



OT375: God's Many-Sided Wisdom for Daily Life (I): Proverbs

Dr Philip Satterthwaite | 1.5CR

About the Course

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have a clear aim: to teach believers, those who 'fear God' (Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13), how to live wisely, such that their lives reflect their commitment to God at every point. Christians can gain much from studying these books and reflecting on the highly practical teaching which they offer on topics such as: friendship, family, love, loyalty, hard work, business, wealth, wise speech, justice and politics.

Both books, however, pose problems when you work through them: Proverbs seems to present its various teachings in a disorganized way; Ecclesiastes is even more perplexing – rambling, self-contradictory and at points apparently skeptical of Israel's traditions. How, then, are we to benefit from these two little-read books? OT 375 focuses on

Proverbs and OT 376 focuses on Ecclesiastes. The two courses are presented as two parts (Part I and II) of a larger topic (God's Many-Sided Wisdom for Daily Life) out of a belief that Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are mutually illuminating and best studied together. OT 375 and 376 can, however, also be taken separately. Teaching is by blended learning (a blend of recorded lectures and class discussion).

About the Lecturer

Dr Philip Satterthwaite has been Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew at BGST since 1998.

His main research areas are the OT Historical and Wisdom Books. In 2007 his book *Exploring the Old Testament 2: The Histories* (written with J.G. McConville) was published by SPCK/IVP. Philip has preached and taught in a number of churches in Singapore. He is a member of Prinsep Street Presbyterian church. He is married to Eileen.



Dates (2022)

Jan 11, 25

Feb 15

Mar 1, 15

Time

7:15pm – 10:00pm

Class Format

- Self-Paced+Live (In-Person)
- Self-Paced+Live (Online)
- Self-Paced+Live (In-Person+Online)

Closing Date for Registration (NB):

Jan 7, 2022

Location

Zoom Classroom

Fees*

S\$225(Credit)
S\$120 (Audit)

Learning Outcomes

Students will gain a clearer understanding of how to read and interpret Proverbs, particularly the difficult section of mainly one-verse sayings in Proverbs 10–30. They will become familiar with the structure and pedagogical method of Proverbs, and the bearing that these have on the interpretation and application of individual sayings. They will be introduced to a number of different ways of reading Proverbs and organizing its teaching into a form that will make it easier to assimilate.

Learning Goals

We will deal with Proverbs in five sessions, considering the different approaches to reading this book found in the work of various scholars. We will apply different reading strategies to Proverbs 10–30, the section dominated by one-verse sayings in which it is so easy to lose one's way. The aim will be to demonstrate how these different strategies help to make the teaching in this section more manageable. There will be a number of class exercises which will introduce some of the most important themes of Proverbs to students, and which will also give students practice in applying different reading strategies.

Academic Information

Assignments:

1. A response (1000-1500 words) to an essay or article on Proverbs. This can take the form of a review of the essay/article, or a more general reflection on issues raised by it. **[40% of grade point]**
2. An essay (2500-3500 words) on one of the following topics **[60% of grade point]**:
 - (a) How would you describe the teaching method of the Book of Proverbs? Do Christian Education programmes in our churches have something to learn from Proverbs in this respect?
 - (b) What does Proverbs teach on one of the following topics: (i) wealth; (ii) speech; (iii) family? In your view, how does this teaching apply in modern Singapore?

Class Schedule:

Jan 11 th :	Introduction to the course; Proverbs 1–9; Proverbs 10–12
Jan 25 th :	Proverbs 13–16
Feb 15 th :	Proverbs 17–21
Mar 1 st :	Proverbs 22–26
Mar 15 th :	Proverbs 27–31

COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the document “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on your course Moodle page.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle.
3. *Unless otherwise indicated*, students must submit their assignments 3 months after the first day of the month following the last class/session (“first deadline”). After the first deadline, students will be granted a further 3-month extension automatically (“second deadline”). However, students who submit after the first deadline will incur the **penalty of a one-third grade deduction** on the specific late assignment (e.g., B+ will be downgraded to B). After the second deadline, the status of the incomplete course will be **converted from Credit to Audit**. This conversion will *not* affect overall GPA.

First Deadline: 1 July 2022
Second Deadline: 1 October 2022

NOTE FOR STUDENT PASS HOLDERS:

The first and second deadlines are shortened to 1 month and 2 months respectively.

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST 'Guidelines for Academic Papers'.

Course Bibliography

Learning Resources and Bibliography

- D. Atkinson *The Message of Proverbs* (IVP: Leicester, 1996)
- R. Alter *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 163-84
- C. Bartholomew 'Hearing the Old Testament Wisdom Literature', pp. 302-331 of C. Bartholomew and D.J.H. Beldman (eds.), *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2012)
- C.G. Bartholomew
& R.P. O'Dowd *Old Testament Wisdom Literature. A Theological Introduction* (Downers Grove/Nottingham: IVP/Apollos, 2011), pp. 188-209
- M. Fox 'The Rhetoric of Disjointed Proverbs' (JSOT 29, 2004), pp. 165-77
- J. Goldingay 'The Arrangement of Sayings in Proverbs 10–15' (JSOT 19 [1994], pp. 75-83)
- P.T.H. Hatton 'A Cautionary Tale: The Acts-Consequence "Construct"' (JSOT 35 [2011], pp. 375-84)
- K.A. Kitchen 'Proverbs 2: Ancient Near Eastern Background', pp. 552-66 in T. Longman and P. Enns (eds.), *Dictionary of Old Testament Interpretation: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008)
- E.C. Lucas *Exploring the Old Testament III: The Psalms and Wisdom Literature* (SPCK/IVP: London/Downers Grove, 2003), pp. 79-115
- E.C. Lucas *Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015)
- T. Longman III *Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), pp. 21-87, 549-78
- P.E. Satterthwaite 'Wealth and Poverty in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes', 26 pages.†

†This piece was published as pp. 145-82 of *Jian Dao* 41 (Jan 2014). As you may not have easy access to this periodical, I will make available to you a copy of a draft of this piece which is very similar to the final printed version.

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