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OT 611 Exegesis of Exodus

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This is a draft of our summer syllabus. The text list is correct. The assignments may change slightly but they are a fair representation of the amount of the work required this term.

Asbury Theological Seminary-Virtual Campus

OT 611 Exegesis of Exodus

Prerequisites: IBS-1/OT501/OT520

Summer 2008

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Preliminary Statement:

“The development of this extended learning syllabus and all course materials is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (Brian D. Russell).” Thanks for honoring these instructions.

Exodus is a foundational book in the Christian Bible. In it, two of the Old Testament’s principal salvific events (Exodus and Sinai) are narrated. In light of these developments, the text engages the reader with multi-faceted portrait of God, a vision of the peculiar vocation of the people of God, and an account of Moses, the servant of Yahweh.

As some of you know, Exodus as a whole and Exodus 15:1-21 in particular were the focus of much of my doctoral studies. I love the book of Exodus, and I look forward to studying it with you for next several months.

As described in the *Catalog*, students should expect to spend 2.5-3.0 hours outside of class for every hour in class. For the ExL environment, this translates to a 10-12 hours maximum commitment per week. Please plan your schedules accordingly.

I. Course description

This course explores selected exegetical issues in the Book of Exodus and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to the

book's strategic passages. The focus will be on developing appropriate interpretive skills for the pastoral ministry.

II. Course objectives (Shared by OT department)

Upon successful completion of this course, each participant will be able to:

A. Confirm and refine by recourse to the Hebrew text of Exodus literary analysis of longer units previously studied in translation,

B. Analyze the significance of the grammar and sentence structure of brief pericopes using primarily the Hebrew text,

C. Present the significance of key terms in a given passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,

D. Identify the function of a given, brief passage of Exodus in the framework of its immediate context, its function in the literary flow of the book and in the section of the canon within which it appears,

E. Situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Exodus in the context of the Old Testament's unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,

F. Demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Exodus, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one's own interpretation in the on going discussion of biblical interpretation,

G. Illustrate the contribution of exegetical study of the Hebrew text to biblical exposition, instruction, theological reflection, and spiritual formation in order to construct an appropriation of the passage that is integrative and coherent.

III. Course procedures and requirements

A. Class presentations will model direct study of Exodus, relying primarily on interpretive skills introduced in OT 501 and IBS-1. After a survey of the contents and issues in the interpretation of Exodus has been completed, class sessions will walk systematically through the units of Exodus, highlighting specific passages that make notable contributions to the meaning of each

unit. Grammatical, linguistic, historical, literary, and theological details of selected passages will be studied in order to illustrate the chosen pericope's contribution to the message of the larger unit. Students will be required to read selected sections of Exodus in preparation for each module. A short assignment will accompany each selection that highlights the use of a particular exegetical skill. *These early assignments are considered to be examples of formative evaluation. As such a letter grade will not be assigned. They are graded on a pass/fail basis.* These assignments will help you to develop skills that will be evaluated in a summative way in the final weeks of the course. Such assignments encompass **Modules 1-6**

It is assumed that each student will be conversant with the content of the commentaries of Fretheim and Durham for each of the assigned passages.

B. Students will prepare a critical book review of Michael Walzer's, *Exodus and Revolution*. Specific directions will follow. **Due as part of Module 8 on.**

C. **Module 7.** Students will write two brief exegetical papers on assigned texts from Exodus, utilizing the skills acquired in OT 501 and IBS-1. These papers should be double-spaced, typed, and no more than 1200 words in length. The paper will provide answers to the following questions: 1) What is the subject of this text?, 2) What is said about the subject?, 3) What is the purpose of what is said? More specific instructions will be provided at the time of the assignments along with several samples. The paper should present the student's observations of the text's components, including causal and temporal particles, connotations of the verbal derived stems and aspects, significance of word order, and where appropriate, implications of a specific word's usage elsewhere in the Old Testament. Also where appropriate to the specific pericope, students should show sensitivity to socio-historical, canonical, and theological issues arising from the text itself. Critical engagement with secondary sources will be assumed. **Students may turn as many of these projects as they wish. In such cases, I will "count" only the two highest scores.** The passages that will be considered include: Exod 19:3-6, 20:8-11, 21:1-11, 32:7-14, and 40:34-38.

D. Students will write a final paper on a pericope to be chosen from the list that will be provided later in the term (at minimum the list will include the five passages worked on in Module 7). The purpose of this paper is to provide the student an opportunity to synthesize his or her newly acquired

skills by allowing a direct demonstration of them. Secondary sources may be consulted, beginning with the preliminary bibliography provided at the end of the syllabus. The paper should also conclude in a brief sermon outline or lesson plan based on the specific observations raised in the paper. These papers should be double-spaced, typed, and no more than 2400 words in length. **Due on Aug 24th as the final part of Module 8**

IV. Textbooks

A. Required specifically for OT 611.

John I. Durham. *Exodus*. WBC. Waco: Word, 1987.

Terrence E. Fretheim. *Exodus*. Interpretation. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991.

Michael Walzer. *Exodus and Revolution*

T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.

B. Required in previous courses (OT 501).

Arnold, Bill and John Choi. *Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. **If you don't have this text, you definitely need to purchase it.**

Seow, C. L. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Rev. ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

C. Recommended:

BibleWorks 4.0 – 7.0 (*Hermeneutika*)

D. Recommended Commentaries and Studies:

See bibliography posted in course center

V. Student evaluation

A. Short Assignments	15%
B. Book Review of <i>Exodus and Revolution</i> *Due August 20	15%
C. Exegetical Papers (two highest grades)*	20%
D. Final paper Due August 24*	35%
E. Class Participation*	15%

Note on Grading:

1) I subscribe to a theory of grading that uses the designations *formative* and *summative* for grading. Formative grading essentially allows me to offer you feedback without the necessity of assigning a letter grade.

Theoretically, this should allow you to learn the material without fear/pressure of “getting it right the first time.” Only in summative grading is a letter grade assigned. In this class, those items marked above (*) will be graded in summative fashion. The various short assignments in the first half of the semester will be marked credit/no credit accordingly. These early assignments will allow you to practice exegetical skills and allow me to offer you substantive feedback *so that you can shine on the summative assignments at the end of the term*. In other words, I work under the assumption that your work will improve over the course and thus only your *best* work will be assigned a letter grade.

2) I pledge that I will return your assignments within one week from the due date for a given assignment.

3) Class participation. The Virtual campus environment requires the active participation of all of us. I envision a lively debate/discussion among budding biblical interpreters. This part of the evaluation covers your postings in both your team folders and class discussion center. Just to let you know, I am not going to grade by counting the number of questions/responses that you post. I am going to grade by the consistency of participation and by the quality of the comments. By consistency, I mean weekly, on-going engagement with the class through each module including working within the time limits of the module. At minimum (C level participation), this would involve two solid posts per week. By quality, I mean: a) raising of questions, b) evidence of critical thought. This is not meant to sound intimidating. Rather I want to grade as fairly as possible.

4) “Attendance” – It is expected that each member of the class will be “present” on a weekly basis as outlined in #3 above. I suspect that many of you will be traveling during the summer. *You are permitted to opt out of*

discussion without penalty for one week, provided that you let me know in advance.

4) Late Work: Due to the nature of a text based course, all late work will start with a maximum grade of D+ (69%). *Exceptions must be negotiated in advance with the instructor.*

VI. Basic Orientation:

Beginnings

Our course will begin on June . You will be able to access our course via www.virtual.asburyseminary.edu .

Endings

Our course will officially end (i.e., communication will come to a close) on August 25th. In terms of ExL jargon, we are turning the lights out in our class on August 25 (ET). **All course materials must be received by this time.**

VII. Virtual Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media contact Information Commons:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale: ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm>

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

Copyright Policies

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

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VI. Outline of Modules

The course is divided into discrete units or modules, each of which will occupy about a week of class time. Students will be required to read the assigned sections of the biblical text, complete a brief assignment, and read the relevant portions of the commentaries as part of each module.

A basic class schedule follows. The lessons may be modified slightly depending on the strengths of the class. More specific directions will be available within the posted modules so *always make sure that you read the directions in the modules.*

Module 0 Class Introductions Due June th

Module 1 Overview of the Book of Exodus Due June th

1) a. Read the introductory sections to Durham's commentary on Exodus.
b. In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, read the following three articles: i. "Exodus, Date of", 258-72, ii. "Exodus, Book of", 249-58, and iii. "Hermeneutics", 387-401.

Prepare a one page (single-spaced) reflection that contains two elements – your principal learning from the reading and key questions that you have from the reading. Feel free to paste your reflection paper directly into an email.

2) Review Hebrew notes from OT501. Pay particular attention to the syntax associated with construct chains, prepositional phrases, and verbal forms. What questions do you have about employing the Hebrew language in exegetical work?

Module 2 Grammatical Analysis (Exod 1-2) Due June th

Review *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, particularly pp. 7-20, 24-53, and 54-68, i.e., those sections covering Nouns, Verbs, and Prepositions. This should essentially be a quick review of OT501.

Complete a grammatical analysis of all nouns, prepositions and verbs in Exod 1:8-10. Compare several English translations as part of the process. You will find essential agreement in most cases (i.e., you could apply to the same grammatical label), but do note areas where differences arise and explain differences in terms of the grammar. Make sure that you understand the meaning of the various categories. The key to this exercise is not *merely* being able to label/parse a word, but to better understand the passage by means of the grammatical analysis.

Module 3 Source and Redaction Criticism (Exod 2:23-7:6) Due June th

a) Read the essay on “Source Criticism” by David Baker (p. 798-805) in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Post any questions or comments.

b) Read Exod 2:23-7:6.

c) Prepare a grammatical analysis of Exod 6:3.

d) The “two” call/commissions of Moses (3:1-4:17 and 6:2-7:6) are foundational in the source division of the Pentateuch. Specifically the dual explanation for the divine name Yhwh and the fact that Yhwh is used in the so-called “J” source from Gen 2:4 onward. The question: why two explanations for the revelation of God’s personal name? Source critics suggested the presence of two sources: E in chapt 3 and P in Chapter six. Further complicating these chapters is the presence of J material in Exod 3-4 as well. (See source division document provided separately in this module) Notice that regardless of how one divides these chapters into sources (or if one rejects the enterprise all together), the redactional question remains: What is the function of these two call stories? This week will provide an opportunity to assess exegetically the source critical claims for the two call/commission narratives of Moses. Does such a claim survive a close reading of the text? If not, how does one explain the similarities as well as the differences? One scholar sees artistry; another will posit discrete sources.

Spend of the bulk of your class time this week preparing a study of 3:1-4:17 and 6:2-7:6. Compare/Contrast these dual commissions of Moses. Why are there two narratives? What role does each play in the Exodus story? In one single-spaced pages – 12 font, Times New Roman, 1” margins, succinctly summarize your findings and on the basis of your own close reading of the

text make a case for or against a source critical analysis of these materials. As part of your study, (at minimum) make sure that you read relevant sections of Durham and Fretheim.

Module 4 Word Study (Exod 7:7-11:10) Due July th

a) Read Exod 7:7-11:10.

b) Complete and turn in a grammatical analysis of Exod 9:16. You will be able to make use of this in the next assignment.

c) I trust that you have had ample instruction on word study method in Concise Greek, Survey of Biblical Hebrew, and perhaps even IBS-1 (depending on your instructor). Study the recurrences of the “hard heart” motif in Exodus. Thus, I am asking for a study of a limited sample. I want you to focus your attention to the immediate context of each occurrence in Exodus. Note that this theme begins in Exod 4:21 and does not end until Exod 14. Also, take care that you find *all* recurrences (hint: there are three different Hebrew verbs that are used). Here are some sample questions that come to mind: What does it mean that pharaoh’s heart is hardened? Who does the hardening? What is the purpose of this theme in Exodus? Is there development in the theme or does it remain the same?

(Most of the time this question turns into some form of the free-will versus determinism debate. As you think through the exegetical issues, observe to what degree your own theological presuppositions about freedom of the will influence your exegesis.)

In single-spaced pages or less, sketch out your understanding of this theme. Use resources at your disposal including: Fretheim/Durham, *TWOT**(w/BibleWorks), and relevant articles in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (“Egypt, Egyptians,” “Signs and Wonders,” and “Hardness of Heart.”). I would also recommend (if you haven’t already) exploring resources accessible through our library’s Restricted Databases. Use ATLA to find articles on the passages under consideration.

For Modules 5 and 6, students are required to do one or the other.

Module 5 Liturgy and Narrative (Exod 12:1-13:16) Due July

Study carefully 12:1-13:16. The following questions may prove helpful in your analysis: How precisely and specifically does it function in the wider context of the book of Exodus? What are the emphases of these verses?

What is the effect of the interplay between narrative reporting and liturgical instruction? Study the use of the theme of remembrance. As usual dialogue with Durham, Fretheim, and relevant articles in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Your completed assignment should not exceed 1 pages single-spaced.

OR

Module 6 Poetry and Narrative (Exod 13:17-15:1-21) Due July

a) You have choices for the main project for this module. Do any one of the following:

1) Compare / contrast the presentation of the Exodus/Red Sea event in 13:17-14:31 with that of Exod 15:1-21? What are possible explanations / implications of your findings? (2) Read the Baal cycle – suggest parallels between the Baal cycle and Exod 15:1-21. You can find the Baal epic in a number of sources: <http://www.baal.com/baal/about/BaalEpic.shtml>
<http://www.piney.com/BaalEpic.html>

Also you can find the epic in a number of print sources: William Hallo, ed., *Contexts in Scripture* or Simon Parker, ed., *Narrative Ugaritic Poetry*.

Module 7 Practice of Exodus (Exodus 19-40)

(As Stated above – students must complete at least two of the following five projects)

Exod 19:3-6 Due July th

Exod 20:8-11 Due July th

Exod 21:1-11 Due July st

Exod 32:7-14 Due August th

Exod 40:34-38 Due August th

Module 8 Exodus and Tradition// Final Exegetical Paper

1) Book Review of Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution* **Due August st by 11:59 PM (EST)**

2) Final Exegetical Paper **Due August th by 11:59 PM (EST)**