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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 with David L. Thompson<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES--1

Fall 2002

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 become conversant, 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 the cultural placement of the reader in the process of interpretation and application and the importance of exposure to multicultural perspectives for

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<sup>1</sup> In the Fall semester section of the class, Dr. Stone will serve as professor of record and Dr. Thompson will lecture as Guest Professor. In the Spring section, the roles will be reversed.

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 is/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 from time to time 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 are 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. Completion of **2 examinations** involving Old Testament historical background, content and critical issues (50% of final grade).
- D. No assignment may be skipped. All work must be turned in to receive a passing grade.

**Guidelines for Exams:** Material covered by Dr. Stone's lectures and the books by Dillard-Longman and Klein-Hubbard-Bush, will be addressed in a mid-term and final examination. Both of these exams will take about an hour. They will be multiple choice in nature, but not mechanical or merely recognition oriented. Questions will require of students critical judgment and balancing of alternatives. Sometimes a biblical passage will be presented and students will respond to a series of questions requiring some level of analysis of the passage based on knowledge gained from the course. Where possible, test questions will assume students' Inductive Studies learning. Each exam will count 25% of the student's total grade.

These will be take-home tests, to be taken within a continuous, uninterrupted 75-minute period. There are to be no notes, books, or consultations during the exam. Students are on their honor not to discuss the exam in any way with anyone who has not yet completed it. The test will be distributed on a Tuesday and will be due back on Thursday at the class period.

**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.

Both the Mid-term and the Final examinations will include an inquiry regarding the completion of reading for the course as of that date. This will be part of the overall score for the test.

## V. GENERAL COURSE SCHEDULE BY WEEKS

Old Testament Introduction Emphasis	Inductive Biblical Studies Emphasis
<p>1. Sept 3 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 5 Read Thompson, <i>Bible Study That Works</i>, second edition, for an overview of the approach to Scripture interpretation which we will explore in the IBS emphasis of this class. Due 9/12.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Sept 10 Divinity, Humanity, and OT Interpretation William Robertson Smith, "Biblical Criticism and the Theology of the Reformation" in the online lecture folder file ROBSMITH.DOC Read: Dillard and Longman, 37-56; Blomberg, Klein, Hubbard, 53-151;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 12  Write a 500 word critical interaction with BSTW. Note strengths, weaknesses and theological assumptions. Submit hard copy in class. (5%)</li> </ul>
<p>3. Sept 17 Background Sketch 1: A Long Time Ago in a Civilization Far, Far Away Read: Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 152-183; Dillard/Longman 57-90</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 19  Content survey of the book of Exodus as a whole (10%)</li> </ul>
<p>4. Sept 24 Background Sketch 2: Prince of Egypt: The Birth of the Covenant Community Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 184-214; Dillard/Longman 91-128</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sept 26</li> </ul>
<p>5. October 1 BG Sketch 3: The Godfather: The Crisis of Kingship Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 259-284; D/L 129-168, chapters on Psalms, Proverbs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oct 3  Survey of the book of Zephaniah as a whole due.(15%)</li> </ul>
<p>6. Oct 8 BG Sketch 4: The Blues Brothers: Who's Really on a Mission From God" Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oct 10</li> </ul>

Dillard/Longman: Amos, Hosea, Micah MID TERM TEST DISTRIBUTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MID-TERM TEST DUE: 8:00 AM</li> </ul>
7. Oct 15 BG Sketch 5: A New Hope: Zion's Triumph and Tragedy Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 284-322 D/L, Chapters on: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oct 17</li> </ul> <p>Interpretation of Zephaniah strategic passage due.(15%)</p>
8. Oct 22 BG Sketch 6: The Empire Strikes Back: Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 377-400 D/L, Chapters on Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah, Job, Ecclesiastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oct 24</li> </ul>
9. Oct 29 BG Sketch 7: The Return of the Judean Dillard/Longman, chaps on Chron, Ezra, Neh, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oct 31</li> </ul> <p>Survey of book of Amos as a whole due. (15%)</p>
10. Nov 5 Critical Lens 1: Textual Criticism Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 401-426 Dillard/Longman, 17-36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 7</li> </ul>
11. Nov 12 Critical Lens 2: Source Criticism: Finding Unity in Diversity <i>Read the WORD document</i> <i>Source/Form.doc</i> posted on Intranet Lectures in the "Articles" folder. BREAK: Nov 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 14</li> </ul> <p>Interpretation of Amos strategic passage. (20%)</p>
12. Nov 19 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 21.</li> </ul>
13. Dec 3 Critical Lens 4. Redaction Criticism:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dec 5</li> <li>• Amos evaluation of strategic</li> </ul>

<p>From Analysis to Synthesis</p> <p>Read: the document <i>Redcrit.doc</i>, Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 427-458</p>	<p>passage due. (10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FINAL TEST DISTRIBUTED</li> <li>• TO BE SUBMITTED DEC 10 by 1200 Noon</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finals: Final Session Thursday, Dec. 12, 9-11 AM Final Exams will be Returned at this time.</li> <li>2. IBS final assignment due: Amos Application (10%)</li> </ol>	

## VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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