



B423 Old Testament Wisdom Literature

3 credits. Prerequisites: Introduction to the Old Testament and Bible Study Methods

 Online Video

Apr 27-July 31, 2026

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“There’s always another new book; You’ll drain your body before you fill your head” - *Qoheleth*

Course Goals

Course Description

This course explores the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. While the study explores historical, literary, and theological issues related to these texts, emphasis will also rest upon how ancient Israelite wisdom speaks to the everyday issues of human life, work, suffering, and loss. The course focuses on a particular portion of Wisdom Literature, which includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, along with select psalms and prophetic writings.

Relationship to Horizon’s Mission

Through understanding the Old Testament wisdom literature, the students become more fully equipped so as to competently use those biblical texts and that literary genre of wisdom literature within the context of ministry and personal life.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



To demonstrate competency in **Biblical & Theological Literacy**, students will

1. Interpret the Old Testament Wisdom Books in light of their literary and socio-historical contexts and distinct theological perspectives with the assistance of relevant secondary literature.

- *Assessment:* Wisdom Books Overview Essay; Wisdom in Context Study; Class Preparation and Participation
2. Describe the key interpretive issues that are critical for understanding the Old Testament Wisdom Books.
 - *Assessment:* Wisdom Books Overview Essay; Class Preparation and Participation
 3. Identify and explain key emphases and their significance within the Old Testament Wisdom Books.
 - *Assessment:* Wisdom in Context Study; Class Preparation and Participation; Reading Reflections
 4. Explain how the theological witness of the Old Testament Wisdom Books speaks to the way we think, live, and minister today.
 - *Assessment:* Reading Reflections; Wisdom in Context Study

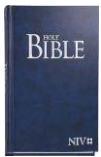


To demonstrate competency in **Spiritual Maturity**, students will

5. Cultivate spiritual ears to hear the Lord speaking his living word to them in and through the Old Testament Wisdom Books of Scripture.
 - *Assessment:* Reading Reflections

Course Work

Required Readings



Contemporary translation of the Bible (in class, the professor will be using the NIV and NASB translations)

Lucas, Ernest. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Vol. 3 of *Exploring the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003
Vol 3 [DTL](#)

Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life : An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002. ISBN: 978 0802839657. *Note 3rd edition. [DTL](#)

In addition to the required textbook, there will also be articles assigned. See Readings in Populi. (Crenshaw, “Wisdom Literature,”)

**While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library. For your convenience, Horizon has partnered with Kennedy’s Parable to provide textbooks.

Course Assignments and Activities

1. Video Lesson Discussions

In order to pass the course, students are required to “attend” all video lectures and to discuss them via **Padlet** with the professor. Students will submit a 2–3-minute video report which: 1) confirms they have watched the required lectures for that time period, 2) summarizes one thing they learned that will help them reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question they had after watching the class videos. Students are welcome to add an additional comment or two. This assignment will be considered complete or incomplete.

Lecture video recordings are housed on Masters-Horizon Video Centre. The link and password will be placed on Populi, under the “Syllabus” tab, under the list of “Links,” in the right column.

You can find instructions on how to access and post to Padlet in the “Padlet Instructions” Lesson on Populi. **Padlet video report Submission Due Dates:**

- Day 1 Lectures (Sessions 1-4) & Report due Saturday, May 2 at 11:59PM
- Day 2 Lectures (Sessions 1-4) & Report due Saturday, May 9 at 11:59PM
- Day 3 Lectures (Sessions 1-4) & Report due Saturday, May 16 at 11:59PM
- Day 4 Lectures (Sessions 1-3) & Report due Saturday, May 30 at 11:59PM
- Day 5 Lectures (Session 1) & Report due Saturday, June 6 at 11:59PM

2. Class Preparation: Reading and Engagement – 15%

In order to cultivate a cooperative learning community, students will prepare for each video lecture by 1) reading select passages in the Old Testament Wisdom corpus and/or introductory articles on biblical Wisdom Literature and 2) by identifying questions and observations that can be used to interact during lectures, group discussions, and other classroom activities. **The readings are to be completed prior to watching the class videos.** The readings assigned are as follows:

Read Prior to Watching . . .	Readings
Day 1 Lectures	Prov 1; Eccl 1; Job 28; Crenshaw, “Wisdom Literature,” 114-30.
Day 2 Lectures	Prov 8-9; 15; Murphy, “Proverbs: The Wisdom of Words” 15-29.
Day 3 Lectures	Eccl 11:7-12:14; Murphy, “Qoheleth the Skeptic?,” 49-60.
Day 4 Lectures	Job 1-2; Murphy, “Job the Steadfast,” 33-46.
Day 5 Lectures	Deut 4; Pss 1; 19; 73

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - 1) Carefully read the assigned passages for each week of class 2) identify one critical question and one observation about the assigned passage 3) during each week of watching the lecture videos, identify an *additional two* critical observations and an *additional two* questions that arise from further engagement through the classroom lectures that day; 4) *using the template provided on Populi*, compile your questions and observations into a written format for submission at the assigned due date.
 - The assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Uses the template provided on Populi.
 - Includes three questions and three observations for each week of readings and videos.
 - Indicates the date on which the student completed each assigned reading.
 - “Stealing” the observations and questions raised by fellow students during classroom times is encouraged! However, try to think of why another person’s contribution stood out to you as important. Make it your own, even if your thoughts were stimulated by others.
 - Related Learning Outcomes: #1, 2, 3.
 - **Assignment Length:** No set length in pages; *Do not overtax yourself with the writing aspect of this assignment.* Single sentences for questions and observations are sufficient—as long as the professor can understand what you’re saying and how it engages with specific passages and class times. The goal is to document that you prepared for class times as expected.
 - **Due date:** Weekly, before watching the class video for that week. Entire assignment using the template is due June 7, 2026.

3. Reading & Reflection – 25%

This written submission of about five pages will involve reading and reflecting on the three major Wisdom books in the Old Testament: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. **Students will read the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.** Approach your reading as a devotional activity with prayer. The goal of this exercise is not only to learn what is in these books to support theological and biblical literacy, but to allow these books to function as divine revelation for your life right now. Since the word of the Lord does not return to him empty, you should expect and pray that this assignment will be transformative, as well as informative.

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - 1) First, *before* reading for the assignment, develop your personal context for reading these Wisdom books by identifying several questions you have in your life and learning right now. These can be questions about your personal life such as questions about decisions and direction or sense-making questions that you have as you try to understand what God is doing in your life through the circumstances and experiences you have encountered. The questions can also be related to your current level of biblical and theological understanding, such as questions about theological issues or

Church practices and patterns of thought that you are wrestling with and need greater insight and clarity over. You will probably find it helpful to write down some of these questions as you begin the reading and add to them as you go. 2) Read the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, praying that the Holy Spirit will speak his living word to you through these Scriptures. 3) As you read, look for ways that the things you learned during module week impact the perspective you have on the text. 4) As you read, watch for thoughts and ideas that come into your mind about the questions you identified in developing your personal context for reading. These may be promptings of the Spirit. Note these things and pray about them. Listen to what the Lord may want to say in or about those thoughts and ideas. 5) Write a short reflective essay highlighting how these books make sense to you now in light of the lectures you've heard and how your experience of hearing from God through Scripture has been helped (or hindered) by the perspectives you've gained in the course. The essay should include specific discussion of your perspective on each of those three books and how it has been impacted by the course as well as specific reflection on how God has or has not spoken into the questions you identified when developing your personal context of reading these Scriptures at the outset.

- This assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Follows the Horizon Format Guide.
 - Includes a short initial statement confirming that you have read the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.
- Related learning outcome(s): #3, 4, 5.
- **Assignment Length:** *≈ 5 pages. Again, don't overtax yourself on the writing aspect of this assignment.* The goal of the submission is to provide evidence that you have gone through the process outlined above. The real "work" of the assignment is reading these books, listening for the Spirit's voice, and prayerfully reflecting on how the reading is impacting you in the context of what you have learned in class. The vast majority of what comes out of this exercise for you will not be contained in the five-page submission. In the essay, you're just trying to give an illustrative and brief account of having completed the exercise.
- **Due Date:** Monday June 15, 2026

4. *Wisdom Books Overview Essay – 30%*

Each student will write an essay that gives an overview of the biblical Wisdom Books, describes their relationship to each other, and explores their role in the development of Israel's "wisdom tradition."

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - 1) Read chapters 2 through 6 of the assigned course textbook (pp. 67-173) as this will be your main scholarly resource for this assignment, 2) write a summary essay about the Old Testament Wisdom books that integrates a discussion of relevant background questions for each book (e.g., authorship, date, genre, and purpose) with a description

of the development and function of Wisdom as part of ancient Israelite/Hebrew life, culture, and ultimately Scripture.

This essay should include the following sections:

- *Introduction*: Identify the purpose of the essay and clearly articulate a thesis about the relationship between Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes as “Wisdom books” and their respective contributions to the Wisdom tradition(s) of Ancient Israel.
 - *Body Section*: Present an argument that supports your thesis statement. This argument should supply evidence from the three Old Testament Wisdom books and interact with the assigned course textbook. (Research from other secondary sources that you might have come across is welcome, but no reading/research beyond the course textbook is required for this assignment.)
 - *Conclusion*: Given the brevity of the paper, there need not be any recap of your argument in the conclusion. Instead, reflect in several sentences on how your exploration of biblical wisdom has relevance for the life of the Church in the world today.
- This assignment will be considered complete if the assignment submission:
 - Follows the Horizon Format Guide.
 - Includes specific discussion of all three Wisdom books.
 - Related learning outcome(s): # 1, 2.
 - **Assignment Length**: 5-6 pages.
 - **Due Date**: Monday June 29, 2026

5. *Wisdom in Context Study* – 30%

The final assignment for this course will be a written submission on the theme of Wisdom itself in relation to its different contexts.

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - 1) During your reading of the three Old Testament Wisdom books for the Reading & Reflection assignment, take note of anything that stands out as relevant to answering the questions in this assignment. 2) Consult three or more scholarly resources that deal with Wisdom in ways related to the questions in this assignment. A good place to start is a dictionary entry in something like *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, or *New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. For more advanced resources, check out the Cambridge and Oxford Handbook or Companion series. Other major academic presses also have similar collections, which should all be available through DTL. These companion series often have a dedicated volume on Wisdom with helpful essays by leading experts on a variety of relevant topics. Pay attention to how these scholarly discussions highlight things you either did or did not notice in your own reading. Finally, 5) complete the written submission *using the template provided on Populi* by providing long-form/essay style answers to the following questions.

- What is Wisdom and where may it be found? (2-2.5 pgs.)
- What is the relationship between Wisdom and the wider theology of the Old Testament? Be sure to discuss how Wisdom and Torah relate to one another. (2-2.5 pgs.)
- Why is gaining Wisdom desirable or necessary for Yahweh's covenant people? (0.5-1 pgs.)
- What could/should our relationship to and/or pursuit of Wisdom look like in the church and world today? (0.5-1 pgs.)

In your answers to these questions you should make reference to specific passages in the Wisdom books that support your answer and you should interact with the 3 or more scholarly resources you consulted on the theme of Wisdom.

- This assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Uses the template provided on Populi.
 - Follows the Horizon Format Guide.
 - Includes long-form responses to each question as indicated above.
 - Includes a bibliography of at least three scholarly resources that you cited in footnotes.
- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 5-7 pages.
- **Due Date:** Monday July 20, 2026

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	
1. Class Preparation and Participation	4 hrs	various	15%
2. Reading Reflections	24 hrs	June 15	25%
3. Wisdom Books Overview Essay	20 hrs	June 29	30%
4. Wisdom in Context Study	20 hrs	July 20	30%
Total	≈ 98 hrs		

Assessment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

**The following schedule is a guideline. Adjustments may occur.*

Day	Time	Topics
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Day 1 Videos	Course Introductions Introduction to Wisdom in the Old Testament Introduction to the Wisdom Books Study Calendar Time
Day 2 Videos	Introduction to Proverbs Proverbs
Day 3 Videos	Introduction to Ecclesiastes Ecclesiastes
Day 4 Videos	Introduction to Job Job
Day 5 Videos	Wisdom in the New Testament and in the Church Today

- Since this is a DE course, revisions will be requested throughout the semester. Watch Populi for due dates for revisions. No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after **Friday July 31, 2026**.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the [Horizon](#) & [MCS](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines. The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded. Assignments should be submitted via Populi under *Submissions* (not *Comments*). The resource at this [link](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Extensions

To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Request Extension Form* on the [MCS](#) or [Horizon](#) website and *before the due date*. Professors reserve the right to deny extensions. Generally, the sooner that a student asks for an extension, the more willing faculty tend to be in granting extensions. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned or extended due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. Late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. Repeated late submissions, including late submissions of revisions, will result in academic discipline, such as warnings, required coaching, or academic probation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline.

If an assignment is submitted more than four calendar days late, the student will receive a failing grade (0%) for that assignment until it is submitted (students must demonstrate competency by submitting and passing all assignments to pass a course). Upon submission, the assignment may not be graded until revision week. In addition, the student will receive the grade for the assignment with minimal feedback (only a brief rationale for the assignment grade) and no opportunity to submit revisions.

Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Assignment Revisions

Students can generally submit up to two revisions for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward achieving competency.

Horizon and MCS's College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment rubric. Once a student's assignment has met all competency requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. Assignments that do not meet competency will receive a 0. A final course grade is not calculated until the end of the course. Students pass a course (with a B- or higher) only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all competency requirements* for that course and, therefore, only after they have passed all assignments.

Horizon and MCS CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated good achievement of all learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

If the student does not meet all competency requirements in a course and, therefore, does not pass all the assignments in a course, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at Horizon and MCS. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below according to the scale below.

BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student was beginning to meet one or more learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66

			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Horizon and MCS have a subscription to software that ensures the originality of academic writing, verifies the proper citation of all sources, and detects AI-generated content. When you submit an assignment, you will automatically receive a summary on Populi that includes your submitted files along with an originality score (a high originality score is positive).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

In keeping with the Academic Integrity policy above, students must disclose on the title page of all assignments whether or not they have used AI and how they have used it. If the assignment has no title page, the student must disclose this to the instructor by some other means, such as in a comment on Populi. Students are expected to follow the policy for acceptable use of AI that is published in the [Horizon](#) and [MCS](#) Student Handbooks.

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon and MCS are committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institutions, programs, and courses. The application for Academic Accommodations begins with a student disclosing a medical diagnosis or professionally documented learning disability during the application process. Enrolled students may contact Accessibility services personnel (at MCS, the Director of Academic Success, Wendy Holmes at wendy.holmes@mcs.edu; at Horizon, the Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu). All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the Student Handbooks.

Class Attendance (On Campus or Livestreaming)

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or

through livestreaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

Horizon and MCS encourage the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

Bibliography

The professor may give
further suggestions in the class lectures.