

*“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”*

<b>Course</b>	<b>WISDOM LITERATURE</b> OLDT 0513 1A
<b>Date and Time</b>	MAY 1 – JULY 21, 2023 ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>EDWARD HO, PhD</b> Email: <a href="mailto:eho@tyndale.ca">eho@tyndale.ca</a>
<b>Class Information</b>	This course is an asynchronous web-based online course, but it is not self-paced. Students are expected to participate on a weekly basis and to take advantage of the group-interaction features of the online classroom software.  Office Hours: By appointment only
<b>Course Material</b>	Access course material at <a href="https://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="#">Tyndale One</a> . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a literary and theological study of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes) with a special focus on the place of wisdom in Old Testament theology, Wisdom theology, reading and interpretive strategies, Wisdom genres and the theological message of each book. The overall objective is to appropriate the collective message of the wisdom books to contemporary social and ecclesiastical context.

*Pre-requisite: BIBL 0501 Biblical Interpretation*

*Recommended: OLDT 0511 Old Testament History and Theology*

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Identify the scope of Old Testament wisdom literature

- Describe the characteristics of Old Testament wisdom literature
- Articulate the structure, content, and literary features of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job
- Explain key interpretive issues of each book and evaluate the corresponding proposed solutions
- Present the current state of research on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and the wisdom corpus as a whole
- Critically evaluate commentaries and articles written on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job
- Apply the messages of the wisdom corpus to their personal lives, their ministry, and to a contemporary audience

### **III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. REQUIRED READING**

David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson, eds. *Interpreting Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. ISBN# 978-0830851782

#### **B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS**

Supplementary materials will be posted within the discussion forums, and the course bibliography can also be used for the discussion questions and for the term project.

Tyndale recommends [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

#### **C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS**

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](http://classes.tyndale.ca).

#### **D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in the Discussion Forums.

## 1. Discussion Forums (30%)

For each week, you will find a study plan including required lecture videos and readings. In the Discussion Forums, questions will be posted for reflection.

Educational research reveals that maximum benefits in online instructional formats result when students take personal responsibilities to complete readings, engage actively (e.g. forums), and consciously contribute to a virtual learning community through a spirit of collaboration, openness and encouragement. "Attendance" in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in forums.

### Individual Posts & Responses:

There will be 11 forums in total (one for each week) and each forum will have one to two questions. Students will post their responses by 11:59 PM on Wednesday (Eastern Time), and comment on the posts of at least 3 other students by 11:59 PM on Saturday (Eastern Time) of that same week. Your post should be 200-300 words per question. Each post should be concise, addressing the issues in the questions with reference to class readings/lectures, and demonstrate critical thinking (e.g. further questions or issues raised, application to your context). Your comments to fellow students would be briefer, with an affirmation (perhaps from your experience or readings) and one thoughtful question for further reflection. You are not required to respond to a "late post" of any member.

Discussion Forums Evaluation Rubric

Category	A	B	C	D
Completeness of post	completely addresses all questions in reasonable details	addresses all questions briefly	addresses some questions; responses are short	addresses almost none of the questions; responses are very short
Promptness and Initiative	initial posting on or before Wednesday; responds to at least 3 postings on or before Saturday	initial posting on or before Wednesday; responds to 1 or 2 postings on or before Saturday	initial posting on or before Wednesday; responds to other postings after Saturday	initial posting after Wednesday; does not respond to most postings
Relevance of Post	consistently posts topics related to	frequently posts topics related to	occasionally posts topics	frequently posts topics

	discussion; posts often prompt further relevant discussion	discussion; posts occasionally prompt further relevant discussion	unrelated to discussion	unrelated to discussion
Arguments within the Post	consistently expresses substantiated opinions in a clear and concise manner	occasionally expresses substantiated opinions in a clear and concise manner	rarely expresses substantiated opinions in a clear and concise manner	frequently expresses unsubstantiated or unclear opinions
Presentation of Post	consistently uses expressions free of grammatical and spelling errors	occasional grammatical or spelling errors	frequent grammatical or spelling errors	very frequent grammatical or spelling errors

## 2. Critical Book Review (20%) – Due on July 21 1t 11:59 PM (Eastern Time)

Provide a careful and thorough examination of the basic issues(s) at stake in one of the books provided below (available as e-books through the Library). Evaluate critically the relative strengths and weaknesses of the author’s case. Do not merely summarize, but rather seek to express the dominant issues and argument of the work. The review should be 6-7 pages in length, double-spaced.

### Select one of the following 12 books:

#### On Proverbs

Bland, Dave. [\*Proverbs and the Formation of Character\*](#). Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2016.

Keefer, Arthur Jan. [\*The Book of Proverbs and Virtue Ethics: Integrating the Biblical and Philosophical Traditions\*](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Schwab, Zoltan S. [\*Toward an Interpretation of the Book of Proverbs: Selfishness and Secularity Reconsidered\*](#). Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements 7. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014.

Stewart, Anne W. [\*Poetic Ethics in Proverbs: Wisdom Literature and the Shaping of the Moral Self\*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

### On Ecclesiastes

Keefer, Arthur Jan. [\*Ecclesiastes and the Meaning of Life in the Ancient World\*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Perry, T. Anthony. [\*The Book of Ecclesiastes \(Qohelet\) and the Path to Joyous Living\*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Sneed, Mark R. [\*The Politics of Pessimism in Ecclesiastes: A Social-Science Perspective\*](#). Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012.

Weeks, Stuart. [\*Ecclesiastes and Scepticism\*](#). Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 541. New York: T&T Clark, 2012.

### On Job

Balentine, Samuel E. [\*Have You Considered My Servant Job?: Understanding the Biblical Archetype of Patience\*](#). Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2015.

Newsom, Carol A. [\*The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations\*](#). New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Verbin, N. [\*Divinely Abused: A Philosophical Perspective on Job and His Kin\*](#). London: Continuum, 2010.

Vesely, Patricia. [\*Friendship and Virtue Ethics in the Book of Job\*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

### **3. Term Project (50%) – Due on July 21 at 11:59 PM (Eastern Time)**

You will write a research paper (15 – 20 pages; double-spaced) on a topic directly based on at least one of the Wisdom books studied, but different from that chosen for the critical book review. (For example, if you choose to write a critical review of a book based on Proverbs, you may not write a research paper on a topic based on Proverbs. However, you may still write a paper on a topic about the wisdom tradition.) Your paper should draw on a minimum of 10 secondary sources beyond the textbooks for the class. These secondary sources must include both books and articles, must reflect recent research (within the last 25 years), and must be elongated treatments of your topic. You will present the result of your research in an essay with the following ingredients: (i) the history/context/issues/ importance of your selected topic; (ii) scholarly opinions and your evaluation; (iii) the result/resolution from your research and the support; and (iv) bibliography.

Term Project Evaluation Rubric

Category	A	B	C	D
Purpose	The writer's central purpose or argument is readily apparent to the reader.	The writing has a clear purpose or argument, but may sometimes digress from it.	The central purpose or argument is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose or argument is generally unclear.
Content	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.	Information provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Information supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.
Organization	The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.	The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.
Use of References	Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources is given to support claims. Attribution	Professionally legitimate sources that support claims are generally present and	Although attributions are occasionally given, many statements seem unsubstantiated.	References are seldom cited to support statements.

	is clear and fairly represented. Accurate and consistent citation style is used.	attribution is, for the most part, clear and fairly represented. Accurate and consistent citation style is used.	The reader is confused about the source of information and ideas. Citation style is either inaccurate or inconsistent.	
Quality of References	References are primarily peer-reviewed professional journals or other approved sources (e.g., government documents, agency manuals, ...). The reader is confident that the information and ideas can be trusted.	Although most of the references are professionally legitimate, a few are questionable (e.g., trade books, internet sources, popular magazines, ...). The reader is uncertain of the reliability of some of the sources.	Most of the references are from sources that are not peer-reviewed and have uncertain reliability. The reader doubts the accuracy of much of the material presented.	There are virtually no sources that are professionally reliable. The reader seriously doubts the value of the material and stops reading.
Presentation (Grammar, Spelling, Other Writing Mechanics)	The writing is free or almost free of errors.	There are occasional errors, but they don't represent a major distraction or obscure meaning.	The writing has many errors, and the reader is distracted by them.	There are so many errors that meaning is obscured. The reader is confused and stops reading.
Integration of Knowledge	The paper demonstrates that the author fully understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Concepts are integrated into the writer's own	The paper demonstrates that the author, for the most part, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course. Some of	The paper demonstrates that the author, to a certain extent, understands and has applied concepts learned in the course.	The paper does not demonstrate that the author has fully understood and applied concepts

	insights. The writer provides concluding remarks that show analysis and synthesis of ideas.	the conclusions, however, are not supported in the body of the paper.		learned in the course.
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### E. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

### F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Discussion Forums	30 %
Critical Book Review	20 %
Term Project	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

### G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the [tip sheet, “How to Cite Sources in Theology”](#).

#### 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 takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.



Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

### **Research Ethics**

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office ([aau@tyndale.ca](mailto:aau@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

## **H. COURSE EVALUATION**

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

## **IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS**

Week 1. Introduction to OT Wisdom Literature

Week 2. Introduction to Proverbs

Week 3. Proverbs 1-9

Week 4. Proverbs 10-31

Week 5. Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Week 6. Ecclesiastes 1:1-6:9

Week 7. Ecclesiastes 6:10-12:14

Week 8. Introduction to Job

Week 9. Job 1-3

Week 10. Job 4-31

Week 11. Job 32-42

Week 12. Conclusion: Reading Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job Together

## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

### Introductions and Handbooks

- Balentine, Samuel E. *Wisdom Literature*. Core Biblical Studies. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018.
- Bartholomew, Craig G, and Ryan P O'Dowd. *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- Clifford, Richard J. *The Wisdom Literature*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.
- Crenshaw, James L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Rev. and Enl. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998.
- Dell, Katharine J. *Get Wisdom, Get Insight: An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Literature*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000.
- Estes, Daniel J. *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Kynes, Will, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Wisdom and the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- McLaughlin, John L. *An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Traditions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.
- Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Weeks, Stuart. *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature*. T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2010.

### On Wisdom Tradition

- Belcher, Richard P. *Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 46. London: Apollos, 2018.
- Boda, Mark J., Kevin Chau, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, eds. *Inner-Biblical Allusion in the Poetry of Wisdom and Psalms*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 659. London: T&T Clark, 2018.
- Brown, William P. *Wisdom's Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in Bible's Wisdom Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Clifford, Richard J. *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*. Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 36. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007.
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- Najman, Hindy, Rey Jean-Sébastien, and Eibert J. C Tigchelaar, eds. *Tracing Sapiential Traditions in Ancient Judaism*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 174. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.
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- Sneed, Mark R. *The Social World of the Sages: An Introduction to Israelite and Jewish Wisdom Literature*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Was There a Wisdom Tradition?: New Prospects in Israelite Wisdom Studies*. Society of Biblical Literature: Ancient Israel and Its Literature 23. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.

### On Proverbs

- Ansberry, Christopher B. *Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad: An Exploration of the Courtly Nature of the Book of Proverbs*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 422. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.
- Boström, Lennart. *The God of the Sages: The Portrayal of God in the Book of Proverbs*. Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament, 29. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990.
- Bland, Dave. *Proverbs and the Formation of Character*. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2016.
- Brown, William P. "The Didactic Power of Metaphor in the Aphoristic Sayings of Proverbs." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (2004): 133-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 10:1-31:9." Pages 150-82 in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by William P. Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
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- Emerton, John A. "The Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs xxii 17-xxiv 22: Further Reflections on a Long-Standing Problem." *Vetus Testamentum* 51 (2001): 431-65.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. *Proverbs 10-31*. The Anchor Bible 18B. New York: Doubleday, 2009.
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- Heim, Knut M. *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Cluster in Proverbs 10:1-22:16*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Woman of Substance ('*eset hayil*): A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 31:10-31." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 427-447.
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### On Ecclesiastes

- Anderson, William H. U. *Scepticism and Ironic Correlations in the Joy Statements of Qoheleth?* Gorgias Biblical Studies. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019.
- Atkinson, Taylor. *Singing at the Winepress: Ecclesiastes and the Ethics of Work*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
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- Boda, Mark J, Tremper Longman and Cristian G. Rata, eds. *The Words of the Wise Are Like Goads: Engaging Qoheleth in the 21st Century*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013.
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