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OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

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OT 520 OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

June 2004—A Three Hour Course Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

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NOTE: DUE TO THE PROFESSOR'S TRAVEL SCHEDULE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS IS WEDNESDAY JUNE 2.

NOTE also that the original syllabus posted assumed a schedule through June 25. This was an error since the announced schedule was through June 18. This syllabus replaces the previous one and includes substantial changes of policy and timing.

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. A central axiom of the class is that the OT emerges from a cultural and ethnic setting that is radically different from those of any contemporary culture. Thus to study the OT in connection with the settings of its emergence is to learn to *receive* God's word cross-culturally, which forms a necessary preparation for *testifying* to the message of God's word cross-culturally. Thus the very act of responsible and holistic interpretation involves grasping, affirming, and moving creatively between the text's ethnic and cultural framework and our own. Because the OT is a multi-dimensional text, embracing language, literature, culture, religion, politics—all seen as divine revelation—biblical exegesis must of necessity be multi-disciplinary, hence we will draw eclectically, but not chaotically, from a wide range of subject areas.

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 by providing an exercise in *listening* to voices of testimony from another culture as a preparation for *speaking* a word of witness cross-culturally;
3. Recognize specific information concerning the ethnically diverse and culturally alien historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages as it is applied to understanding OT;
4. Recognize how the social and cultural location, assumptions, claims, procedures and conclusions of selected types of contemporary OT study affect interpretation. Methods

covered 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* in a manner that is faithful to the framework of the text and relevant to the contemporary practice of ministry;
6. Discover study, especially study of the text's pre-Christian and pre-western character, as a stimulus for spiritual growth.

The instructor prays this course fosters theological, intellectual, and spritual renewal at ATS.

Means of Realizing Course Aspirations (AKA "Course Requirements")

To accommodate a variety of learning styles and to promote generally wholesome learning habits, the course grade will derive from a wide range of learning activities.

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.

LaSor, W. S., D. A. Hubbard, F. W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

A Book-By-Book overview of the content and interpretation issues of the OT books followed by a section on general issues. Since this course is not organized in a book-by-book fashion, we will be reading this text "out of order" so pay close attention to the Course Schedule.

W. W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg, R. L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco: Word, 1993.

Introduces essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Our assignments skip sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

Pritchard, James, Ed. *HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible*. Harper, 1991.

Much more than maps, a good atlas (like this one) is a concise guide to the geography, history, culture, and lifestyle of the people it treats. Try to go beyond reading with this book, and spend time enjoying the maps and sheer glory of factual data presented in a fairly small space.

Several articles are in electronic form and will be in the Course Conference icon. Full citations and filenames are given in the schedule. All are Adobe Acrobat PDF files. To read these, you use the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Recommended Bibliographical Resource: Bauer, David. *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Wilmore, Revised 2nd Edition, 1995.

Completion of the reading constitutes a significant portion of the grade. While readings are correlated to specific days, students will not typically read the exact assignments for each day.

What is **required** are a midterm and final reading report in which you will *indicate your completion of reading assigned to that date* on a form provided by the professor.

LECTURES are a vital component of the course. Note that instead of directly expounding readings, lecture often presents *analyses* of issues and supplementary material.

Attendance Policy: Occasional absences are a normal part of academic life, but attendance is vital. Attendance will be taken daily.

Student attendance will be significant part of the grade, 25 points of a total of 275. An absence for any reason reduces that score by 1 point. All absences count, *and all may be made up*, therefore no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” will be observed.

Any absence can be made up by contacting the instructor. Make-up work will normally involve listening to an audio recording of the lecture and writing a 250-500 word reaction.

One Examinations will be given over the historical background of the OT. The format will be machine gradable, multiple choice questions. The questions themselves, however, will range in function from simple factual items, to questions asking for a more integrative application of material. Note that the Final Exam is optional, depending on the student's preference for a final exam or a final essay.

The Exam will be based primarily on *lecture* material. Lecture, however, assumes a reading of the assigned material, and students Any questions that involve the textbooks will be of a sort that quotes a statement from the book, and then asks the student to analyze the statement in the light of some other course content. *I do not go browsing through the books looking for arcane details to "catch" students on.* Focus in your study on the lectures, and as you read the textbooks in a timely fashion, be aware of how the class content and the textbooks interact.

Sample questions will be posted in the Course Center and students completing those are free to raise any questions they might have about the questions, answers, and evaluations involved. Note that the sample questions represent about half the total set of questions that might be used on the tests, so prepare accordingly. Both exams will be taken in class according to the schedule.

Two Open Book/Notes Essays will be assigned, each of which will be 6-8 page not counting front or back matter. These papers will be concrete 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 unless the instructions so direct, 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 PDF documents, which can be read on any workstation on campus and printed out.

Essays may be submitted two ways. *First*, you can print it out, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and submit it as specified in the assignment.

Second, work may be submitted electronically. I can only accept work produced on MS Word (Mac or Wintel is fine). Attach your document to an e-mail and send it via your ATS FirstClass free e-mail account. *I do not support any other e-mail account than your ATS FirstClass account.*

Up to 10 Points Extra Credit may be earned by completing additional assignments. These will typically be worth 2 points each and will be comparable to absence make-up assignments. Arrange for extra credit work with the professor.

Grade Calculation: Grading is by a Total Points System. Attendance, readings, exams, and essays are all worth a certain number of points, with the total being 275 Points.

Attendance----- 25 Points
 Reading Report 1 ----- 25 Points
 Reading Report 2 ----- 25 Points
 Exam ----- 50 Points
 Essay 1 ----- 50 Points
 Essay 2 ----- 50 Points

Total Points:----- 225 Points

Letter Grades are assigned by the following values:

	From	To
A	212	225
A-	200	211
B+	196	199
B	189	195
B-	178	188
C+	173	177
C	167	172
C-	155	166
D+	151	154
D	144	150
D-	133	143
F	0	132

Office Hours will be announced, but you are welcome at any time to speak to me personally, call or e-mail me with a question or to make an appointment. As a courtesy, I ask you not to try to see me about course business prior to the start of the class session.

The Course Conference. As soon as possible early in the first week of class, students will find an OT 520 Conference icon on their FirstClass desktop in the ATS e-mail system. This conference serves several functions:

1. It is where all course materials will be posted. No paper materials are distributed in class.
2. A discussion forum is held there to allow for your questions, further discussion of issues raised in class, etc. You are encouraged to make the most of this opportunity. I check this several times per day and usually can respond immediately to issues raised. This is also a

forum in which you can "take me on" if you want to debate course content issues. Periodically I will be posting "polls" to find out student opinion and reaction to various topics relevant to the conduct of the course.

3. Announcements to the class as a whole will be made here

These materials *will not be available elsewhere*. Any announcements or other communications made on the course center are just as binding as if they had been made in class. Therefore it is essential for students to have an ATS e-mail account (free) and avail themselves of the computing services offered at ATS if they do not have e-mail access from home.

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. We will try to integrate covering the basics of interpretation and the overall history of the OT with a very general conceptualization of the OT material.

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. The assignments are sequenced so that much reading is done early in the course, gradually tapering a bit toward the end as you collapse in complete exhaustion.

- I. THE QUEST: DIVINE REVELATION IN HUMAN LITERATURE**
 - A. Who Needs to Study the Old Testament?
 - B. Reading in A Strange Language: A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation
 - C. Reading in a the Old Testament
- II. FORMATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP: A JOINING OF TENSIONS**
 - A. Promise: From Promise to People
 - B. Sinai: From People to Nation
 - C. Zion: From Nation to Kingdom
- III. BREAKING OF THE FELLOWSHIP: DIVISION AND DECLINE**
 - A. The Breaking of the Company
 - B. The Failure of the Promise Bearer
- IV. RENEWAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP: REINVENTING THE PEOPLE OF GOD**
 - A. The Empire Strikes Back: The Furnace of Exile
 - B. Return of the Judean: Reinventing the People of God
- V. THE BOOK AND THE STORY: METHODS IN OT STUDY**
 - A. Deciding Among Variants in the Text: Textual Criticism
 - B. Distinguishing the Voices in the Text: Souce Criticism
 - C. Discovering the Vitality of the Text: Form Criticism
 - D. Discerning the Vision of the Text: Redaction Criticism
 - E. Deciding the Vectors of the Text: Literary Criticism

Schedule of Units and Assignments

Note: Textbook reading will not typically be exactly synchronized with classtimes due to the intensive nature of the June terms. Also, even though lecture will end on July 18, I am extending the deadline for the final reading report and final paper to June 24. For this reason, I am asking for the following basic "targets" for the textbook reading:

June 15:

OTS 1-355; IBI 1-214; HCAB 3-89
NEEDOT.PDF, ROBSMITH.PDF, WHYCRIT.PDF, STONESOUL.PDF

June 24:

OTS 355-694; IBI 215-322, 376-End
ISAIAH.PDF, PLACE.PDF, GUNKEL.PDF, VONRAD.PDF, REDACRIT.PDF

June 1 Get Started on your Reading! Professor is on the Road. No Class.

General Reading Report Goals:**June 2 Organization and Why Study the OT?**

G. Ernest Wright, "The Church's Need for the Old Testament" from *The God Who Acts*
(NEEDOT.PDF)

June 3 A Hebrew Teacher Looks at the Creation Story

William Robertson Smith, "Biblical Criticism and the Theology of the Reformation" from *The Old Testament and the Jewish Church* (ROBSMITH.PDF)
Lawson Stone, "Why OT Criticism" (printed lecture) (WHYCRIT.PDF)
Lawson Stone, "The Soul: Possession, Part, or Person? The Genesis of Human Nature in Genesis 2:7" in *What About the Soul?* Ed. Joel B. Green, Abingdon, 2004. 47-61. (STONESOUL.PDF)

June 4 From Promise to People

Essay Assignment 1 Posted

June 8 From People to Nation and Kingdom**June 9 The Fellowship Broken And Judean State**

Essay 1 Due

June 10 The Exile and Restoration

George Adam Smith's "The Date of Isaiah XL-LXVI from his *Isaiah* in the *Expositors Bible* commentary, (ISAIAH.PDF)

June 11 Textual Criticism: Deciding Among the Variants

MIDTERM EXAM POSTED

June 15 Source Criticism: Distinguishing the Voices

J. Wellhausen's "The Place of Worship," *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*.
(PLACE.PDF)
MIDTERM EXAM DUE

June 16 Form Criticism: Discovering the Vitality

Hermann Gunkel, "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History" from *What Remains of the Old Testament?* (GUNKEL.PDF)

Gerhard Von Rad, "God's Word in History According to the Old Testament" *God at Work in Israel*, Abingdon, Pp 139-159. (VONRAD.PDF)

FINAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT POSTED

June 17 Redaction Criticism: Discerning the Vision

Lawson Stone, "Redaction Criticism: Going Beyond Form Criticism Without Leaving it Behind," in *A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form, and Content*, ed. E. Carpenter, JSOT Supplement Series, 1997. Pp 77-90. (REDACRIT.PDF)

June 18 Literary Criticism: Detecting the Vectors (how's that for stretching alliteration?)

NOTE: The last lecture is on June 18. You have until June 24 to complete your readings and submit your final essay.

Mid Term Reading Report: Due June 15, 2004

NAME: _____

1. _____ *OT Survey*: 1-355
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 2. _____ *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*: 1-214
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 3. _____ *HarperCollins Concise Atlas*: pp 3-89
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 4. _____ Wright, "The Church's Need for the OT"
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 5. _____ Roberston-Smith, "Biblical Criticism..."
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 6. _____ Stone, "Why OT Criticism"
ALL: 3 Points MOST: 2 Points, LESS Than HALF: 1, NONE: 0
 7. _____ Stone, "The Soul: Possession, Part, or Person?"
ALL: 2 Points PARTIAL: 1, NONE: 0
- _____ Total Mid Term Reading Points

Final Reading Report: Due June 24

Name: _____

Pay Attention to the Point values for each reading: they vary!

1. _____ All of *Old Testament Survey*.
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 2. _____ All assigned material from *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*
ALL: 4 Points MOST: 3 Points, LESS Than HALF: 2, ALMOST NONE: 1, NONE: 0
 3. _____ Smith on Isaiah
ALL: 3 Points, MOST: 2 Points LESS THAN HALF: 1 Point, NONE: 0
 4. _____ Wellhausen on the Place of Worship
ALL: 3 Points, MOST: 2 Points LESS THAN HALF: 1 Point, NONE: 0
 5. _____ Gunkel on Problems in Hebrew Literary History
ALL: 3 Points, MOST: 2 Points LESS THAN HALF: 1 Point, NONE: 0
 6. _____ Von Rad on God's Word in History
ALL: 3 Points, MOST: 2 Points LESS THAN HALF: 1 Point, NONE: 0
 7. _____ Stone on Redaction Criticism
ALL; 3Points; MOST: 2 PART: 1 Point; NONE: 0
 8. _____ Made Up any *missed articles* from the first report?
ALL: 2 Points; SOME: 1 Point NONE: 0 Points
- _____ Total Final Reading Report Points

Attendance and Extra Credit Reports

Name: _____

1. _____ Number of Class Segments (I.e. half-periods) missed that were *not made up* (made up absences are not to be reported here)

2. _____ Extra Credit Assignment: Article Read:

3. _____ Extra Credit Assignment: Article Read:

4. _____ Extra Credit Assignment: Article Read:

5. _____ Extra Credit Assignment: Article Read:

6. _____ Extra Credit Assignment: Article Read:

_____ Total Extra Credit Points