

Module Title:	Wisdom and Psalms
Module Code:	505 TWPT
Level:	5
Credit Rating:	20 Credits
Duration:	Student Learning Time: 200 hours
Teaching Hours:	40 Hours
Academic Responsibility:	Séamus Mulholland OFM, PhD

Module Aims:

to explore the literary nature, content and style of the Wisdom tradition
to examine the questions about human life with which the Wisdom tradition deals
to explore the understanding of compassion for the reality of the human condition as it is outlined especially in Job and Qoeleth.

1. To examine and explore the literary genre of the Psalms.
2. To examine the Psalms in relation to their environment, both social and religious.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to:

1. Understand the literary styles and content of the Israelite Wisdom tradition.
2. Understand the historical context of the Israelite Wisdom tradition.
3. Demonstrate a knowledge of the Psalm genres such as; Thanksgiving, Royal, Pilgrim etc.
4. Articulate an understanding of the theological content of the Psalms.

Indicative Module Content:

The module allows the student to reflect on some of the questions concerning human life which they will have encountered in their explorations of Old Testament literature thus far. It examines the Wisdom tradition of the Bible and how the difficult and pressing issues concerning the human condition are dealt with. It makes particular use of the Book of Job and Qoeleth [Ecclesiastes]

The module will also introduce the students to the Psalms. The theology of the Psalms will be explored primarily through their literary genres, especially in the pioneering work of Herman Gunkel. At least one Psalm of Lamentation (penitential); Todah (thanksgiving); Pilgrim (Ascent Psalms); and Hymnic will be analysed so as to elucidate the relationship between text and religious meaning.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The basic format of presentation will be lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

Assessment:

The module will be assessed by an essay of 2,500 words

Indicative Essay Titles

- Critically assess whether the Book of Job provides us with an effective strategy for coping with the disasters that afflict the human condition, especially death and loss.
- Through a close reading of Qoeleth [Ecclesiastes] and analysis of relevant passages discuss the idea that Qoeleth was the first existentialist philosopher.
- Through the use of Pss. 82,110 & 132, give an outline of the concept of Messianic hope personified in the Davidic promise
- Using both Ps. 8 and the Book of Genesis, discuss the idea that Ps. 8 is a poetic version of the Genesis story.
- Critically assess the contribution of Herman Gunkel to the study of Psalmic literature .

Illustrative Bibliography

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Journal

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