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OT 520 Foundations for Old Testament Study

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OT 520
Introduction to the Old Testament
Asbury Theological Seminary
Spring 2001
Tues/Thurs 2:30 -3:45 pm
SH 230

INSTRUCTOR:
Professor Sandra Richter
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SPO 933
Office: 858-2032

OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday 10:00-11:00 am
Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm
Thursday 4:00-5:00 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to lay a foundation for the rest of the student’s seminary career by familiarizing the student with the amazing story of Redemption as told in the Old Testament. To accomplish this goal, the student will be exposed to the geographical and socio-historical context from which the Old Testament emerges; the content, historical flow and theological structure of the Old Testament; the genre and history of the Canon; and the scholarship which has sought for generations to understand this collection of Scripture. It is my hope that this class will provide the student with a framework for their study of the OT, while investing in each a profound excitement and respect for these sacred texts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1) To become familiar with the history and geography of the biblical world in order to contextualize the OT narrative in real space and time.
2) To become familiar with the sociological structure of the biblical world in order to contextualize OT personalities within the relational structures from which they emerge.
3) To become familiar with the intentional theological structure of the OT in order to relate its message of redemption to that of the New.
4) To be exposed to issues of genre and authorship in order to facilitate future study and exposition of the text.
5) To engage the major questions of OT study and scholarship (historicity, canonicity, authorship) in order to equip the student to respond to these same questions for those they are called to serve.

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**Course Procedures & Requirements:**

**Method of Instruction:**
The format of the class will be primarily lecture, augmented by visual presentations and small and large group discussion. Student responsibilities will include a careful reading of a broad selection of materials, both in the required and recommended texts, and in the Course Packet.

**Textbooks:**
The required and recommended texts are on reserve in the library. These textbooks and a Course Packet are available for purchase at the bookstore. The materials in the Course Packet are also on reserve at the circulation desk and may be checked out to either copy or read. There will be numerous handouts for this class which will be distributed once in class, and always available on the Intranet.

**Required**


**Recommended**


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**Requirements**

**20% Quizzes.** Each Tuesday students will be briefly quizzed on assigned reading. Of these quizzes, the lowest grade will be dropped. There will be no make-ups. In addition, most of the quizzes will have an “extra” question drawn from the recommended readings. Students will be able to gain additional percentage points over the course of the semester by correctly answering these “extra” questions.

**10% Book Review.** A three-four page book review of Jon Levenson’s *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* is due by Friday, 4/20 at 5:00 pm. This review should answer the following three questions: (1) What is the content of this book?; (2) How does this content interact with other course material?; (3) What is the student’s response to the information and arguments presented in this book? This book review must be well-written, presented in standard form, clean and critical. Reviews received after the posted hour will be penalized half a grade per day, weekends included! Further instructions are available in “How to Write a Book Review” on the e-mail desktop page under “Resources” and on the Intranet.

**30% Midterm Exam.**

**40% Final Exam.**

**Groups.** Thursdays we will break into small discussion groups in order to evaluate some aspect of the assigned reading and synthesize it with class material. Attendance in these groups will be recorded. Each absence from the Thursday discussion groups will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final evaluation. Although not required, it is strongly suggested that students use the to-be-distributed course list to form study and discussion groups in order to provide further opportunity to process and interact with course material.
**PRESENCE**, preparedness and participation are always expected. Class absences will be considered in your final evaluation.

*Remembering that “A” work is defined at Asbury as “Exceptional work: outstanding or supassing achievement of course objectives” (Asbury Catalog, p. 28), know that to score an “A” on the midterm and final exam the student must show evidence of having critically synthesized reading material and class presentations and must display familiarity with the bulk of the recommended readings.*

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READING & LECTURE SCHEDULE

Part I: The Big Picture

2/6 INTRODUCTION & THE BIBLE AS THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

2/8 THE OT IN TIME & SPACE
De Vaux, pp. 3-61, “Nomadism & Family Institutions”
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “Geography,” pp. 619-631
Atlas, pp. 8-13, 36, 60-61

2/13 THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT quiz
Frank Cross, “Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel” in *From Epic to Canon*, pp. 3-22

2/15 MORE ON COVENANT
**Recommended:** Deuteronomy 6:26-34:12 (i.e. the rest of Deuteronomy)
Atlas, pp. 8-13, 36, 60-61
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “Deuteronomy,” pp. 111-127

2/20 GOD’S ORIGINAL INTENT: EDEN quiz
Genesis, chapters 1-4, Psalm 8
Henri Blocher, “Approaching Genesis” and “The Week of Creation” in *In the Beginning*, pp. 15-59
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 15-31, “Genesis: Primeval Prologue”
**Recommended:** *ANE*, “The Mesopotamian Creation Epic,” pp. 31-39
Childs, “Male & Female as a Theological Problem,” 188-192

2/22 GOD’S FINAL INTENT: THE NEW JERUSALEM
Exodus 24:12-26:37 (looking for cherubim)
Ezekiel 47:1-12 (if this is the first time you’ve read Ezekiel, read a summary of the book and this particular section of the book in a Bible handbook, Eerdmans is excellent)
Revelation 19:11-22:21
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “The Authority of the OT,” “Revelation,” “Canon,” pp. 585-605

2/27 NOAH quiz
Genesis 5:1-11:32
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51, “Genesis: Patriarchal History”
Atlas, pp. 58-59
Dumbrell, “The Covenant with Noah,” pp. 11-43
**Recommended:** *ANE*, “The Gilgamesh Epic,” pp. 40-75
3/1 **ABRAHAM**
Genesis 12:1-36:43
Atlas, 14-17
Dumbrell, “The Covenant with Abraham,” pp. 47-79
Childs, “The Recipients of God’s Revelation,” 92-103
**Recommended:** Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the OT and in the ANE,” *JAOS* 90 (1970): 184-203

3/6 **MOSES**
Genesis 37, 39-41, 47:1-Exodus 18:27
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 63 -79, “Exodus: Message”
Childs, “The Theological Significance of the Decalogue,” pp. 63-83, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*
**Recommended:** Dumbrell, “The Sinai Covenant,” pp. 80-126

3/8 **EXCURSUS: THE TABERNACLE: “So that I may dwell among them...” Exodus 25:8**
Exodus 24-34 (some review here)
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 80-98, “Leviticus”
Childs, pp. 155-172, “Benefits of the Covenant: the Cultus”
**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 274-311: “Semitic Sanctuaries,” “The First Israelite Sanctuaries”

3/13 **DAVID**
1 Samuel 16:1-2 Samuel 12:31
**Recommended:** Childs, pp. 108-119, “Agents of God’s Rule: Moses, Judges, Kings”

3/15 **THE NEW COVENANT:**
G.R. Osborn, “Type, Typology,” pp. 1117-19
Dumbrell, “The New Covenant,” 164-200
Luke 1  1 Corinthians 15
John 1:1-34; 14:1-7  Hebrews, chptrs 9-11
**Recommended:**
Jon Levenson, *The Death & Resurrection of the Beloved Son,* pp. 1-17; *25-31*

3/20 **MIDTERM EXAM**
Part II: Close Ups

3/22 THE PENTATEUCH: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP
The Book of Numbers
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 3-14 “Pentateuch”
“JED-P-in-a-nutshell” Handout
Recommended: Face, pp. 116-144, “Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm”

3/27 THE PATRIARCHS
Genesis 25:1-37:36
W.F. Albright, “The Patriarchal Background of Israel’s Faith,” Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, 53-91
K. Kitchen, “The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?” BAR (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95
Recommended: LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “The Chronological Puzzle,” 632-640

3/29 THE EXODUS: MYTH OR HISTORY?
Reread Exodus 13:1-19:6
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 52-62 “Exodus: Historical Background”; pp. 641-57 [skim 658-87]
“Archaeology”;
Kevin D. Miller, “Did the Exodus Never Happen?” Christianity Today 42/10 [Sept 1998]: 44-51
Atlas, pp. 18-21, review p. 34
Recommended: J. Hoffmeier, “Egypt, Plagues in” ABD 2:374-78
de Vaux, “Slaves,” pp. 80-90

4/3 THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 131-137 “Former Prophets”
Frank Cross, “The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History,”
Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, pp. 274-289.
Review Deuteronomy chptrs 1-4; Joshua chapters 1, 12 (summary of conquest battles) and 23; Judges 2:11-23; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kgs 8:12-51; 2 Kgs 17 (the peroration of Samaria); 2 Kgs 22 & 23 (Josiah’s reform), 25 (the fall of the southern kingdom).
Recommended: :
Face, “Historiography of the OT,” pp. 145-75

The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 138-164 “Joshua” “Judges”
de Vaux, pp. 91-98, “The Israelite Concept of State”

READING WEEK, April 9-13
THE RISE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY & ISRAEL’S GOLDEN AGE

4/17
1 Kings 1:1-9:9
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 165-196 “Birth of Monarchy,” “Golden Age”
“David Found at Dan” BAR 20/2 (March/April 1994): 74-87
de Vaux, pp. 312-330, “The Temple at Jerusalem”
Atlas [review pp. 48-51], pp. 52-57, “The Economy of Solomon’s Kingdom,” etc.
Recommended:
Philip Davies, “‘House of David’ Built on Sand,” 54-55.
Anson Rainey, “‘House of David’ and the House of the Reconstructionists,” 47.
de Vaux, “The Temple at Jerusalem,” pp. 331-344

THE POETS & SAGES OF ISRAEL: THE BOOK OF PSALMS & THE WISDOM LITERATURE

4/19
Psalms: 1, 2, 3, 8, 44, 46, 73, 88, 95, 96, 111, 150 (note divisions of five Books)
Proverbs: 1, 2, 3, 22:17-23:11 (note ANE parallels), 30, 31
Ecclesiastes
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 231-242 “Hebrew Poetry”; pp. 447-459 “Wisdom Literature”
Face, “Wisdom Lit” 295-328
Recommended: LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 460-519 (read selectively)

THE DIVIDED MONARCHY

4/24
1 Kings 11:1-22:53 (Ahijah & Elijah); 2 Kgs 18-23:27 (Hezekiah, Manasseh & Josiah)
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 197-220, “The Divided Monarchy”
de Vaux, pp. 100-137, “The Person of the King,” etc.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET:

4/26
Reread: Deuteronomy, chptrs 13 & 18
Read: LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 221-230 (see chart, pp. 224-226); 243-269.
Childs, “The Office & Function of the Prophet,” pp. 122-142
[Review TDOT, “cyzb,” pp. 276-279]

THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS: CONTENT & HERMENEUTICS

5/1
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 289-312; 328-355
Hosea chapters 1-4: Hosea
Isaiah 1, 3-9:7, 36-38, 40: Isaiah
Jeremiah chapters 1-5; 7 and 31 (cf. Hebrews chptrs 8 & 9): Jeremiah
Recommended: YHWH’s prophets sent to Assyria: Jonah & Nahum

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY & THE EXILIC COMMUNITY: DANIEL & EZEKIEL

5/3
*Malamat, “Caught Between the Great Powers: the Fall of Judah” BAR (July/Aug 1999): 34-41, 64
Atlas, pp. 88-89, “Nebuchadnezzar”
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “Ezekiel,” “Daniel,” “ 356-369; 566-582
Ezekiel chptrs 1-3, 10
Daniel chptrs 1-4, 7
Recommended: Face, “Recent Studies in OT Apocalyptic,” 369-390

THE CHRONICLER’S HISTORY: THE RETURN & RESTORATION OF THE POST-EXILIC COMMUNITY

5/8
1 Chronicles chptrs 1-14, 23; 2 Chron 1, 9, 36; Ezra chptrs 1-6; Nehemiah 8-9
5/10  **The Intertestamental Period & Conclusions**
Atlas pp. 92-103; 1 &2 Maccabees (read selectively)
Dumbrell, “Epilogue,” pp. 201-206
**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 372-404 (the priesthood before & after the Temple)

**Final Exam:** 12:30-2:30 pm, Monday, May 14th