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## BS 501 Introduction to Biblical Studies

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Area of Biblical Studies

BS501 3 hours

Lawson Stone and David L. Thompson<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES--1

Fall 2001

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The two-course sequence of BS 500-501 comprises three interrelated sections: (1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics, and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation; (2) an introduction to the Old Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specializations represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. (Professional), M.A. in Theological Studies, and M.A. Counseling degree students. BS 500 focuses on the Old Testament.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. The student will trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the Old Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.
- B. The student will discuss, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the historical background of the Bible, including the historical setting of the biblical story, and especially the story of the Old Testament, and the critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various Old Testament books, and will demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text.
- C. The student will be conversant with the major issues in hermeneutics (i.e., will be able to identify these issues, articulate the main contemporary positions surrounding these issues, and present in a reasonable and informed fashion his/her own perspective regarding these issues), and will demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the actual interpretation and application of the Old Testament text. Among these hermeneutical issues will be the role of

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<sup>1</sup> In section A of the class, Dr. Thompson will serve as professor of record and Dr. Stone will lecture as Guest Professor. In section B, Dr. Stone will be the professor of record and Dr. Thompson the Guest Professor.

the cultural placement of the reader in the process of interpretation and application and the importance of exposure to multicultural perspectives for understanding of the text.

- D. The student will demonstrate, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the Old Testament text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will (a) identify the macrostructure of a biblical book (including the structural development of the book in terms of its units and sub-nits, and major structural dynamics within the book) and will show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (b) engage in a “close reading” of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation; (c) employ various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (d) move from interpretation of the Old Testament passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the exemplifying of principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the Old Testament for Christian application.
- E. The student will show how the teachings of individual passages within the Old Testament contribute to the flow of biblical revelation in the large, and will trace, in at least a general way, the development of major biblical themes and motifs throughout the whole of Scripture so as to articulate a biblical theology of these major themes and motifs.
- F. The student will demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, to his/her vocation.

### III. COURSE REQUIRED TEXTS

Bauer, David R (ed.). Biblical Resources for Ministry. Second edition. Evangel Press, 1995.

Dillard, Raymond B. and Tremper Longman III. An Introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. A traditional OT introduction written by two evangelical scholars. An “introduction” to the OT is not a guide to the uninformed, but is a summary of current scholarly opinion about the authorship, date, origins, and composition of each OT book and the issues involved in their interpretation

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. Introduces essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Students may *omit* sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

Revised Standard Version of the Bible or New American Standard Bible or some other contemporary, formal (vs. dynamic) equivalence translation with minimal editorial clutter in the layout. NRSV and NIV are also fine.

Thompson, David L. Bible Study That Works. Revised edition. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1994.

Several articles of importance for OT Studies have been scanned and saved as MS Word documents, and are located in the "Articles" folder with the lecture materials for this class on the lecture drive. Power Point files will also be posted to the lecture drive *after completion of the unit, not beforehand*.

**Required Access to Reference Materials:** You will need to use one of the following multi-volume Bible encyclopedia sets. No substitutes are permitted. You do not have to own these, but they are a worthy addition to your library. Often one or the other is available in public libraries. The Asbury Bookstore can facilitate purchase should you wish to do so, as well as other dealers in theological books.

*The Anchor Bible Encyclopedia*. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM for Windoze or PowerPC Macs running a Wintel emulation program

*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes.

In addition to these, a very fine supplementary resource is the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols; ed. W. Van Gemeren, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE

- A. Regular attendance, preparation, and participation in the class is necessary. Students missing more than three course sessions will not be eligible for a passing grade without negotiation for make-up work.
- B. Timely completion of assignments involving the methodological practice of the structural analysis of Old Testament books, the close reading of individual Old Testament passages, and the interpretation and application of Old Testament passages to contemporary Christian life. (50% of final grade)
- C. Timely completion of 2 essay assignments involving Old Testament canonicity, hermeneutics, historical background, content and critical issues, showing an ability to integrate these issues and those in no. 2 with student's vocational interest. (50% of final grade).

**Guidelines for Open Book/Notes Essays:** these will be on topics assigned by Dr. Stone, each of which will be 1200-1600 words. These papers will be practicum exercises in which students will work with a passage of scripture

or problem of biblical interpretation posed by the instructor in the light of specific issues focused in class. Students may consult class notes, textbooks, essays are to represent your *very best thought and work*. Essays are to be the *student's own work* and students are asked not to consult, give, or receive any advice in conjunction with these essays. *The essay topic and instructions will be posted on the Intranet "lectures" folder about 2 weeks before it is due, per the schedule below. They will not be distributed in class.* Assignments will be in the form of Microsoft Word documents, which can be read on any workstation on campus and printed out. Essays should be double-spaced, with 1" margins. You may send me your paper as an attachment to an e-mail, but it must be in the Microsoft Word format. I cannot support any other format. Also, *submission by e-mail is acceptable only on the ATS First Class e-mail system.* All papers, however submitted, must be in the instructor's office by 5:00 PM on the due date. Electronic submissions must be marked as received onto the First Class system by that time.

**A note on reading assignments:** While readings are correlated to specific days, it is recognized that students will not always be able to read the exact assignments for each day. If an article is part of a particular day's reading assignment, students will find the article especially helpful and relevant for that day and would profit from having read it prior to class. What is **required**, though is that *when you submit essays, indicate your completion of reading assigned to that date as a percentage.* Failure to complete reading assigned to that point will result in a reduction of that essay's grade.

## V. GENERAL COURSE SCHEDULE BY WEEKS

Old Testament Introduction Emphasis	Inductive Biblical Studies Emphasis
<p>1. Sept 4 &amp; 5 What do we make of the Old Testament? Read: G. Ernest Wright, "The Church's Need for the Old Testament" from <i>The God Who Acts</i> This is a MS Word document WRIGHT.DOC in the "Articles" folder of the Lecture drive. Blomberg-Klein-Hubbard, pages xxi-51, and Dillard-Longman, pages 17-36</p>	<p>1. Sept 6 &amp; 7 Intro I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Thompson, <u>Bible Study That Works</u>, second edition, for an overview of the approach to Bible interpretation which we will explore in the IBS emphasis of this class.</li> <li>• Write a 500 word, typed critical interaction with BSTW2. Submit in class in hard copy. Due September 13/14.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Due date depends, of course, on which section of the class you are in, A or B.

<p>2. Sept 11 &amp; 12 Divinity, Humanity, and OT Interpretation</p> <p>William Robertson Smith, "Biblical Criticism and the Theology of the Reformation" in the online lecture folder file ROBSMITH.DOC</p> <p>Read: Dillard and Longman, 37-56; Blomberg, Klein, Hubbard, 53-151;</p>	<p>2. Sept 13 &amp; 14 Intro II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSTW2 Critical interaction due.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Sept 18 &amp; 19 Background Sketch 1: A Long Time Ago in a Civilization Far, Far Away</p> <p>Read: Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 152-183; Dillard/Longman 57-90</p>	<p>3. Sept 20 &amp; 21 Intro III</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin a "survey" of the book of Zephaniah. Specific directions for this exercise and the others will will do will be provided.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Sept 25 &amp; 26 Background Sketch 2: Prince of Egypt: The Birth of the Covenant Community</p> <p>Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 184-214; Dillard/Longman 91-128</p> <p>ESSAY 1 Assignment POSTED</p>	<p>4. Sept 27 &amp; 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zephaniah Book Survey due. This and other lessons preferably typed, though hand done charts are fine. Legible hand copy accepted also.</li> </ul>
<p>5. October 2 &amp; 3 BG Sketch 3: The Godfather: The Crisis of Kingship</p> <p>Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 259-284; Dillard/Longman 129-168, chapters on Psalms, Proverbs</p>	<p>5. Oct 4 &amp; 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin Zephaniah ¶ Interpretation due Oct 11/12. Specific directions for this lesson will be given.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Oct 9 &amp; 10 BG Sketch 4: The Blues Brothers: Who's Really on a Mission From God"</p> <p>Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard None (Do I hear "Amen!"; Dillard/Longman: Amos, Hosea, Micah</p> <p>ESSAY 1 DUE</p>	<p>6. Oct 11 &amp; 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zephaniah ¶ Interpretation due.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Oct 16 &amp; 17 BG Sketch 5: A New Hope: Zion's Triumph and Tragedy</p>	<p>7. Oct 18 &amp; 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zephaniah Evaluation &amp; Application due, with special focus</li> </ul>

<p>Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 284-322 Dillard/Longman, Chapters on: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah</p>	<p>on applicability to the student's vocational interest.</p>
<p>8. Oct 23 &amp; 24 BG Sketch 6: The Empire Strikes Back: Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 377-400 Dillard/Longman, Chapters on Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah, Job, Ecclesiastes</p>	<p>8. Oct 25 &amp; 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amos Book Survey due.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Oct 30 &amp; 31 BG Sketch 7: The Return of the Judean Dillard/Longman, chapters on Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi</p>	<p>9. Nov 1 &amp; 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amos Section/Segment Survey due.</li> </ul>
<p>10. Nov 6 &amp; 7 Critical Lens 1: Textual Criticism Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 401-426 Dillard/Longman, 17-36</p>	<p>10. Nov 8 &amp; 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin Amos ¶ Interpretation due Nov. 15/16.</li> </ul>
<p>11. Nov 13 &amp; 14 Critical Lens 2: Source Criticism: Finding Unity in Diversity <i>Read the WORD document Source/Form.doc posted on Intranet Lectures in the "Articles" folder.</i> BREAK: Nov 19-23 ESSAY 2 Assignment POSTED</p>	<p>11. Nov 15 &amp; 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amos ¶ Intepretation due.</li> </ul>
<p>12. Nov 27 &amp; 28 Critical Lens 3. Form Criticism: Discovering the Life Behind the Literature On the Lecture Drive in the "Articles" folder: "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History" H. Gunkel (GUNKEL.DOC)</p>	<p>12. Nov 29 &amp; 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amos Evaluation due.</li> </ul>
<p>13. Dec 4 &amp; 5 Critical Lens 4. Redaction Criticism: From Analysis to Synthesis</p>	<p>13. Dec 6 &amp; 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amos Application due.</li> </ul>

Read: the document <i>Redcrit.doc</i> , Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 427-458 ESSAY 2 DUE	
1. Finals • TR class: 9:00-11:00 am, Thursday, 13th • WF class: 9:00-11:00 am, Monday, 10th	

## VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Consult David R. Bauer (ed.), Biblical Resources for Ministry, Second edition (Evangel Press, 1995), for full, up to date bibliography.