Course Syllabus

SUMMER 2015
THE FIVE SCROLLS: RUTH, SONGS OF SONGS, ECCLESIASTES, LAMENTATIONS, & ESTHER
OLDT 0674

JULY 20-24, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: MARY L. CONWAY, PH.D.
Email: mconway@tyndale.ca
Office Hours: Before or after class or by appointment.

To access your course material, please go to http://classes.tyndale.ca. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the books known as the Five Scrolls or Megillot—Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther—their content, their place in the history of Israel, their theology, their role as Christian Scripture, and their application to the church today.

These five small but fascinating books of the Old Testament are often overlooked in both church and seminary; nevertheless, they form an essential part of Christian Scripture and give us increased insight into the relationship between God and humanity. They contain exciting narrative and profound philosophy, lyrical poems and poignant lament, and stories of both love and danger.

Prerequisites: BIBL 0501. Recommended: OLDT 0511

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

i. demonstrate an understanding of the basic content of the Five Scrolls

ii. demonstrate an understanding of the practical and spiritual relevance of the Five Scrolls to God’s people both in their historical context and for the Christian church today

iii. communicate effectively what the Five Scrolls teach about God, his character, and his purposes for humanity

iv. demonstrate practical skill in exegeting a pericope from one of the Five Scrolls in depth
and relating it to the New Testament and Christian life today

-or-

v. demonstrate an ability to synthesize and communicate relevant themes from the Five Scrolls

vi. exhibit competence in relating the Five Scrolls to various ministries and specializations in today’s church and culture

vii. grow to love God and humanity more through the internalization of the concepts in these books

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING:


One of these two options on Ruth and Esther:


(These two commentaries are a suitable substitute if you cannot obtain the Bush commentary. Both will be required.)

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING:


C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Due to the short time frame, extensions are generally not given for summer courses except in dire circumstances. Plan ahead! Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day.

All assignments should be double spaced and typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Note that page requirements do not include the title page and bibliography. Please use footnotes, not endnotes. Specific requirements are listed under the individual assignments.

All assignments must be submitted in .pdf format by email to mconway@tyndale.ca. Other document types will not be accepted. Be sure to include your last name as part of the file name. Your assignment will be evaluated by means of comments on the .pdf and returned to you by email. Please include your preferred email address on the cover page.

The assignments below are designed to foster the acquisition of the goals listed above. Assignment #1 addresses goals I and vii; Assignment #2 addresses i; Assignment #3 addresses i, ii, iii, vi, and vii; and Assignment #4 addresses i, ii, iii, iv, v, and vii.

1. **Reading Response to the Five Scrolls**: Due during the week of July 20-24, 2015; 5% of final grade.

   The most effective way to become familiar with the Old Testament and to appreciate its contribution to the Christian life is to read it. To this end, students should read the five books—Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentations—in a modern critical translation (e.g., NRSV, TNIV, NIV, NLT, NASB, JPS). For each book you will submit a 150 word response. These responses will contain your thoughts on one aspect of content, background, theology, application, or things about the book that surprised, concerned, or puzzled you during your reading, or a new insight that you gained. Do NOT summarize the book. If possible, read the biblical books and submit your paragraphs before the course starts; otherwise, submit the paragraph for each book by the time discussion of that book begins (e.g., Lamentations by the start of class on Thursday morning).
2. **Reading about the Five Scrolls:** Due on **Friday, August 21, 2015 at 11:59 pm**; 10% of final grade.

Students will read at least 50 pages from the texts above on each of the Five Scrolls, more if this is your area of interest. You will also read from other commentaries, monographs, and articles as you research your assignments to a total of 800-1000 pages. You will submit a chart modelled on the one below detailing your reading. In the third column you will summarize briefly something interesting that you learned from each text that you didn’t know before (about 100 words for each).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Book</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
<td>Provan, <em>Ecclesiastes, Song</em>, x-xxx</td>
<td>Proin at nulla hendrerit, cursus felis et, vestibulum erat. Nulla pellentesque sapien sed nisi dictum. Curabitur ipsum ultricies, quis vehicula sem accumsan ... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>Provan, <em>Ecclesiastes, Song</em>, xxx-xxx</td>
<td>Morbi ut orci eget elit blandit ornare in id leo. Morb ut neque sollicitudin auctor sapien sed eu massa faucibus iaculis sed ut sem. ... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parry, <em>Lamentations</em>, xx-xxx.</td>
<td>Vim ad dicunt numquam elaboraret, an ius falli doming saperet, sed eripuit maiorum scripserit cu. Ne ius splendide ... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Krašovec, “The Source of Hope in the Book of Lamentations,” xxx-xxx.</td>
<td>Ne eos ipsum delectus. Mea assum consectetur id, ex modo tempor pro. Porro tamquam lobortis mei ad... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moore, “Human Suffering in Lamentations,” xx-xx.</td>
<td>Ea eam movet sensibus, ponderum conssetetur interpretaris eos id. An qui minim... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>Bechtl, <em>Esther</em>, xx-xxx, xxx-xxx.</td>
<td>Nullam tincidunt, nisi eget molestie sodales, risus purus placerat enim, nec mollis leo tortor sed nibh. ... (p. xx)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Responses in a Specialized Area of Interest:** Due on **Monday, August 10, 2015 at 11:59 pm**; 35% of final grade.

Students will complete one of the following assignments which relate the Five Scrolls to various ministries and specializations in today’s church and culture. This project will be evaluated for both creativity and content. Your work should indicate thorough understanding of the Five Scrolls as well as their contemporary relevance. Reference to secondary sources (books, articles, music, video, websites, etc.) should be given as appropriate for all options, and must be fully documented. Be sure to evaluate the quality of your sources carefully. Note: A DropBox folder will be set up for files too large to email.

   **a. Commentary Analysis** (Biblical studies focus)
   Select three different commentaries on one of the Five Scrolls and study them carefully. Write a 5-6 page critical review of these commentaries in which you evaluate them for their usefulness in biblical studies. Be sure that you set out your criteria, which may
include: presuppositions (implicit or explicit), format and organization, use of original languages, historical and cultural background information, consideration of textual issues, breadth of scholarship, cogency of arguments, validity of theological conclusions, contemporary application, etc. Include clear conclusions.

b. Film Analysis (Biblical studies focus)
A number of films focus on the books of Esther and Ruth: Esther and the King (1960, available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ6qYypfmlO), Esther (2000), Queen Esther, One Night with the King (2006), The Book of Esther (2013), The Story of Ruth (1960), and the Book of Ruth (2010). Select one of these movies and watch it. In a paper of 5-6 pages, critically analyze the movie in terms of its portrayal of Scripture. Consider the relevance of characterization, historical accuracy, and theological themes. Do NOT simply give a comparison of the content! Focus on what the film says about society’s understanding/interpretation of the biblical story of Esther or Ruth.

c. Sermon Preparation (Pastoral studies focus)
Prepare and record (audio or video) a sermon of 20-25 minutes on a passage from one of the five Scrolls that you might deliver at your church. This sermon must be written specifically for this course and must not be recycled material. It should demonstrate insights that you have gained from this course. Include a typed version of the sermon that includes footnotes of sources, even though you will not read these when you preach. It is appropriate, however, to include in a sermon a phrase such as “In her book, Karen Jobes points out that…” Always give credit where credit is due.

d. Liturgy Preparation (Ministry studies focus)
Prepare a 30 minute liturgy for your church that will lead up to and conclude a sermon by your pastor on a topic or section of one of the Five Scrolls. Describe briefly the purpose and content of the sermon that the pastor will be delivering. The service may be traditional, contemporary, or blended. Prepare a bulletin listing the sermon topic, music, songs, prayers, etc. Please provide the text of prayers and links to the music/songs (or submit the file). Include a 2-3 page explanation of why you chose these elements for your liturgy.

e. Counselling Plan (Counselling focus)
Select one of the Five Scrolls and explain in a paper of 5-6 pages how you would use it as a pastor/spiritual advisor in individual counselling with members of your church. For example, you might use Lamentations in grief counseling, Ruth in dealing with personal setbacks and difficulties, Ecclesiastes in coping with depression, Esther in handling situations involving prejudice or cultural oppression, and even Song of Songs in marriage counseling. Many other options are possible.

f. Lesson Preparation (Teaching focus)
Create a 40 minute Sunday school lesson for grade school children or high school students, or a 40-60 minute small group study for adults, that deals with a relevant section of one of the Five Scrolls and that integrates the historical context with contemporary theological relevance. Focus on how the material applies to Christians today and how it might reinforce or challenge their worldview. For example, Ecclesiastes may be relevant to our modern workaholic, consumeristic culture, Esther may connect to the oppressed, or Ruth
may relate to problems of immigrants or the marginalized. Specify the age level and nature of your class. Include the purpose of the lesson, the strategies, and the lesson materials.

g. Novel or Movie Analysis (Christian worldview focus)
Select a novel or movie that has a situation, theme, or character type in common with one of the Five Scrolls. This does not need to be a “Christian” novel or movie. For example, *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert may make an interesting comparison with Qoholet in Ecclesiastes since Alma and Ambrose live with “a desperate need to understand the workings of this world and the mechanisms behind all life” as they explore the realms of the scientific and the spiritual. Or, the movie *Schindler’s List* may relate to Lamentations in its depiction of suffering. Or, Jhumpa Lahiri’s book, *The Lowland*, may relate to Ruth. These are suggestions only, not recommendations; there are limitless possibilities. In a paper or 5-6 pages, explore the relationship between the biblical book and the contemporary novel or movie, and give insights into how each informs the other. Do NOT simply focus on a list of similarities and differences.

4. Exegetical or Thematic Paper: Due on Friday, August 28, 2015 at 11:59 pm; 50% of final grade.

Students will prepare an exegetical or thematic paper of approximately 15-20 pages, double spaced. At least 10 academic secondary sources are required for these papers, and all must be used and cited in the paper. Sources may include the class texts, monographs, commentaries, and articles from journals or books. Sources must NOT include web sites (other than on line databases for articles, unless with the professor’s permission), one volume Bible dictionaries, study Bibles, Bible translations, and dated devotional commentaries (such as Matthew Henry’s). Recent sources are preferred. Please avoid lengthy quotations from these sources; integrate the information into your own writing, documenting paraphrase as well as direct quotation. Do not include a lengthy paraphrase with an all-encompassing footnote at the end of the paragraph. Material must be processed and integrated with your own ideas with each borrowed idea referenced separately. Do not include lengthy biblical quotations. Note: Often, references to other parts of the Old or New Testaments are very appropriate, but you MUST demonstrate their relevance in your paper, not assume it.

Your written work will be evaluated according to three main criteria:

I. Presentation: Spelling, grammar, clarity, layout, documentation, format of footnotes and bibliography. Use subtitles to enhance organization.

II. Argumentation: Introduction with clear thesis, logical flow of ideas, compelling evidence, effective use of sources, effective conclusions.

III. Content: Coverage of all relevant issues, adequate background information, deep engagement with the text and with sources.

a. Exegetical Paper:
Students will select one self-contained pericope of 8-12 verses from one of the Five Scrolls and complete an exegetical analysis. The paper should include:

i. Introductory Material:
   a. A clear statement of the thesis in the introduction
   b. The historical and cultural context of the passage and book
   c. Explanation of how your passage fits within the book as a whole

ii. Analysis: (this should form the major part of your paper)
a. A detailed exegesis of the passage
b. Theological reflections on the passage (may be integrated with the exegesis)

iii. Conclusions:
    a. May include connections to the rest of the OT, NT and/or suggestions for practical/pastoral applications
    b. A clear conclusion to your argument with reference to your thesis

b. Thematic Paper:
   Students will identify a significant theme in one or more of the five scrolls and explore its development. The paper should include:
   i. Introductory Material
      a. A clear statement of the thesis in the introduction
      b. A clear explication of the theme and its importance
   ii. Development: (this should form the major part of your paper)
      a. Analysis of relevant passages that relate to the theme
      c. Theological reflections on the theme (may be integrated with your argument)
   iii. Conclusions:
      a. May include connections to the rest of the OT, NT and/or suggestions for practical/pastoral applications
      b. A clear conclusion to your argument with reference to your thesis

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:
For proper citation style, consult the Chicago-Style Quick Guide (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the Chicago Manual of Style Online, especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.

Academic Integrity
Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at http://tyndale.ca/registrar.
E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Response on the Five Scrolls</td>
<td>Friday, July 24</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses in a Specialized Area of Interest</td>
<td>Monday, Aug 10</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading about the Five Scrolls</td>
<td>Friday, Aug 21</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exegetical or Thematic Paper</td>
<td>Friday, Aug 28</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grade</strong></td>
<td>Due Date</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures and Class Activities</th>
<th>Bible Readings/Responses Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday Morning, July 20</td>
<td>Syllabus, Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Afternoon, July 20</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday Morning, July 21</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday Afternoon, July 21</td>
<td>Song Part 1</td>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Morning, July 22</td>
<td>Song Part 2, Ecclesiastes Part 1</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Afternoon, July 22</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes Part 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday Morning, July 23</td>
<td>Lamentations Part 1</td>
<td>Lamentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday Afternoon, July 23</td>
<td>Lamentations Part 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Morning, July 24</td>
<td>Esther Part 1</td>
<td>Esther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Afternoon, July 24</td>
<td>Esther Part 2, Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bartholomew, Craig G. “Ecclesiastes.” In *Theological Bible Commentary*, 201-04. Louisville:


Revised March 5, 2015


Lee, Nancy C. The Singers of Lamentations: Cities under Siege, from Ur to Jerusalem to Sarajevo. BIS. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002.
Parry, Robin A. *Lamentations*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids:
———. “Guidelines for Understanding and Utilizing the Song of Songs.” BSac 156 (1999) 399-422.
Smith, Mark S. “‘Your People Shall Be My People’: Family and Covenant in Ruth 1:16-17.” CBQ 69