



Interpreting the Old Testament 1 OTEN5351
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Biblical Studies
Fall 2023
Online

Dr. Jonathan Patterson
Adjunct Instructor, Old Testament & Hebrew
Office: LSC 231D
Phone: 504-816-8171 (office); 251-259-8145 (cell)
Email: jpatterson@nobts.edu

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course introduces the content and major interpretive issues of Genesis—Esther. The course covers literary, historical, and theological contexts as well as hermeneutical principles related to reading the OT genres of law and historical narratives. This course complements OTEN5352 Interpreting the Old Testament 2: Job—Malachi.

Student Learning Outcomes

At this conclusion of this course, the student will:

- Recognize the key issues in the critical study of the OT books of Genesis—Esther.
- Recognize the purpose and message of the OT books of Genesis—Esther.
- Understand the significance of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.
- Utilize key hermeneutical principles to interpret OT genres of narrative, law, and history.
- Develop an appreciation for and enjoyment of the Old Testament.

Embedded Assignment

Worksheet 1 will include the following question, which will be used as an embedded assignment for this course:

Identify how the Ten Commandments relate to the succession of covenants throughout the Pentateuch and Former Prophets. Draw from your assessment how this covenant idea should impact the body of Christ, including individual believers.

1. Students should understand thoroughly Old Testament history, background, and selected themes of the Old Testament.
2. Students should adequately apply Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to contemporary church needs.
3. Students should communicate clearly Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to a contemporary audience.

Textbooks

The following textbooks are required:

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglass Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. (**F&S**)

Hess, Richard S. *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. (**Hess**)

One of the following translations of the Bible: Christian Standard Bible, English Standard Version, New International Version, New Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

The primary method of instruction for this course will be lecture and guided analysis of the Old Testament. Students will also learn through reading, discussion, and research assignments which they will complete as required components of the course.

Course Requirements

Students will complete the following assignments for this course:

1. Weekly Quizzes (30%) - The weekly quizzes will cover material from the lecture, notes, PowerPoints, as well as the reading for the week. Students will take quizzes on Canvas and should set aside 45 minutes to take the weekly quiz.
2. OT Chats (10%) - This course includes five 30-minute "chats" with the professor and other members of the course. Students who are able to participate live in the discussion will receive full credit. Students who cannot attend the conversation must write a 200 word summary of the conversation and submit it via Canvas by the due date for weekly assignments in order to receive credit.
3. Critical Thinking Forum Posts (10%) - This course also includes five Critical Thinking Forums. Each forum post requires critical engagement with a discussion prompt. Students should follow the instructions given for each post to fully address the forum prompt. Avoid using language like "I think," "I feel," etc. Give direct answers to the prompt. While you are not required to respond to your peers, you are free to do so in a polite, charitable manner if you have questions about their post, additional thoughts you may add to their observations, or want to comment on qualities of their post you found particularly engaging.
4. Worksheets (40%) - Students will complete four worksheets which cover material relevant to the Old Testament. Worksheets are guided research that will require students to engage particular questions using specific sources and methodologies. Worksheets are to be 3-4 pages, single-spaced, and must be submitted on Canvas by the dates given in the Course Schedule below. Worksheets should be submitted in Turabian format, using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins (including top and bottom of the page).
5. "Why the OT Matters" Essay (10%) - Students will write a 4-5 page double-spaced essay on "Why the Old Testament Matters." Address the following questions: What is the overarching story told by the OT? Do God's commands in the OT still apply to contemporary Christians? What does the OT teach Christians about Jesus? What role should the OT play in the teaching/preaching ministry of the local church? The essay should be submitted in Turabian format, using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins (including top and bottom of the page). **The final exam essay is due by Wednesday, December 6.**

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Weekly Quizzes	30%
Discussion Forums	10%
OT Chats	10%
Why OT Matters Essay	10%
Worksheets	40%

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to engage regularly with course content through the learning management system and other course delivery methods. Students who fail to participate consistently in course activities may receive a grade of "F" for the course.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. Bluejeanshelpdesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Bluejeans & NOBTS Bluejeans classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Late Work Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted in this class unless approval has been granted by the professor *prior to the due date*. Any assignment not submitted by the due date will receive a grade of 0. Failure to ensure that assignments have been properly submitted on Canvas does not constitute an adequate excuse for late work.

Help for Writing Papers at "The Write Stuff"

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center's page on the seminary website at: <https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Unit	Topic	Reading	Assignments	Due Date
1	Formation of OT ANE Culture	Gen 1-25 ANE Texts (Canvas)	Unit 1 Quiz Forum Post #1	Aug 19
2	OT Geography Introduction to the Pentateuch	Gen 26-50; Exod 1-2 Hess, pp. 1-24	Unit 2 Quiz OT Chat #1	Aug 26
3	Reading OT Narrative	Exod 3-37 F&S, pp. 93-111	Unit 3 Quiz Forum Post #2	Sept 2
4	Genesis	Exod 38-40; Lev 1-22 Hess, pp. 25-54	Unit 4 Quiz OT Chat #2	Sept 9
5	Reading OT Law	Lev 23-27; Num 1-29 F&S, pp. 168-86	Unit 5 Quiz Worksheet #1	Sept 16
6	Exodus	Num 30-36; Deut 1-23 Hess, pp. 55-78	Unit 6 Quiz Forum Post #3	Sept 23
7	Leviticus Numbers	Deut 24-34; Josh 1-24 Hess, pp. 79-122	Unit 7 Quiz OT Chat #3	Sept 30
FALL BREAK OCTOBER 2-6				
8	Deuteronomy	Judg 1-21 Hess, pp. 123-60	Unit 8 Quiz Worksheet #2	Oct 14
9	Reading OT Historical Books Joshua	Ruth 1-4; 1 Sam 1-31 Hess, pp. 155-93	Unit 9 Quiz Forum Post #4	Oct 21
10	Judges Ruth	2 Sam 1-24 Hess, pp. 194-235	Unit 10 Quiz OT Chat #4	Oct 28
11	1-2 Samuel	1 Kgs 1-22; 2 Kgs 1-10 Hess, pp. 236-74	Unit 11 Quiz Worksheet #3	Nov 4
12	1-2 Kings	2 Kgs 11-25; 1 Chr 1-22 Hess, pp. 275-316	Unit 12 Quiz Forum Post #5	Nov 11
13	1-2 Chronicles	1 Chr 23-29; 2 Chr 1-36 Hess, pp. 317-347	Unit 13 Quiz OT Chat #5	Nov 18
THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 20-24				
14	Ezra-Nehemiah Esther	Ezra 1-10; Neh 1-13; Esther 1-10 Hess, pp. 348-92	Unit 14 Quiz Worksheet #4	Dec 2
15	Exam Week		Why the OT Matters Essay	Dec 6

Selected Bibliography

- Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, eds. 2002. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic.
- Anderson, Amy, and Wendy Widder. 2018. *Textual Criticism of the Bible: Revised Edition*. Edited by Douglas Mangum. 2nd edition. Lexham Press.
- Arnold, Bill T., and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. 2005. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Student edition. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic.
- Briscoe, Thomas V. 1998. *Holman Bible Atlas: A Complete Guide to the Expansive Geography of Biblical History*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman.
- Goldingay, John. 2015. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Exploring Text, Approaches and Issues*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Imes, Carmen Joy, and Christopher J. H. Wright. 2019. *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic.
- Provan, Iain W, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman. 2015. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Richter, Sandra L. 2008. *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*. Illustrated edition. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic.
- Walton, John H. 2018. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.