Course Description

The message of Ecclesiastes appears very contemporary (everything is meaningless), but such a message makes the book a challenge to preach. This course will combine exegesis of key passages in Ecclesiastes along with reflection on how to preach from those passages and from the book as a whole. Exegesis will help in understanding the message of the book and the preaching angle will discuss how to communicate that message within the literary structure of the book and in light of the full revelation of the completed canon.

Course Objectives

1) To further a student's ability in Hebrew Exegesis
2) To practice moving from exegesis to the sermon
3) To think about how to preach through one book of the Bible
4) To reflect on how to move from original meaning to modern meaning in light of the message of Ecclesiastes within the context of the canon.

Textbooks and Assignments

A) Tremper Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) will be the basic text that the whole class will read.

B) The class will also read the exegesis section (the notes section) of the following two commentaries on Ecclesiastes for the texts marked (b) in the Schedule:

1) Roland Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1992)

C) The student will choose a commentary to read from the following list:

1) Graham S. Ogden (the message of Ecclesiastes is positive), either one of the two below can be chosen
   a) *Qoheleth* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) – shorter than b)
   b) *A Handbook on Ecclesiastes* (New York: UBS, 1997) with Lynell Zogbo


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4) Michael Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999): the contradictions in Ecclesiastes state the problems of life as a way to move forward

D) From Exegesis to Sermon Preparation: it is suggested that the student follow this order in approaching the assigned texts each week

1) The texts in the Schedule marked (a) will be read in the Hebrew (not a slow, careful reading)
2) Read through the text marked (a) several times in English
3) Write down in one to two sentences the theme of the passage

4) The texts marked (b) will be exegeted in the following manner:
   a) Parse the verbs
   b) Read the exegesis section of Longman, Seow, and Murphy and write down any comments on the Hebrew that you think are significant
   c) Use a grammar to comment on something in the Hebrew (Arnold/Choi; Waltke and O'Conner; Gesenius; or Joun)
   d) Take note of any significant textual variants

5) Read Longman and your chosen commentary on the whole passage, that is, the text marked (a), comparing and contrasting the two in a couple of paragraphs

6) Write down how you might develop the theme of the passage based on the text

7) Reflect on how you would move from the original meaning of the text to modern meaning either in light of the book as a whole, or in light of other parts of the OT, or in light of the NT

E) Presentation of Exegesis and Sermon Preparation in class: one presentation will be given in class by the student in which the following should be covered:

1) Setting the text in the context of the book of Ecclesiastes, including reasons for divisions of the text in light of what comes before and after

2) Translate the text marked (b) for the class, making pertinent comments on the Hebrew related to exegesis of the text (students must choose which elements to comment on, including where your commentaries disagree on exegetical matters)

3) Give an overview of the meaning of the text marked (a) comparing Longman's view with the other commentary you are reading

4) Give the theme of the text and comment how you would develop that theme from the text

5) Reflect on how you would move from the original meaning to modern meaning, including how you might introduce the text and other canonical connections you would make
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F) Review of the Assignments

1) There will be two exams based on the Hebrew texts marked (b) 40%

2) The student will come each week ready to discuss in class the Hebrew of the text marked (b): see number 4 under D above 10%

3) The student will hand-in every week the following: 20%

   a) The comparison and contrast of Longman with the other commentary you are reading (see 5 under D above)

   b) The work done related to preaching on the text marked (a): see 3, 6, and 7 under D above

   c) For the first week the student will hand in how their chosen commentary defines the following (due February 13)

      i) author and date

      ii) the meaning of lb,h,

      iii) the meaning and function of the calls to enjoyment (2:24; 3:12, 22; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7-10)

      iv) the meaning of !Art.yI in relationship to the key question of the book (1:2; 2:11)

4) The presentation in class of exegesis and sermon preparation 30%

Schedule

February 6   Introduction to the Course
             Key Issues in Interpreting Ecclesiastes
             Eccl 1:1-11

February 13  Eccl 1:12-2:11 (a)
             Eccl 1:12-15; 2:8-11 (b)

February 20  Eccl 2:12-26 (a)
             Eccl 2:12-16, 24-26 (b)

February 27  Eccl 3:1-22 (a)
             Eccl 3:11, 16-22 (b)

March 5      Eccl 4:1-16 (a)
             Eccl 4:1-4, 9-12 (b)
             Eccl 4:13-16 be sure to compare explanations of the story
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>March 12</td>
<td>Eccl 5:1-7 (4:17-5:6) – (a) and (b)</td>
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<td>Eccl 5:18-19 (5:17-18) – (a) and (b)</td>
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<td>March 19</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>March 26</td>
<td>Eccl 6:10-7:14 (a)</td>
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<td>Eccl 6:10-12; 7:10-14 (b)</td>
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<td>April 2</td>
<td>Eccl 7:15-29 (a)</td>
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<td>Eccl 7:15-18, 25-29 (b)</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>Eccl 8:1-17 (a)</td>
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<td>Eccl 8:1, 10-17 (b)</td>
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<td>Eccl 9:1-12 (a)</td>
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<td>Eccl 9:18-10:3, 8-11 (b)</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
<td>Eccl 12:8-14 (a) and (b)</td>
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