

MN 396W-L2 LOSS, GRIEF, AND HOPE: Lament in the Hebrew Bible as a Congregational Resource

Wartburg Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa) – ELCA Seminary Shared January Course

2 Semester Hours

January 13-24, 2024, with approximately 2.5 hours of class time each morning.

Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit (pass/fail) grading

Prerequisite: A Hebrew Bible (OT) course covering the Torah

Helen Chukka, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible

Dates to be determined.

Residential/Synchronous Zoom (although if 3 or more commit to asynchronous learning, that option could also be made available)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Loss, Grief, and Hope introduces the biblical understanding of suffering and its effects represented in the pious practice called “lament.” The strategies of protesting, coping, and trusting God amidst various losses are accessible in the laments in the Hebrew Bible. This course explores these various responses of individuals and communities in the Scripture. It will look at expressions and specific forms of lament, as well as the biblical figures as models of piety and prayer and intends to present lament as a powerful and pious expression of faith in and for the Christian church.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- grow in understanding the nature, function, and power of laments
- describe the various forms of lament in the Hebrew Bible
- recognize the complexity of grief in the Hebrew Bible and distinguish it from the various stages of grief in psychology
- appreciate lament as a pious and powerful expression of faith
- transfer knowledge about lament in the Scripture as a congregational resource for various events including funeral services or personalized devotions

EVALUATION

Students will be primarily evaluated on written assignments and class participation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required

Bible (NRSV or NRSVue)

Billman, Kathleen, and Daniel Migliore, eds. *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006.

Recommended (select chapters will be required but purchase is not required)

Kelly, Melissa M. *Grief: Contemporary Theory and Practice of Ministry*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.