From ancient times to the present, the Psalter has held a central role both in expressing and in shaping the faith experience of Jews and Christians. Its texts offer a means of participation in an ongoing drama in which the faithful seek and encounter their God amid the realities of life, with its moments of clarity and ambiguity. While some passages in the Psalter may seem familiar and comfortable to contemporary readers, others may perplex or even scandalize them. In any case, careful attention to liturgical, literary, and other cultural contexts of these rich texts promises to enhance the reader’s ability to understand and to appropriate them. This course will investigate the Psalter with some attention to similar literary material from other OT and NT books and from other ancient Near Eastern sources. It will consider issues of genre, poetic features and structure, theological themes, and dramatic logic. The course will also examine how psalms function in the liturgy and personal prayer of Christians.