



OT426/626
The Psalter
Semester 1, 2015

Brisbane School of Theology offers high quality, Bible-centred theological training in a diverse and supportive community, shaping the whole person for God's purpose. Aiming for more than simply growing students' knowledge of theology, BST is developing passionate, capable disciples who use what they know about God's word to serve him in the church and the world.

*Brisbane School of Theology is an operating name of Bible College of Queensland.
We are an affiliated college of the Australian College of Theology, our ABN no. is 55009670160 and the ACT CRICOS no. is 02650E.*

• Know God's word; take it to the world •

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS UNIT

Description	This unit builds on the introductory study of the Old Testament in OT301/501 and OT302/502. Our study of the Psalms this semester will be historical, theological, exegetical, devotional and practical. You will grow in your knowledge of the Psalms and in your ability to use them in your life and ministry. It is hoped that in a fresh way the Psalms will become "yours".		
Teaching staff	Lecturer	Mr John Coulson <i>BSc(Hons), DipMin, BTh(Hons), MTh</i>	
	Phone	Ph: (07) 3870 8355	
	Email	jcoulson@bst.qld.edu.au	
Additional information	Credit points	4	
	Co/pre-requisites	N/A	
	No. of teaching weeks	13	
Assessment Summary	OT426		
	Item	Details/Due Date	Weighting
	Lead worship time	600 words Due: during weeks 2-13	10%
	Journal	2,400 words Due: weekly and 5 th June	40%
	Exegetical essay	3,000 words Due: 12 th June	50%
	OT626		
	Item	Details/Due Date	Weighting
	Lead worship time	700 words Due: during weeks 2-13	10%
	Reading response and seminar	700 words Due: 24 th April	10%
	Journal	2,600 words Due: weekly and 5 th June	40%
Exegetical essay	3,000 words Due: 12 th June	40%	

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND UNIT CONTENT

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit OT426 students will:

Know and understand:

1. The contents and structure of the Psalter
2. The themes and theological teaching of the Psalter
3. The origin and use of the Psalms in the life and worship of ancient Israel
4. The development of the Psalter, psalm types, psalm and cult
5. The major issues in contemporary study of the Psalter
6. The nature and methods of Old Testament exegesis
7. The English text of selected Psalms
8. The relevance of the Psalms to contemporary ministry

In order to determine the meaning of the text of Psalms, acquire skills to be able to:

1. Use sources such as biblical and theological dictionaries, commentaries and on-line resources
2. Recognise literary form, genre and structure
3. Compare and contrast translations
4. Evaluate matters relating to authorship, date and purpose
5. Utilise the historical, religious, social and cultural contexts
6. Relate to the literary and canonical contexts
7. Establish the meaning of significant words and phrases
8. Trace inter-textual references and allusions
9. Discuss the main themes, arguments and theological teachings
10. Exegete a selection of Psalms

Be in a position to:

1. Exegete the text of the Psalms for personal understanding and in ministry contexts
2. Integrate perspectives from the Psalms into biblical interpretation and Christian thinking
3. Apply the teaching of the Psalms to situations and issues in contemporary church and society

On completion of this unit OT626 students will, in addition to the above:

Know and understand:

9. A selection of historic and contemporary interpretations of the Psalms

In order to determine the meaning of the text of Psalms, acquire skills to be able to:

3. Recognise issues involved in translation, including text and word issues
11. Discuss interpretations of the Psalms

Be in a position to:

4. Evaluate interpretations of the Psalms

Content

1. The origin and use of the Psalms in ancient Israel:
 - (a) The development of the Psalter, psalm types, psalm and cult
 - (b) Theological motifs in the Psalter: the "I", kingship, lament, enemies, Zion
2. Exegesis of the English text of Psalms 1, 2, 8, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 46, 51, 73, 74, 96, 103, 105, 110, 116, 118, 125, 132, 137.

UNIT TIMETABLE

Lecture	Date	Lead Worship	Lecture Topics	Discussion pre-reading	
				Scholars	Psalms
1	Feb 13	John C.	Introduction to unit; the enduring appeal of the Psalms; interpreting the Psalms; kinds of psalms; Psalm 1	None	None
2	Feb 20		Guest lecturer The Psalms as poetry; exegesis of the Psalms; Psalm 23	Class discussion: Interpretation (Fee and Stuart, <i>How to Read the Bible</i> , ch.11)	1-17
3	Feb 27		The structure and growth of the Psalter; Psalm 46	Class discussion: David (Mays, <i>The Lord Reigns</i> , ch. 9)	18-29
4	Mar 6		The Psalms in Israel's worship; the theology of the Psalms; Psalm 105	Small group discussion: Prayer (Peterson, <i>Answering God</i> , Intro, ch. 1)	30-39
5	Mar 13		The Psalms in the NT; the Psalms today; Psalm 110	Class discussion: Psalm 8 (Mays, <i>Preaching and Teaching</i> , ch. 8)	40-51
6	Mar 20		Psalms of praise; Psalms 8, 103	Small group discussion: Praise (Mays, <i>The Lord Reigns</i> , ch. 7)	52-66
Mission week					
Easter holidays (3 Fridays off)					
7	Apr 24		Psalms of lament; "I", "we", enemies; Psalms 22, 51, 74 GDip/MDiv seminar at 2pm: presentation and discussion of reading responses (Undergrad students welcome)	Small group discussion: Self identity (Mays, <i>The Lord Reigns</i> , ch. 5)	67-76
8	May 1		Guest lecturer Psalms of thanksgiving; Psalms 116, 118	Class discussion: Preaching (Bland and Fler, <i>Performing the Psalms</i> , ch. 3)	77-88
9	May 8		Psalms of trust; Psalms 16, 125	Small group discussion: Trust (McCann, <i>Theological Introduction</i> , ch. 8)	89-103
10	May 15		Royal psalms; kingship; Psalms 2, 132	Class discussion: The Messiah (Mays, <i>The Lord Reigns</i> , ch. 10)	104-113
11	May 22		Psalms of Yahweh's kingship (Enthronement Psalms); Psalms 24, 96	Small group discussion: Sermons (Mays, <i>Preaching and Teaching</i> , chs. 19-20)	114-119
12	May 29		Wisdom psalms; Psalm 73 Psalms of imprecation; Psalm 137	Class discussion: Laws (Wenham, <i>Psalms as Torah</i> , ch. 6)	120-138
13	Jun 5		Torah psalms; Psalm 19; overview of Psalm 119 Journal due today	Small group discussion: Curses (Day, <i>Crying for Justice</i> , ch. 8, Appendix)	139-150
Study week	June 12		Exegetical essay due		

ASSESSMENT OUTLINE FOR OT426

This applies to students who are enrolled at Bachelor level. See supplementary document for detailed assignment instructions.

Assessment 1	Item	Lead a time of worship in class; 600 words
	Details/Due Date	Each week we will commence with 10-15 minutes of worship/devotion toward God based on the Psalms. You will lead one worship time based on a psalm, including prayer, a song and a short practical exposition. Due: One Friday morning during weeks 2-13; manuscript due by 5.00 pm that day
	Weighting	10%
Assessment 2	Item	Journal of reading, reflection and prayer; 2,400 words
	Details/Due Date	This journal is designed to be at the heart of your Psalms study and learning this semester. There are 13 entries and you will complete one per week. The journal framework is a file on Moodle which prompts your weekly reading, reflection and prayer. Due: weekly; completed journal due Friday, 5th June, 5.00 pm
	Weighting	40%
Assessment 3	Item	Exegetical essay; 3,000 words
	Details/Due Date	Write an exegetical essay (following guidelines provided in class) on ONE of the following Psalms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Psalm 2 (b) Psalm 8 (c) Psalm 16 (d) Psalm 74. Due: Friday, 12th June, 5.00 pm
	Weighting	50%

ASSESSMENT OUTLINE FOR OT626

This applies to students who are enrolled at Masters level. See supplementary document for detailed assignment instructions.

Assessment 1	Item	Lead a time of worship in class; 700 words
	Details/Due Date	Each week we will commence with 10-15 minutes of worship/devotion toward God based on the Psalms. You will lead one worship time based on a psalm, including prayer, a song and a short practical exposition. Due: One Friday morning during weeks 2-13; manuscript due by 5.00 pm that day
	Weighting	10%
Assessment 2	Item	Reading response for a book on the Psalms; 700 words
	Details/Due Date	You will read about 200 pages from one book from a list of 10 books. You will write a short response to the book and present your findings in a class seminar. Due: Friday, 24th April, 2.00 pm (seminar) and 5.00 pm (paper)
	Weighting	10%
Assessment 3	Item	Journal of reading, reflection and prayer; 2,600 words
	Details/Due Date	This journal is designed to be at the heart of your Psalms study and learning this semester. There are 13 entries and you will complete one per week. The journal framework is a file on Moodle which prompts your weekly reading, reflection and prayer. Due: weekly; completed journal due Friday, 5th June, 5.00 pm
	Weighting	40%

Assessment 4	Item	Exegetical essay; 3,000 words
	Details/Due Date	Write an exegetical essay (following guidelines provided in class) on ONE of the following Psalms: (a) Psalm 22 (b) Psalm 73 (c) Psalm 103 (d) Psalm 118. Due: Friday, 12th June, 5.00 pm
	Weighting	40%

LECTURE ATTENDANCE

Please note the [ACT policy](#) (see also BST Student Handbook) on lecture attendance in the *Undergraduate Handbook* and the *Graduate and Postgraduate Handbook*. You are required to attend at least 80% of lectures. This means you can miss a maximum of two lectures. If you know that you will not be at a lecture, please phone or email the lecturer beforehand. If you miss more than two lectures, your enrolment for this unit may be ended.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

You should allocate approximately 7 hours outside of class each week to this unit.

LATE SUBMISSION OF WORK

Please note the [ACT Late Penalties Policy](#) (including extensions; see also BST Student Handbook). Failure to submit any individual assignment on time may result in either a late penalty or a zero mark for the assignment.

PASSING THIS UNIT

To pass this unit you must complete and submit each assessment item. You must also attain an overall percentage mark of 50% or more.

PLAGIARISM

Please note the [ACT Academic Misconduct Policy](#) (see also BST student handbook) on plagiarism. This is a serious issue and it is your responsibility both to understand what plagiarism includes and to avoid it completely. If you are found to have plagiarised, there will be serious consequences as specified in the BST student handbook.

Penalties for plagiarism are as follows (from [ACT Academic Misconduct Policy](#)).

First offence:

Students will be subject to academic counselling, with the maximum penalty being to fail the item with no marks awarded. Where deemed appropriate, the minimum penalty available will be that students may be granted an opportunity to resubmit the assessment with a maximum of 50% for the assessment.

Second offence:

Fail unit, with no remedial opportunity.

Third or major offence:

Exclusion from any award of the ACT, or exclusion from the award for up to two years, or other outcome appropriate to the case but with an impact less serious than exclusion.

In the case of severe plagiarism and/or cheating, a student may be subject to a separate disciplinary process approved by the ACT Academic Board. Colleges are required to immediately report to the ACT Director of Academic Services all offences of wilful academic misconduct, for recording on TAMS.

READING MATERIALS

See supplementary document for detailed bibliography of reading materials.

* Books marked with an asterisk are on the Frozen Shelf in the library.

Prescribed text

* Bullock, C. H. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Other recommended texts

Theological introductions:

- * Mays, J. L. *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.
- * McCann, J. C. *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

One of the following commentaries:

- a) Broyles, C. C. *Psalms*, NIBC. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.
- b) Clifford, R. J. *Psalms 1-72*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
Clifford, R. J. *Psalms 73-150*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
- c) Mays, J. L. *Psalms*, Interpretation. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.
- d) Craigie, P. C. *Psalms 1-50*, WBC. Waco: Word, 1983.
Tate, M. E. *Psalms 51-100*, WBC. Waco: Word, 1990.
Allen, L. C. *Psalms 101-150*, WBC. Waco: Word, 2001.

Exegetical method:

- * Stuart, D. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*. Third edition. Philadelphia: Westminster, 2009.

GRADUATE OUTCOMES

Attribute	Emphases of Unit			Comment
	Strong	Moderate	Light	
1) Passionate discipleship	√			The Psalms reveal the character of God and express deep faith and commitment to him. The emotional dimension of faith is very evident in the Psalms. We will seek to deepen our relationship with God through the Psalms. This will be facilitated by personal study and devotion, class activities, and assessments.
2) Sound knowledge of Bible	√			The Psalms integrate much of the history and theology of the Old Testament. They are also much-used in the New Testament to understand the life and ministry of Jesus. The study of the Psalms will broaden and deepen our knowledge of the Bible.
3) Humility and faithfulness		√		These character qualities are emphasised in the Psalms as the psalmists ponder the believer's basic posture before God and response to him. We will seek to foster these qualities through class devotions and discussions. We will reflect on them in the journal and essay.
4) Communicating the Gospel		√		The Psalms declare the good news of who God is and what he has done and will do. They declare the universal sovereignty of the Lord. Some Psalms call for the good news to be proclaimed in all the world. We will seek to learn from the Psalms what the Gospel is and how to communicate it.
5) Commitment to mission		√		The Psalms' message of God's rule through his appointed king has great implications for Christian mission. When interpreted eschatologically and Messianically/Christologically the Psalms call us to take the Gospel to all peoples. We will seek to be instructed and inspired concerning this.
6) Commitment to team ministry			√	While the Psalms have a strong individual focus they also emphasise the people of God worshipping and serving the Lord together. We will seek to learn what this means for our corporate life and service.
7) Basic ministry skills			√	This unit involves the skills of listening, reading, reflecting, discussing, research and writing, and leading God's people in a time of worship. Much time will be spent in interpreting and applying Scripture, which is a basic ministry skill.
8) Commitment to lifelong learning		√		The Psalms inspire us to learn and grow in our relationship with God. This takes a lifetime. As we dig into the Psalms in this unit we will not only find "gold" that increases our desire to learn, but also learn how to "dig" for ourselves.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

1) They will be passionate disciples of Jesus Christ. Graduates will maintain a vibrant relationship with God, be passionate about following Jesus and walk by the Spirit in every area of life. They will seek to love God above all else and others as themselves in attitudes, words and deeds. They will be imitators of Jesus, obey His Word, deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Jesus wherever He may lead (Mark 8:34).

2) They will have a sound knowledge of the Bible. Graduates will have an in-depth and comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. They will be committed to the infallibility and authority of the Bible as God's Word in everything pertaining to salvation and the Christian life (2 Tim 3:14-17). They will do their best to be good teachers of the Bible who correctly explain the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).

3) They will have genuine humility and demonstrate faithfulness in life and ministry. Graduates will live lives of holiness, humility and faithfulness. They will be willing to acknowledge their shortcomings and mistakes, and be open to receive constructive criticism and advice. They will do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility will consider others better than themselves (Phil 2:3). They will be prepared to suffer for the sake of Christ, knowing that "we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

4) They will be effective communicators of the Gospel. Graduates will know the Gospel and will be eager and able to communicate the Gospel, especially in word, but also through writing and other media, in ways that are culturally sensitive and intelligible to others. They will have compassionate hearts, listening empathetically to people in their particular contexts. They will be ready to preach the Word at any time with patience and care (2 Tim 4:2), trying to persuade people to believe the Gospel and to become followers of Jesus (2 Cor 5:11).

5) They will have a great commitment to God's mission. Graduates will be aware of the needs and opportunities of local and global mission. They will endeavour to see the coming of God's kingdom in every sphere of life, strive for justice for the poor and work towards community transformation. They will be passionately committed to and will be active in working towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission, to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20).

6) They will be committed to team ministry and servant leadership. Graduates will be committed to the local church as the family of God and as their context for ministry and base for mission (Heb 10:24-25). They will work enthusiastically and cooperatively with others in ministry teams. They will be open to Christians across various evangelical denominations and churches (Luke 9:49-50). As leaders they will be disciple-makers, following the Lord Jesus in serving, leading by example, and training and mentoring other leaders (Mark 10:43-45).

7) They will be competent in basic ministry skills. Graduates will be competent in basic ministry skills, including preaching, teaching, leading and caring for people. They will use their gifts to implement constructive change in the church and community (1 Tim 4:6-16). They will be culturally attuned and flexible in dealing with a range of issues (1 Cor 9:19-23). They will embrace accountability and maintain professional standards in various contexts. They will be "salt and light" in the world (Matt 5:13-14) and be able to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12).

8) They will be committed to lifelong learning and personal growth. Graduates will be proactive in expanding their knowledge and abilities. They will be open to new challenges, be willing to face unfamiliar problems and accept wider responsibilities. They will continue to grow in faith, knowledge and maturity, "forgetting what is behind and pressing ... toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14).