



OTEN 5300 Exploring the Old Testament
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division
Internet - Summer 2021

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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 is an introduction to the literary, historical, and theological contents and contexts of the Old Testament. Significant interpretive issues are noted, major theological themes covered, and their relevance for Christian living addressed.

Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students should:

1. Gain understanding of the canonical development and arrangement of the Old Testament.
2. Be able to identify significant Old Testament themes, characters, nations, and historical events (and their relationship to the New Testament whenever appropriate).
3. Be able to demonstrate the value of the background, setting, literary structure, and message of the Old Testament books (i.e., authorship, date, content, analysis, etc.).
4. Learn to work with selected methods currently employed in the study of the Old Testament and explain the resultant implications of the various theories.

Textbooks and Resources

Arnold, Bill T. and Brent A. Strawn. *The World Around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

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

Provan, Iain W., V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman, III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2d edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Zondervan, 1994.

Any modern English translation of the Bible (NASB, NIV, ESV, CSB, etc.)

Course Teaching Methodology

This course will employ a variety of methods for acquisition and understanding of the Old Testament, including readings from the Old Testament and assigned textbooks, research on a variety of topics pertinent to the study of the Old Testament, and reflection on the implications of Old Testament themes, characters, etc., for New Testament Christians. Brief explanatory videos will be provided for each unit dealing with these various topics and students are expected to view these videos and complete the required reading and writing assignments for each unit.

Course Requirements

1. Reading Quizzes (20%): Students are responsible for completing each of the assigned textbook readings as well as the readings from the Old Testament for each unit. Quizzes on the readings will be given for each unit and students will be expected to complete the reading quizzes by Sunday of each week. *Reading quizzes may not be taken late unless prior approval has been granted by the professor.*
2. Interactive Component: Building a Ministry Portfolio: Students will be required to participate in an interactive discussion component throughout the course, wherein one group of students will be tasked with leading/guiding the discussion for each unit while the other students will provide substantive responses to that discussion. Students will be divided into four groups at the start of the course and each group will lead discussion on a total of three (3) reflection topics throughout the term and provide responses to other groups' reflections. While members of each group are encouraged to interact with one another, particularly when leading the discussion, each member will post his/her own discussion or response every week.
 - a. Reflection Discussions (20%): Embedded in the course are a total of 12 reflection questions that are designed with two objectives in mind: (1) to enable students to think critically about using the Old Testament in ministry and (2) to prepare each student for the upcoming worksheets by highlighting the significance of each research question. Students from each group are encouraged to interact with one another when leading the weekly discussion. The goal is for the leadership group in each given unit to investigate and demonstrate how to employ the Old Testament in answering difficult life questions. As such, members of the group leading the discussion each unit must contribute a minimum of 100 words on the topic in the discussion forum. The course schedule below details which groups will be responsible for leading the discussion of which units. *Reflection discussions must be posted by **Thursday** of each week in order to allow responding groups an opportunity to read through each discussion post and formulate a response.*
 - b. Reflection Responses (9%): All other students not in the leadership group for a given unit will be required to submit responses to the leadership group's reflection discussion. That means that, when Group 1 is leading the discussion, Groups 2, 3, and 4 will be posting responses to the discussion and so on. Responding groups should read all of the discussion posts from the leadership group prior to posting their response in order to adequately interact with the discussion. Responses must be a minimum of 25 words and should be substantive in nature (i.e., 25 words to say "good job" will not satisfy the requirements of this assignment). *Reflection responses must be posted by **Sunday** of each week.*
3. Worksheets (51%): Students will demonstrate mastery of the canonical text by submitting three (3) worksheets during the course term. The worksheets will consist of four research questions each. While students are encouraged to pursue their own research whenever possible, the professor recognizes that many online students have

limited, if any, access to a good theological library. Consequently, a number of essays and articles from dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, and other research works will be provided in the Blackboard shell for the course. At a minimum, students will be expected to have read these materials and use them (properly citing them, as necessary) to answer the research questions for each worksheet. But students should make every effort to locate other source material for researching these questions if they wish to receive credit for doing more than the minimum. Each worksheet must be well-written with proper formatting (footnotes, headings, margins, etc.) and should be a minimum of 14-20 pages, double-spaced and include a selected bibliography (not included in total page count). *Worksheets are due by **Sunday** of the week in which they are assigned.*

4. **Extra Credit:** Students may earn up to **three (3) points** on their final average by completing one of the following extra credit assignments. The assignment should demonstrate research on the topic, by means of footnotes and a selected bibliography, and should be well-written and properly formatted. The extra credit assignment must be submitted no later than **Thursday, July 29**.
 - a. Write a 2-3 single-spaced page critical introduction to the book of Jeremiah. The critical introduction should include discussions of authorship, date, structure historical background and context, and the differences between the Masoretic Text (Hebrew) and the Septuagint (Greek) versions of the book.
 - b. Write a 2-3 single-spaced page introduction to the Book of the Twelve (the English Minor Prophets), including discussion on the compositional/editorial history and processes that brought the twelve individual books together into a single collection in the Hebrew Bible.
 - c. Write a 2-3 single-spaced page introduction to the Psalter, detailing its usage for the ancient Israelites as well as its organization and division into five distinct "books."

Late Work: Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of **ten (10) points each day** after the due date; however, reading quizzes will not be available after the due date and students will not be able to take quizzes late unless they have received approval from the professor *prior to the due date*. Because of the hurried nature of a shortened summer term, students who fall behind in one week are falling behind the equivalent of two weeks in a regular semester. Consequently, it is vital that students are diligent in submitting their assignments in a timely manner. This is especially important when students are responsible for leading the reflection discussion as a failure to submit their discussions on time will also have a negative impact on the responding students' ability to interact and adequately respond.

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Reading Quizzes	20%
Interactive Reflection Component	
Reflection Discussion	20%
Reflection Responses	9%
Worksheets (3 @ 17% each)	<u>51%</u>
	100%

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 site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Attendance and Classroom Etiquette

While an online course does not have an "attendance policy" per se, students are expected to be active participants each week of the class. Students are expected to complete all assignments in a timely manner, including weekly assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Students are also expected to be respectful of their classmates in any online discussion and interaction. Any student who repeatedly demonstrates a lack of respect for classmates or the professors may be required to meet with the professors and the Dean of Students and could be subject to removal from the class.

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.

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

Units	Topics	Readings	Assignments	Due Date
1 & 2	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hess: 1-24 • Provan: 2-104 • Walton: 12, 60-61, 76-79, 90-93, 96 		June 6
	Genesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis • Hess: 25-54 • Provan: 107-125 • Arnold: 1-105 • Walton: 13-18, 80-82, 97-98, 100-101 	Reflection: Group 1 (Thursday)	
3 & 4	Exodus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus • Hess: 55-78 • Provan: 125-137 • Arnold: 107-196 • Walton: 21, 62-65, 71-73, 84-85, 99, 102-110, 112-113 	Reflection: Group 2 (Thursday)	June 13
	Leviticus & Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leviticus & Numbers • Hess: 79-122 • Arnold: 197-265 • Walton: 19-23, 37 	Reflection: Group 3 (Thursday)	

5 & 6	Deuteronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy • Hess: 123-153 • Provan: 138-192 • Arnold: 267-352 • Walton: 24-25, 38, 71-73, 79, 83-84, 86-87 	Reflection: Group 4 (Thursday)	June 20
	Joshua & Judges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua & Judges • Hess: 155-219 • Arnold: 353-377 • Walton: 26, 37-39, 83, 104, 111 	Worksheet 1	
7 & 8	Ruth; 1 & 2 Samuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth; 1 & 2 Samuel • Hess: 220-274 • Provan: 193-238 • Walton: 40-46 	Reflection: Group 1 (Thursday)	June 27
	1 & 2 Kings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 & 2 Kings • Hess: 275-316 • Provan: 239-277 • Arnold: 379-415 • Walton: 27-34 	Reflection: Group 2 (Thursday)	
Mid-Term Break (Catch-up Week) June 28-July 4				
9 & 10	Psalms & Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalms & Job • Hess: 389-451 • Walton: 47-51 	Reflection: Group 3 (Thursday)	July 11
	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, & Lamentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, & Lamentations • Hess: 452-510, 561-567 	Reflection: Group 4 (Thursday)	
11 & 12	8 th Century Prophets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, & Micah • Hess: 511-539, 599-610, 618-630, 637-655 • Arnold: 417-465 • Walton: 46, 52-56, 58, 65-67, 74 	Worksheet 2	July 18
	7 th Century Prophets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, & Zephaniah • Hess: 540-560, 656-682 • Provan: 278-304 • Walton: 68-69 	Reflection: Group 1 (Thursday)	
13 & 14	6 th Century Prophets, 5 th Century Prophets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezekiel, Obadiah, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi • Hess: 568-584, 611-617, 631-636, 683-710 • Walton: 58-70 	Reflection: Group 2 (Thursday)	July 25
	Post-Exilic Writings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther, Ezra, & Nehemiah • Hess: 348-387 • Walton: 27, 35-36, 75, 107-118 	Reflection: Group 3 (Thursday)	
15 & 16	Chronicles & Daniel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 & 2 Chronicles, Daniel • Hess: 317-347, 585-598 • Arnold: 467-500 • Walton: 57, 75, 105-106 	Reflection: Group 4 (Thursday)	July 29
			Worksheet 3	

*Any assignments submitted after Thursday, July 29 will not be accepted.

Reflection Questions

Unit 2 - Ideological Question: Does the age of the earth matter to the original author or recipients of the book of Genesis?

Unit 3 - In what way do the covenant passages in Exod 32-34 and Deut 30 impact the NT church's understanding of the community of faith (Rom 5)?

Unit 4 - What are the impacts on the church for Mosaic or non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?

Unit 5 - Deuteronomy 20-24: (1) Integrity and Purity. How could you use these passages to help women with divorce or abusive relationships? (2) How do the purity laws interact with the holiness laws of Leviticus?

Unit 7 - Compare and contrast Saul and David. Who was the more obedient king? Defend your answer.

Unit 8 - Identify five passages in the Old Testament where archaeological information genuinely impacts one's understanding of the Old Testament.

Unit 9 - How does the Old Testament help people who have lost a loved one to a natural death or dramatic accident?

Unit 10 - Develop a discipleship strategy from the Book of Proverbs.

Unit 12 - How does justice in the prophets compare to the contemporary social justice movement?

Unit 13 - What is meant by "Second Temple Judaism"?

Unit 14 - Create a brief presentation, equivalent to a minimum of four PPT slides, providing an overview of the development of the Jewish Canon.

Unit 15 - What images in the book of Revelation are drawn from Daniel or other Old Testament imagery?

Worksheet Questions

Worksheet 1

- Who were the Israelites and where did they come from?
- What is the purpose of Gen 1-11 as a whole unit?
- Discuss the authorship of the Pentateuch. Include arguments for single authorship, the fragmentary hypothesis, supplementary hypothesis, and documentary hypothesis.
- Discuss the idea of covenant in the Pentateuch with special focus on the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants.

Worksheet 2

- Thoroughly discuss the theories concerning the entry of Israel into the land of Canaan (vast military conquest, peasant revolt, socio-political assimilation, etc.). Include the progression of destruction within the land (the destruction of Ai, Shechem, Jericho, etc.).
- Discuss the difference between the Kings corpus and the Chronicler's history.
- Briefly discuss the theologies in the Psalter.
- List and explain the three major interpretive approaches to the Song of Songs.

Worksheet 3

- Discuss the importance of Josiah's reform (2 Kgs 22-23) in relation to history and the Old Testament canon.
- Discuss the authorship views of the book of Isaiah.
- Summarize the theologies of the Minor Prophets (answers should include a brief paragraph about each book).
- Is the book of Daniel apocalyptic? Discuss the arguments for prophetic and apocalyptic genre. Include a discussion of dating and authorship.

Selected Bibliography

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- Archer, Gleason L., Jr. *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Rev. and expanded. Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.
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Specialized Introductions

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Historical Books

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