Course Title: CRS 3135 THE MEGILLOTH
Second Term 2009/2010  Mon 8:30am-11:15am  HYS G01

Prof Philip Chia  (Email: ppchia050@gmail.com)

Course Description:

This course is a critical study of the Megilloth (Five Scrolls) in the Hebrew Bible, namely, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther. Though diverse in content, these books were grouped together as the Megilloth with a tradition of reciting them publicly at the five great Jewish festivals: (1) The Book of Ruth at Pentecost；(2) The Song of Songs at Passover；(3) Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles；(4) Lamentations at the 9th day of the Ab month in Commemoration of the Destruction of Jerusalem, 586/7 BCE；and (5) The Book of Esther at Purim. Exegetical analysis, literary and theological considerations, socio-historical and cultural interpretations are among those critical methods this course would employ in engaging the texts with relevance sensitivity to contemporary cultural contexts. The intrinsic value of the Megilloth in relation to the Hebrew Bible as well as to the ecclesia and the Jewish tradition will be explored throughout the course.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn the content of the five scrolls, the Megilloth, of the Hebrew bible.
2. To understand historical, literary and cultural interpretations of the Megilloth.
3. To engage the biblical texts with various dimensions of the contemporary cultural life.

Course Content and Schedule:

The class will meet three periods each week for lectures and discussion. This course mainly engages textual studies of the Megilloth, in terms of their interpretations, historical and cultural, highlighting themes and issues within those texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Key concepts/topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 11, 2010</td>
<td>Course Introduction, Introduction to the Megilloth and the divisions of the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>Kethubim, the Writings, Megilloth,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>History of Interpretations of the Megilloth</td>
<td>Reading strategy, Jewish festivals, Jewish and Christian traditions</td>
<td>李-游: 導論</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Ruth I: The Text</td>
<td>Historical background, story, narrative, cultural traditions</td>
<td>李-游:《路得記》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 01</td>
<td>Ruth II: Tradition and Theology</td>
<td>Kinsman redeemer, cultural and ethnic relations, faith and traditions</td>
<td>article</td>
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</table>
Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge Outcomes:
(1) To be able to understand the content of the Megilloth of the Hebrew Bible.
(2) To be able to appreciate historical scholarship and contemporary interpretations of the five scrolls of the Hebrew Bible.
(3) To be able to engage the five scrolls in their historical traditions with relevance to contemporary cultural understanding.

Attitude Outcomes
(1) To develop students’ ability to have a critical and yet sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the Megilloth of the Hebrew bible within the milieu of traditional and modern biblical scholarship.
(2) To develop students’ sensitivity to the relevancy of biblical literature to the cultural dimension of human life.

Learning Activities
This course mainly consists of lectures and student participations through class discussion and project presentation. Students will be asked to do a 10 minute presentation and to lead the discussion following the presentation on the selected book or passage from one of the five scrolls. This presentation will constitute 25% of the overall grade.
Assessment scheme

1. Comparative Book Report: (25%) Submission Date: Apr 16, 2010
   Write a 2500 words of comparative book report on 李熾昌、游斌 合著《五小卷研讀～希伯來聖經與社群認同》(香港：香港基督徒學會，2004年6月) and one other book or commentary (from the list of bibliography attached) on the Megilloth and also Class lectures.

2. Project Presentation: (25%) April 12, 19, 2010
   Each student is to select from one of the five scrolls and present as a project to the class on the followings: literary structure, themes and issues, theological and exegetical exposition, socio-political, economic and religious background, etc. A power point presentation e-file must be submitted together with a general outline. The presentation will be evaluated by peer review.

3. Term Paper: (50%) Submission Date: May 03, 2010
   Each student is required to submit a research term paper of 4500 words, on one of the selected scroll under the following suggested respective leading themes. Consultation with the lecturer is expected in drafting the title, outline, abstract, selected bibliography, etc., which all will be constituted as part of the assessment scheme for the paper.
   1. Ruth: Tradition and Marriage (傳統與婚姻)
   2. Song of Songs: Lust and Love (色慾與情愛)
   3. Ecclesiastes: Profit and Lost in Life and Death (生之益、死之缺)
   4. Lamentation: Lament of a Nation (國殤)
   5. Esther: Empire and Ethnicity (帝國與族裔)
   Submit a proposed outline by Mar 15. The final paper is to be submitted on May 03. Late submission will not be accepted without prior written approval and may suffer penalty in grade.
   Full documentation standard (The Chicago Manual of Style) must be strictly observed or suffer grade repercussion.

Students must submit all written assignments via the Webpage of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine (CUPIDE) http://cupide.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/student; post a copy onto the WebCT and give a hardcopy together with a print out of receipt and signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement from CUPIDE (received via e-mail after you have submitted your assignment) to prof Philip Chia mail box at HYS 4th floor.
Comparative Book Report
Based on assigned reading materials and write a comparative book report, comparing various interpretations and reading strategies on the understanding of the Megilloth. Due date: Apr 16. 25%

Presentation
10 minutes presentation based on the selected book or passage + leading a discussion following the presentation. Apr 12, 19, 2010 25%

Written Assignment
Term Paper (4,500 words & due on or before May 03, 2010) 50%

Learning resources for students
See attached bibliography.

Other suggested readings will be given in class and through the WebCT.

Feedback for evaluation
An end-of-term university wide course evaluation will be conducted in class. Students’ comments and feedback on the course through e-mail or within WebCT or personal meeting with instructor are always welcomed.

Teachers’ Contact Details
Lecturer: Prof. CHIA, Philip 謝品然 (Department of Cultural and Religious Studies)
Lecturer’s office Hour: Mon and Tue by appointment.
Please use the e-mail and/or Discussion Forum in WebCT for all course communication

A Facility for Posting Course Announcements
Details for assignment and feedback for written assignment will be posted through the WebCT or email in due course. All questions with regard to the course could be posted on the discussion forum or via e-mail and/or within the WebCT.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
Students must submit all their written assignments via CUPIDE and hand in a hard copy and a print out of receipt and a signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement. Relevant information on academic honesty and plagiarism can be allocated via: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty
Megilloth: Bibliography


**Ecclesiastes—Bibliography**

**Commentaries**


Plumptre, E.H. *Ecclesiastes, Or, the Preacher, With Notes and Introduction by E.H. Plumptre*. Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1895.


**Monographs**


**Lamentations—Bibliography**

**Commentaries**


**Monographs**

**Lamentations—Bibliography**


Monographs


Song of Songs—Bibliography

Commentaries


Monographs
Fox, Michael V. *The Song of Songs and The Ancient Egyptian Love Song.* Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.


王鎮. 《雅歌默想：歌頌基督與教會的愛情》上海：中國基督教協會神學教育委員會，1989.

**Articles:**


**Ruth—Bibliography**

**Commentaries**


**Monographs**


**Esther—Bibliography**

**Commentaries**


1998.

力戈登腓力斯 (Phillips, L Gordon.) 《以斯拉・尼希米・以斯帖記釋義》（Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.）
林夜明譯，香港：基督教輔薦出版社，1962.
唐佑之《民族史詩：以斯帖記》香港：證道出版社，1978.

**Monographs**


