OT 820 Research Methods in Old Testament Interpretation

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1. Course description

A seminar in which participants explore through readings, practice, and critical discussion the range of methods employed in contemporary Old Testament study. The entire research process – from “getting into the conversation” and specifying a “thesis” to the presentation of one’s research – will be discussed, modeled, and practiced.

2. Course objectives

Students in this course will:

- describe the major approaches to Old Testament study today;
- apply the range of critical methods employed in Old Testament study today;
- determine what methods are appropriate to particular problems or questions in Old Testament interpretation;
- articulate central concerns, strengths, and weaknesses of the various methodological approaches comprising Old Testament interpretation;
- construct, follow, and revise a research agenda around an Old Testament text or area of concern to Old Testament study; and
- engage in thoughtful and generous criticism of the research agenda and products of others.

3. Course procedures and requirements

3.1. Class participation. The seminar is a community of learning, and a shared commitment to attend all sessions with a willingness to contribute to the learning process is essential. Students will be expected to come to each class session prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and in cases in which papers are to be presented, to contribute substantively to the discussion about the papers and presentations. Written materials must be submitted in a timely fashion. Late work will receive no written comments. Late assignments will receive a penalty of one-third letter grade after twenty-four hours, and a full letter grade thereafter. (0%)

3.2. Periodic assignments. See the tentative schedule of assignments below. Exercises throughout the course give opportunity for building a research project from inception to final presentation. Thus the first assignment explores the text critical foundations of a given pericope (3000 words), and a second assignment develops the pericope using the critical methodologies surveyed in the seminar (3000 words), depending on the nature of the passage in view. (35%)

3.3. Research paper. The primary assignment for the seminar is the preparation and presentation of a major exegesis paper (7000-8000 words, including notes but not bibliography). Drafts of the
papers shall be made available to members of the seminar no less than one week prior to each presentation. (55%)  

3.4. **Critical response.** Each participant will prepare a written response on an essay to be prepared by another member of the seminar. Responses are to be presented in written form to the author of the paper and to the instructor, and in oral form to the seminar, at the class session for which the paper is due to be discussed (10%)  

4. **Course Communication**  

Class communication is accomplished with the open-source Moodle platform, accessed using a web browser (Firefox is preferred). Log into [http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu](http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu) and you will see this course listed to the left. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

4.1 **The Course Information Center**, in the center of your screen, contains many features to be used throughout the semester, including:

- **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
- **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
- **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
- **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
- **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
- **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

4.2 **Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

4.3 **Resources**, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you will want to use often in the semester.
5. Information Commons (Library) Services

The primary clientele served by the Information Commons are the students, staff, and faculty of the Asbury Theological Seminary. To contact the Information Commons by telephone, call toll free 866.454.2733 or by info_commons@asburyseminary.edu

- **Circulation**: Patrons with current accounts may borrow materials from the Information Commons. Others may apply for borrowing privileges, by coming to the Information Commons desk for assistance. Current borrowers can check the status of their accounts through the library catalog.

- **Library Loan**: Only ATS students, staff, and faculty may request materials from other libraries through Library Loan. Generally, books and articles from journals that are not held by the ATS may be requested through the Library Loan system.

- **Information Commons Equipment**: Only ATS students and staff may request Information Commons Equipment materials. Generally, digital cameras, video cameras, headphones, etc., held by the Information Commons may be requested for 24-hour check-out.

- **Computer Workstations**: ATS students, staff and faculty are issued a user account to log into the computer workstations for access to curriculum-related software, research materials, local digital resources, email, and web-based programs. The Information Commons does provide six (6) Quick-Stop stations for all users to access to research materials, local digital resources, email, and web-based programs.

- **Research assistance** (e.g. locating resources or choosing a topic) is available via appointment. Email info_commons@asburyseminary.edu to request research assistance.

6. Course texts

6.1. Required.


Students will also be expected to have the following ready-to-hand (abbreviations are available in Alexander, *SBL Handbook*):

- **BHS**
- **GKC**
- **IBHS**
- **Joüon**

6.2. **Recommended.**


7. **Tentative Schedule of Assignments**

Week #1 – Introduction to research and writing in OT studies.

Week #2 – Trends in text criticism; what is “the text”?
Readings: selected assignments from Emanuel Tov.

Week #3 – Archaeology and Epigraphy
Readings: *FOTS*, 38-96; *OTI*, 245-260.
Due: Paper #1 – text critical exercise

Week #4 – Student presentations

Week #5 – Student presentations

Week #6 – Literature of the Pentateuch
Readings: *FOTS*, 97-144; *OTI*, 31-79

Week #7 – Historiography of the OT

Week #8 – Prophecy and Wisdom
Readings: *FOTS*, 266-328; *OTI*, 97-143, 157-194.

Week #9 – Religion, Theology, and Sociological Approaches
Readings: *FOTS*, 391-478; *OTI* 261-276, 293-301.
Due: Paper #2 – critical approaches

Week #10 – Student presentations

Week #11 – Student presentations

Week #12 – Student presentations

Week #13 – Student presentations
8. Additional Course Bibliography


Nelson, Richard D. “‘The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case is Still Compelling.’” *JSOT*


