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OT 520 FOUNDATIONS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

Spring 2001—A Three Hour Course    Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

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Course Aspirations and Place in the Curriculum

Aspirations: OT 520 seeks to equip students for ministry by providing selected tools fundamental to responsible interpretation of the OT. The course neither offers a comprehensive approach, nor emphasizes direct textual study, but enhances both by developing a framework within which competent interpretation can take place. Students explore contemporary approaches to the literary character, historical and cultural setting, composition, authorship, and literary unity of these books, their various literary types, settings, and functions, and how these affect Christian reading of the OT. Students who realize these aspirations will be able to:

1. Show how a close reading of the the OT itself provides the stimulus and basis for OT studies;
2. Illustrate how a knowledge of Hebrew and sensitivity to the OT’s literary character enhance OT study;
3. Employ specific knowledge of the historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages to illuminate passages of scripture;
4. Apply to selected texts of scripture a grasp of the background, concepts, and procedures and major claims of selected types of OT study: These include archeology, Textual criticism, Source criticism, Form criticism, Redaction criticism, Selected contemporary literary approaches.
5. Identify, clarify, and strengthen essential convictions regarding biblical theology and authority;
6. Discover study as a means of spiritual growth. This involves seeing our work as:
   a. “Studying (hurry, hasten, be eager, take pains, make every effort) to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining (cut a path in a straight direction, cut a road across country, guide along the right path) the word of truth;” (2 Tim. 2:15)
   b. Exploring practically how to love God with all our mind (dianoia) (Matt. 22:37);
7. Embrace and seek to exemplify certain integrative aspirations distinctive of ATS, including:
   a. The implications of our commitment to the Bible as “the foundation, controlling center and formative concern of the entire curriculum (Catalogue, p. 15).”
   b. The centrality in ATS’ history, identity, and destiny of the doctrine and experience of Entire Sanctification.
   c. The lost art of expository preaching as the norm and standard for pulpit ministry;
   d. In opening prayers and openness to God’s grace, seeking renewal in learning by the revival spirit which birthed this institution. Far from obstructing the full use of critical reason, revival should rather energize and focus it!

The instructor prays this course fosters theological, intellectual, and spiritual renewal at ATS.
Means of Realizing Course Aspirations

READING in the literature of OT studies from many perspectives, from “mainstream” (i.e. non-conservative) OT criticism as well as evangelical scholars. Some readings are difficult and not always obviously relevant to, say, sermon preparation or youth ministry.

Basic Textbook:
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.

Required Supplementary Texts: Three additional textbooks are required for this course

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.

F. F. Bruce, Israel and the Nations: The History of Israel from the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple. InterVarsity, 1998.
This is a very fine short presentation of the history of biblical Israel. The middle section of the class will take you rather quickly through this material.

In the lectures, we will take a rapid overview, in chronological order, of the world of the OT. This book complements that by covering the world of the OT from the perspective of social settings and institutions.

Required Access to Reference Materials: You will sometimes 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.


LECTURES are a vital component of the course. Note that instead of directly expounding readings, lecture often presents analyses of issues and supplementary material.
“Excused absences” are a normal part of academic life, but attendance is vital. Each day carries a full week of material, so more than 1 absence begins to cost students dearly. More than 2 absences will result in a lowering of the final grade by a degree, i.e. B+>B.

Four Open Book/Notes Essays will be assigned, 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 and textbooks, but no other sources, for writing these essays. These 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 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.

When you submit worksheets or essays, you will also indicate your completion of reading assigned to that point. Failure to complete reading assigned to that point will result in a reduction of that worksheet or essay’s grade.

Grade Calculation: Essays will be given letter grades, exams will have numerical grades. They all contribute together toward your final grade in the following proportions. Note they increase through the term, so that a weak early performance can often be compensated for by harder work on subsequent essays:

Essay 1 -------------------------- 20%
Essay 2 -------------------------- 25%
Essay 3 -------------------------- 25%
Essay 4 -------------------------- 30%

Essays may be submitted two ways. First, you can print it out, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and submit it on the due date by 5:00 PM in class, or to my office. Comments and grade will be written on the paper and it will be returned via the SPO.

Second, work may be submitted electronically. At this time, I can only accept work produced on Microsoft Word, not Word Perfect, Works, or any other word processing program (Mac or Windoze is fine). If you can submit a document in MS Word, there are several advantages to you. First, submission is easier. Just attach your document to an e-mail and send it to me via your ATS FirstClass free e-mail account. NOTE: I cannot support any other e-mail system than FirstClass due to complications, especially with AOL, in how attachments are handled. No submissions on disk, please. A second advantage is that I will place my comments and grade on your paper via MS Word's "Comments" feature, which allows direct commenting on a document. I then return your paper via an E-mail attachment and you open it in MS Word and you'll see some words are highlighted. Placing your mouse pointer over the highlighted word will reveal the comment.

The advantage here is that when I comment papers by hand, it is a slow process and I tend to write less. When I'm typing comments directly into a paper, I can write much more quickly so I tend to write more, and the result is that you receive more feedback on your paper than if I had to write them by hand.

While I prefer to get work submitted electronically, the traditional hard-copy approach is still viable and acceptable.
Online Discussion Area: I will be setting up a discussion area on the FirstClass system for anyone who is interested in participating. I will daily be on this Folder which will function somewhat like Table Talk, and would enjoy very much having the chance to interact with you.

Office Hours will be announced, but you are welcome at any time to call or e-mail me with a question or to make an appointment.

**Course Assignment Due dates**

The outline of the course and modules of study are listed below. It is very important for students to establish a regular discipline of work and study. This is graduate school, brothers and sisters! It will require of all of us discipline and effort, but working together we can achieve great things.
Sequence of Lecture Unit Topics

The outline below provides a picture of the structure and flow of the course’s lecture topics. Note that not all blocks of lecture are the same length, and so some will be combined in due-dates. The schedule of online assignments and turned-in work is on the last page.

I. Divine Revelation in Human Literature: The Basics of OT Study
   A. Who Needs the Old Testament? (Unit 1)
   B. Who Needs This thing called “Criticism?” (Unit 2)
   C. A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation (Unit 3)

II. Seven Historical Tapestries for Reading the Old Testament
   A. Tapestry 1: A Long Time Ago, In A Civilization Far, Far, Away (Unit 4)
   B. Tapestry 2: Prince of Egypt? (Unit 5)
   C. Tapestry 3: The Godfather? (Unit 6)
   D. Tapestry 4: The Blues Brothers: Who’s On A Mission from God? (Unit 7)
   E. Tapestry 5: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence (Unit 8)
   F. Tapestry 6: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile (Unit 9)
   G. Tapestry 7: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration (Unit 10)

III. Five Critical Viewpoints for Studying the Old Testament
   A. View 1: Textual Criticism: A Text in the Making (Unit 11)
   B. View 2: Source Criticism: Discovering the Diversity of the OT (Unit 12)
   C. View 3: Form Criticism: The Life Behind the Literature (Unit 13)
   D. View 4: Redaction Criticism: Out of Diversity, Unity (Unit 14)
   E. View 5: Literary Criticism: The Rhetoric of Divine Rule (Unit 15)
Here are the Unit Topics and Assignment Due Dates:

**February 6, 2001**
Course Introduction, Unit 1 "Why the OT"

**February 13, 2001**
Unit 2: Why Interpretation?
**ESSAY ONE POSTED ON INTRANET**

**February 20, 2001**
Unit 3: A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation
Read: Dillard and Longman, 37-56; Blomberg, Klein, Hubbard, 53-151; Bruce/Payne, 1-8;
Matthews/Benjamin "Introduction" and 1-36

**February 27, 2001**
Unit 4: A Long Time Ago, in a Civilization Far, Far, Away
Read: Bruce/Payne none; Matthews/Benjamin 37-81; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 152-183;
Dillard/Longman 57-90
**Essay 1 Due!**

**March 6, 2001**
Unit 5: Prince of Egypt?
Bruce/Payne 9-31; Matthews/Benjamin 82-120; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 184-214;
Dillard/Longman 91-128

**March 13, 2001**
Unit 6: The Godfather?
Bruce/Payne 32-58; Matthews/Benjamin 121-154; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 259-284;
Dillard/Longman 129-168
**ESSAY 2 ASSIGNMENT POSTED ON INTRANET**

**March 20, 2001**
Unit 7: The Blues Brothers: Who's Really on a Mission From God?
Bruce/Payne 59-73; Matthews/Benjamin 155-186; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard None (Do I hear "Amen!")?); Dillard/Longman None!!!

**March 27, 2001**
Unit 8: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence
Bruce/Payne, 74-89; Matthews/Benjamin, 187-226; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 284-322
Dillard/Longman, Chapters on: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah
**ESSAY 2 DUE**

**April 3, 2001**
Unit 9: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile
Bruce/Payne 90-123
Matthews/Benjamin, 227-252
Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 377-400
Dillard/Longman, Chapters on Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah
**ESSAY 3 POSTED ON INTRANET**
April 10, 2001 READING WEEK

April 17, 2001
Unit 10: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration
ESSAY 3 DUE

April 24, 2001
Note: We will be covering modern critical methods in the following order, but might not always
cover each unit in exactly these sessions. Some carry-over will be involved.
DO NOT FREAK OVER THE READINGS. You're not tested on them, just read them for the
main ideas and issues.
Unit 11-12 Textual and Source Criticism
Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 401-426
Read also the WORD document Source/Form.doc. posted on Intranet Lectures. This is a chapter
from a book I am writing on redaction criticism, and it summarizes the tasks of source criticism
and form criticism in order to lay a foundation for approaching the more synthetic task of redaction
criticism.
ESSAY 4 POSTED ON INTRANET

May 1, 2001
Unit 13-14 Form and Redaction Criticism
Read: the document Redcrit.doc, which is the next chapter in the book on redaction criticism. It
discusses the procedure more specifically and with examples.

May 8, 2001
Unit 15 Literary and Canonical Criticism
Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 427-458.
Note your reading is DONE! Or you are catching up, or using the extra time to work on Essay 3!

May 15, 2001 Final Class Session
Attendance at this session is required.
ESSAY 4 DUE