matter of growing in knowledge and skill, but also in one’s relationship with God and one’s Christian character as a disciple of Jesus. I pray [I truly do] that your work in this course will promote such growth.

V. TEXTBOOKS:

Our main textbook will be the Old Testament. Use a reliable English translation (not a paraphrase) of the OT such as ESV, RSV, NASB, NIV, and NKJV. We have a tremendous amount of reading to do. Familiarizing ourselves with the text of the OT is necessary if we are to develop our appreciation for the big redemptive picture that unfolds in the Bible. This in turn will help us appreciate how the OT gives Christians the bearings to understand here we come from and where we are going.
Required Texts:

Our main textbook will be the Book of Psalms. Use a reliable English translation (not a paraphrase) of the OT such as ESV, RSV, NASB, NIV, or NKJV.


Articles on reserve in Google Classroom

In addition to the above required reading, students are to choose two of the following selections and write a book review for each:


Recommended Texts:


Harold W. Attridge and Margot E. Fassler, Eds. *Psalms in Community: Jewish and*


__________. The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary. Grand
VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Pre-Class Requirements:

1. **Book Reviews:** Students are to write book reviews for two of the books listed. Each review should be 7-8 pages (double spaced; Times New Roman; 12 point font). In the first three pages, write a brief summary of three or four major aspects of the book (i.e. major themes, author’s approach, conclusions, etc.). For the last four pages write a critical analysis of particular features of the author’s discussion that you found interesting, helpful, or troublesome (i.e. were certain topics ignored or too readily dismissed by the author?). **Send these papers to me** ([emoore@tsm.edu](mailto:emoore@tsm.edu)) no later than Friday, Jan 1, 2021.

2. **Read through/listen** to the entire Book of Psalms twice between the posting of this syllabus (October 3, 2020) and the first day of class (Jan 4, 2021). On the first day of class you will be asked to submit a note indicating whether or not you did so.

3. **Audio Lectures:** Introduction to the Book of Psalms. Listen to my three posted audio lectures and send me a note indicating that you have listened to the lectures and completed the readings along with 3-5 observations/comments/questions on the Book of Psalms that you would like addressed during our week together.

**Pre-class readings:**

**Lecture 1: Introduction to the Psalms:**

READ: Bullock, pp.

**Lecture 2: Survey of the Macro-Structure of the Psalms**

READ: Bullock, pp.

G.H. Wilson, “The Shape of the Book of Psalms,” *Interpretation* 46 (1992),
Lecture 3: Theology of the Psalms:
READ: Bullock, pp.

Send this to me no later than Monday morning, Jan 4, 2021, prior to the start of class.

**In-Class Requirements:**

1. We will meet each morning from 8:30 (beginning with Morning Prayer) - 4:45 (ending with Evening Prayer) with a lunch break from 12-1. Daily reading assignments will be from C. Hassell Bullock. *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* as well as articles posted on Google Classroom.

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning (9:15-12:00)</th>
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2. On Friday, Jan 10, after listening to the last lecture, we will set aside one hour before our final discussion time together so that students may write an essay explaining to a targeted lay group why and how they should appropriate the Psalms. You may use your Bible and class notes from this week, no other outside helps permitted. Pick your targeted audience from one of the following groups: adult Sunday School class; Jr. or Sr. High youth group [specify which]; 3. Men’s or Women’s Bible Study [specify which]
Post-Class Requirements:

(1) **Teaching Outline:** Develop a detailed teaching outline for an adult education class on the Book of Psalms. Assume class members are not new to Bible study. Produce a plan for twelve lessons that covers the entire book. Write a synopsis for each of the twelve lessons that includes enough content for me to grasp what you intend to teach the class. How do you teach the Book of Psalms in light of the redemption accomplished by Jesus? This Outline should be between 25-30 pages (double spaced; Times New Roman; 12 point font) in length. If you would like to nuance the assignment and focus on a different target group (i.e. a junior high youth group; a Bible study at a local corrections facility...) or a particular aspect of the Psalms, check with me first for approval. Sample outlines of other OT books will be available on Google Classroom to help you see the type of study that I am looking for in this assignment.

OR

**Exegesis Paper:** A 25-30 page double spaced (Times New Roman; 12 point font) paper on a passage in the Book of Psalms. If you choose this option, make sure you inform me of the passage before the end of the week of residency.

For option 2, be sure to include the following in your paper:

1. **Literary context and genre:** What is the evidence for considering this passage as a complete unit? What boundary markers are there at the beginning and end of this passage that suggest it is a complete integrated unit? Is this passage part of a larger literary unit that has a discernible beginning and end? How does the passage fit within the book of Psalms as a whole? Determine the evidence for dividing the passage into subunits. What is the genre?

2. **Textual problems:** Review the external and internal evidence for any variant readings. How do the variant readings affect the interpretation of the passage? Explain what you believe to be the original reading and why.

3. **Outline and Discourse Analysis:** Construct a prose outline that represents the major units of information and summarizes the flow of thought. Are there any points of grammar that are significant for understanding the passage? Summarize, in your best judgment, the overall logical structure of the psalm.

4. **Synthesis:** Identify what you think is the main point of the passage. What is its contribution to the overall message of the book? Discuss, as needed, crucial words for in-depth analysis.

5. **Biblical Theology:** What are the major themes of the passage and how do they find their fulfillment in Jesus?
6. Implications: Why should a Christian be interested in learning about this passage? What issues does it raise? What difficulties does it present? Identify a pastoral problem in the passage and demonstrate how Jesus is the solution to the problem, and how a person might handle the identified problem in light of the redemption accomplished by Jesus.


Additional Research Expectations:

1. Demonstrate that you have used at least four commentaries in your paper.
2. Demonstrate that you have used at least four monographs or journal articles.
3. Demonstrate that you have used at least two biblical dictionary/encyclopedia articles.

(2) Memorization: Select two Psalms of different genres that you do not already know by memory and memorize them. When submitting your final paper, indicate to me in your email what two psalms you have memorized along with a brief note indicating why you made your particular selection.

All post-class assignments are to be mailed or emailed to me (emoore@tsm.edu) postmarked no later than Feb 8, 2001. All work for the course must be received by this date. Please consider finishing the assignments well before this deadline. Late papers will be assessed a penalty of one full letter grade.

VII. COURSE EVALUATION:

Pre-class book reviews: 15% (each)
Reading/listening through/to the entire Psalter two times: 5%
Essay explaining the importance of the Psalter: 5%
Post-class project: 50%
Post-class memorization of two Psalms: 5% (each)

VIII. COURSE INSTRUCTOR:
I serve as the Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew Exegesis here at Trinity School for Ministry. I have been at Trinity since 2002. I live with my husband Jim, son Philip, and mom Rose on a horse farm in Syracuse NY. I am looking forward to spending the week together delving into the riches of a beloved portion of God’ Word written.

I have had several opportunities to spend extended periods of time immersed in the Psalter. I spent years working on two commentaries with Drs. Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship* (Eerdmans, 2010) and *The Psalms as Christian Lament* (Eerdmans, 2014). I also served on the Renewed Coverdale Psalter Committee which produced the revised Coverdale Psalter for the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (2019). Throughout these marvelous opportunities my love for both the Psalter and our Kingly Psalter-Singer has grown.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at any point. It is probably easiest to email me at emoore@tsm.edu. You may also contact me at 724-266-3838.

**VIII. COURSE AND SCHOOL POLICIES:**

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** This is an *intensive*, which means we are covering a semester’s worth of work in our time together. You must be present for both am and pm sessions, Monday-Friday, no exceptions.

**PLAGIARISM:** Simply put, plagiarism is ‘literary theft’ and as such is a serious offense. It is a violation of an author’s/artist’s intellectual property rights. Please see the [Academic Catalog](#) for a full explanation of Trinity’s plagiarism guidelines and note, as stated there, that every student is expected to be fully aware of the guidelines. A student who plagiarizes will automatically receive a failing grade on the assignment and risks failing the course. If a student does not know whether they may be engaging in plagiarism, they are encouraged to speak to Leslie Thyberg, our Learning Skills Coordinator and tutor for the Majority World Scholars.

**INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are not normally given and are granted only in the most serious of cases. They are not granted as a way to extend the semester due to incomplete work. In order to request an incomplete, student must obtain the necessary form online and bring to the professor who will list the specific assignments to be completed with due dates. The due date cannot be beyond six weeks from the last day of class. The form will be submitted to the Academic Dean for final approval.

**ATS REVIEW OF STUDENT WORK:** As per The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) requirements, several samples of student work may be randomly selected and used as a class artifact as part of an on-going assessment of courses and degree programs. Students’ names will be removed from any work used for this purpose.
IX. Grading System:

Trinity School of Ministry has the following grade scale: A = 100-95; A- = 94-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = below 70; F = below 60. The following is offered as a guide, rather than a set of rules.

B: Work will demonstrate broad (sufficient information is covered) and deep (supporting material is offered) coverage of the material. Information will be accurate and there will be a clear and coherent structure. Coverage of the material and comments will be reasonably competent without being exceptional. B+ (89 – 87); B (86 – 83); B- (82 – 80)

C: Work will demonstrate reasonable coverage of the material but will lack breadth and depth of analysis. There will not be serious inadequacies in the information presented, but the overall structure will be characteristically unclear, narrow, and shallow and void of imaginative and interesting analysis. C+ (79 – 77); C (76 – 73); C- (72 – 70)

D: Work will be notably defective according to the criteria outlined above. (Below 70)

F: Work will demonstrate a complete failure on the part of its author to interact with the material in accordance with criteria outlined above. (Below 60)

A: Work will demonstrate exceptional coverage of the material. What distinguishes work in this category from a “B” is the author’s ability to develop the material in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for a good understanding of it. The author will engage with the material in a way that is often though not always marked by creativity, exceptional insight, and/or extensive research. A (95 or above); A- (94 – 90)

DMIN Addendum:

The DMin learning outcomes for Trinity School for Ministry are:
1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to identify and articulate a distinct ministry problem.
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to reflect biblically and theologically about the identified problem.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to apply the learning from the biblical and theological reflections to the identified problem.

N.B. There is a dinner at the Dean’s home on Monday night. This is formally considered as three hours of the course (for DMin students only). It is a time for fellowship over
dinner followed by a presentation from the Dean. Other evenings are left free for reading, working on your assignments and fellowship with others in the course.

If you are taking OT 961 for DMin credit, note these additional assignments will be required beyond those described in the above syllabus:

Write **four** book reviews from the list in the syllabus above, following the guidelines given. **Send these papers to me ( emoore@tsm.edu ) no later than Friday, Jan 1, 2021.**

**In addition to** the teaching outline or exegesis paper described above, DMin students must also write a theological reflection paper focusing on the importance of the Psalms in some aspect of your current ministry. Papers should be between 15-20 pages (double spaced; 12 point font) and include a bibliography of no less than 12 entries. **For DMin students, both the teaching outline/exegesis paper options plus the theological reflection are due April 5, 2021.**