

OT520 Old Testament Introduction

Asbury Theological Seminary – Florida Campus

Spring 2010

Class meetings: 2/12, 2/26, 3/19, 4/16, and 5/7

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“What other life can there be without the knowledge of the Scriptures, for through these Christ himself, who is the life of the faithful becomes known?” – Jerome

"Apply the whole of yourself to the text; apply the whole of the text to yourself." - Bengel

I love teaching this course. It is my prayer that as we enter the world of the Scriptures of Ancient Israel that we will emerge better prepared to serve as interpreters of Scripture *and* become more profound people in the process.

DUAL FORMAT

1) This course is an Orlando based on campus course that will meet over five Fridays ()

2) We will use the Virtual classroom: www.virtual.asburyseminary.edu to discuss the assigned reading as well as other content related conversations. The reading assignments will be due on Saturdays beginning February 20, 2010. We will spend the subsequent seven days debriefing online about the reading. **Make sure that you review carefully the instruction posted online regarding the discussion forums.**

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to (1) the literature of the Old Testament in its socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (2) critical study of the OT.

Note: This course is not a *survey* of the literature of the OT. If you desire a survey course to prepare for the Bible Competency exam, you should consider taking BS400.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course with a grade of C or better, the student will be able to :

- A. Describe the history and geography of the Ancient Near East as it relates to the Old Testament;
- B. Narrate representative features of the history of the interpretation of the Old Testament;
- C. Understand and apply critical methods of Biblical interpretation;
- D. Describe and critique the major questions of OT scholarship and study (authorship, historicity, etc.);
- E. Narrate the essential elements of Israelite history and religion;
- F. Articulate the on-going authority of the Old Testament as canonical Scripture;
- G. Understand the missional movement of the Old Testament

H. Use the Old Testament more effectively in ministry.

III. TEXTS

Oswalt, John N. *Called to Be Holy*. Evangel Publishing House, 1999. **CBH**

Dillard, R. B. and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. **IOT**

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (IVP, 2006) **MOG**

Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Baker Academic, 2005). **IAI**

Paul Lawrence *et al.* *The IVP Atlas of Bible History* (IVP, 2006). **ATLAS**

III. EVALUATION

Grade Scale

A 100-93	B 86-83	C 76-73	D 66-63
A- 92-90	B- 82-80	C- 72-70	D- 62-60
B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67	F 59-0

** "A" work at Asbury Theological Seminary is defined as "Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives" (*Catalog*, p. 28). To achieve "A" level, students must demonstrate a critical engagement and synthetic understanding of all course materials.

I take grading very seriously. It is my responsibility to evaluate your work and give you a letter grade. I hope to do this in the spirit of Ephesians 4:15-16 "But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

I will be clear (to the best of my abilities) about my expectations for each assignment.

- 1) Completion of all reading with active participation in the online discussion forums. (25%)
There will be a reading assignment for each week (including the weeks that we meet on campus). Reflection questions will be posted in a discussion forum in the Virtual Classroom for discussion beginning on the Saturday on which the reading is due. Reading must be completed by the scheduled due date (see schedule below) **and** each student is expected to participate substantively and regularly in the team discussion that will open on the day that the reading is due.
- 2) Map Quiz. (5%) Students will be quizzed on their knowledge of the geography of the Ancient Near East, includes two parts: Countries and Bodies of Water; Key Cities in Syro-Palestine. See below for study guide. **Mar 19** (see document below for elements to be tested).

3) Final Essay Exam (35%). Each student on the basis of reflection upon class presentations and readings will sketch out his or her current approach to the Old Testament. Students are limited to eight double spaced pages. **Due May 22nd 35%**

4) Research Project (35%). Each student will prepare a critical 6-8 page essay on a topic of her or his choice. The paper will be primarily exegetical (i.e., focuses around an issue crucial to the interpretation of a specific text). A minimum of five *scholarly* sources is required. You may use your text books but they do not count as part of the five required sources. The paper must use 1” margins on all sides, 12 size, Times New Roman font. **Due April 30th (35%)**

Students in the **MABS and MATS** programs will upload their research paper for their Christian Formation Portfolio project on Believers and Humanity. Please consult with me regarding your topic.

IV. Attendance

Class attendance is a necessity for successful completion of the course requirements. You may miss one three hour block without penalty. A loss of one grade level (A to A-) will result from absences in excess of this for each additional block missed. Exceptions to this policy must be discussed/approved *before* the class meetings.

VI. SCHEDULE (The following topics are tentative. Depending on time, more or less will be covered in lecture)

Each class day will begin with worship including praise, prayer, and the exposition of a key Old Testament text. This part of the class does not stand in opposition to the “teaching part” of the class, but rather seeks to bridge the false dichotomy of head and heart. Serious study of Scripture leads to the worship of the living Triune God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; worship leads to the serious study of Scripture. Both unleash us into the world for *mission*. *Mission is the reason for the continued existence of the Church.*

The largest portion of the day will consist of lecture, discussion, and multi-media presentations on key topics in the study of the Old Testament.

The class day will end with an opportunity for research in the library so that you can begin to gain skills in research and access materials that will help you to prepare your final research paper.

Course Introduction; Why study the Old Testament? The Need for Critical Interpretation?
The Canon of the OT; Textual Criticism; Geography
Worldview; Creation; Archaeology and the OT
History of Ancient Near East
Israelite History: Abraham to the Settlement
Israelite History: Monarchy to the Maccabees
Missional Approach to the Old Testament
Critical Introduction to the Pentateuch: Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism,
Canonical Approaches
Covenant
Evangelical Response to Pentateuchal Criticism;

The Former Prophets: Jos – Kings
Prophets and Prophecy in Israel: The Eighth Century and beyond
The Poetry of Ancient Israel; Wisdom and the Sages
Apocalyptic
Issues in Old Testament Theology
Women and the Feminine in Ancient Israel

VII. Reading Assignments – The following reading guide is provided to help you identify themes and key learning points.

As you complete the reading, use the following guides:

Two broad questions: 1) what significant learnings have I acquired through a careful reading of this book? 2) What questions do I have about the material (these questions may be confusing points made by the author or issues that you wished the author would have raised)?

Each week I will post questions for discussion in our Virtual classroom on the reading completed the previous week.

The readings will supplement our classroom discussions and lectures. Keep the Atlas handy as you read and bring it to class for reference. If you don't know the geography of Israel well, make this a learning objective. It will be an additional means of enhancing the interpretation and understanding of texts.

I have included readings from a cross section of the Old Testament. You are encouraged during this semester to read even more widely within our *primary* sources. There is no better way to learn about the Old Testament than by reading widely and regularly in its literature.

Reading Schedule

Due 2/20 Psalms 1 and 8; Gen 1-3, 12, 15 and 17; *IOT* 14-37; *IAI* 13-70; *CBH* 1-20

Due 2/27 Exodus 3, 6, 12:1-15:21, 19-20, 32-34, and 40:34-38; *IAI* 71-112; *CBH* 21-38

Due 3/6 Lev 9-10, 16; Num 13-14, 20:1-13; *IAI* 113-73; *CBH* 39-64, *IOT* 38-62

Due 3/13 Deut 6, 11-12, 17:14-20, 26:1-15, 28; *IOT* 63-166, *CBH* 65-88

Due 3/20 Jos 1-2, 6-10, 23-24; Judg 1-3:6; 1 Sam 12-16; *IOT* 167-277, *CBH* 89-96

Due 3/28 2 Sam 11, 24; 1 Kings 2, 8, 12-13, 18-19; 2 Kings 17-25; *IOT* 278-396; *CBH* 97-102

Spring Reading Week 3/29 – 4/3

Due 4/10 1 Chr 21, Ezra 3-5, 9; Neh 9; Esther 4, *IOT* 397-502, *CBH* 103-124

Due 4/17 Isa 1, 6, 12, 40, 53-54; Jer 1, 31; Ezek 1-4, 18, 47; *MOG* 21-135, *CBH* 125-34

- Due 4/24 Hos 1-3; Amos 7; Micah 6; Haggai; CBH 135-48; MOG 136-264
- Due 5/1 Job 1-5, 29-31, 38-42; CBH 149-64; MOG 265-392
- Due 5/8 Prov 1-3, Ecc. 1-3, 12; CBH 165-84; MOG 393-535
- Due 5/15 Psalms 2, 3, 19, 22, 73, 90, 103, 121, 137, 145, 150; Daniel 3-7; CBH 185-200;
- Due 5/22 ***Final Essay Exam Due 11:59 PM***

Geographical Features for Study

Nations/Regions:

Egypt

Edom

Moab

Philistia

Sinai Peninsula

Assyria

Babylon

Phoenicia

Persia

Cities:

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

Shiloh

Gilgal

Jericho

Bethel

Dan

Samaria

Megiddo

Tyre

Sidon

Damascus

Nineveh

Babylon

Ur

Rivers:

Nile

Jordan

Euphrates

Tigris

Other bodies of water:

Mediterranean Sea

Dead Sea

Sea of Galilee

Persian Gulf

Red Sea

Research Topics for Spring 2010
OT520

The research paper will be 1800-2400 words. Begin with a tightly articulated thesis statement and then proceed to demonstrate your thesis through the presentation of your research. Avoid writing papers that merely serve as broad surveys of the material. You must use at least five *scholarly* resources. Neither text books nor internet sites count toward this total unless the web page is an e-version of an actual scholarly work, e.g., material available through ATLA. **MABS and MATS write a paper for the Christian Formation Plan under the theme: Believers and Humanity.**

- 1) Comparison between Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 12
- 2) Atrahasis, Enuma Elish, and Genesis 1
- 3) The Servant Songs in Isaiah (Who is the Servant?)
- 4) The figure David in the Psalter
- 5) The Baal Epic and the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1-21)
- 6) The Purpose and Function of the Israelite Tabernacle
- 7) Concepts of Clean/Unclean, holiness (in Leviticus)
- 8) Identification of the Pharaoh of the Exodus
- 9) The Conquest(s) in Joshua and Judge 1
- 10) The function of genealogical lists in the Old Testament
- 11) Authorship of a book/corpus in the Old Testament: Provide a critical introduction to the issues
- 12) Some aspect of Hebrew religion (tabernacle/temple, sacrifice, festivals, law, etc.) as compared with a similar aspect in another ancient Near Eastern culture, or as detailed in the Pentateuch.
- 13) The Plagues/Signs against Egypt in relationship to the gods/goddesses of Egypt
- 14) Identification of (the) Satan in Job or the presence of Satan in the OT
- 15) War in the Old Testament
- 16) Purpose of the Book of Jonah
- 17) Function of the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah (13-23) or in any other prophetic book.
- 18) Definition of a biblical prophet
- 19) Meaning of one of the Ten Commandments
- 20) Treatment of women in Israelite law
- 21) Treatment of the poor in Israelite law
- 22) Pharaoh's Hard Heart in Exodus
- 23) Call Narratives in the OT (Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc)
- 24) The goddess Asherah in the OT
- 25) Creation themes
- 26) Flood stories in the ancient world
- 27) The Unity of the Book of Twelve (Minor Prophets)
- 28) Purpose of the book of Ruth
- 29) Purpose of the Book of Esther
- 30) Theological Meaning of the Flood Narrative
- 31) A missional approach to the Old Testament

The above topics are suggestive rather than exhaustive. My desire is that you complete a paper on an area of interest to you in OT studies. The only stipulation is that the paper must aid in the interpretation of a biblical passage.

