

A Joyful Noise!
The Psalms in Proclamation, Praise and Prayer
HB425/426 SP405

Spring 2008

Faculty: Gerald Hobbs and Lynne McNaughton

Purpose: To introduce students to the Hebrew psalms as scripture for praise, prayer and communal proclamation.

Format: One three hour session weekly Wednesday (6:30 to 9:30). There will be an additional one hour reading class for students wishing Hebrew Exegesis credit (HB426). (time to be negotiated at the first class)

Content: The psalms have been at the heart of both individual and corporate prayer in Israel and in the Christian Church for nearly 3000 years. They are also the most used Biblical book in the Church's lectionary. This course operates on the premise that a holistic experience of the psalms will include, in addition to a critical reading, singing, dancing, other artistic expression, all of which are expression of prayer. It is expected the students will develop skills in the use of the psalms in personal prayer and in nurturing the life of the community.

This course is a joint offering in Spirituality and Biblical Exegesis. The course will be taught using both lenses, so that students discover both that a healthy spirituality is nourished in careful reading of Scripture, and that good biblical exegesis always nurtures the life of the Spirit.

The course will give particular attention to the use of the psalms in contemporary faith community, including preaching, pastoral care, liturgical song, retreat leadership and bible study groups. The selection of psalms studied will include some of the assigned Sunday lections.

Expectations of the student and Evaluation: Students may take this course either as an exegetical course or an elective in spirituality. For each, some written work will be required; and all participants will make a final class presentation of an interpretation of one psalm.

Students are expected to attend 80% of classes (i.e. at least nine of the evening classes), to do preparatory reading and to participate in class. Must be willing to play a tambourine! ☺

Prerequisites:

For credit, Hebrew Bible Basics and SP100, DSF102/102, or equivalent introduction to spirituality. New Testament Basics is also recommended. Persons wishing to audit should speak with the instructors.

Note: HB 426 Students wishing to take this course as a Hebrew exegesis course will meet one additional hour weekly to read in Hebrew the Psalm for the following week's class. Prerequisite for this section: introductory Hebrew.

Students wishing to take this course for Th.M. or other advanced credit will be expected to write one additional paper engaging the issues of exegesis and spirituality in a particular psalm.

Bibliography:

Walter Brueggemann. *The Message of the Psalms*.

Students will be expected to own and work regularly with at least one modern critical commentary. The following are recommended.

- H.J.Kraus, *Psalms 1-59, Psalms 60-150*, Minneapolis: Augsburg 1988 (2 vols.)
- Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship. A Commentary on the book of Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1998.

A fuller bibliography and required texts will be distributed in the first class.

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