1-1-2008

OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

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OT 520
Introduction to the Old Testament
Asbury Theological Seminary
Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR:
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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 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 genre, content, historical flow, and theological structure of the Old Testament 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 societal and relational structures from which they emerge. (This cross-cultural exercise will also further equip the student to cross-culturally communicate in a responsible manner within their own context of ministry.)
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 and to the contemporary Christian community.
4) To be exposed to issues of genre and authorship in order to facilitate future study and exposition of the text for the purposes of Christian ministry.
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.
COURSE PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS:

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

Textbooks:
Both the textbooks and the Coursepacket are available for purchase at the bookstore; a number of your readings will be available through the library’s online archives. There will be numerous handouts for this class which will be distributed once in class, and always available on the Intranet.

To be purchased:

To be purchased if you're rich, or borrowed if you're not:
Jon Levenson, Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible (HarperSanFrancisco, 1985)
Coursepacket (a number of your required readings are found here)

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 5 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. 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. (In reading Levenson’s book, some people find it helpful to read the “Introduction” last.) Reviews received after the posted hour will be penalized a third of a grade per day, weekends included! Further instructions are available in “How to Write a Book Review” on the Intranet.

30% MIDTERM EXAM
40% FINAL EXAM. 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.

GROUPS. Most 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. One absence from the Thursday discussion groups will be waived, additional absences will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final evaluation. Although not required, it is strongly suggested that students use their discussion groups as study groups in order to provide further opportunity to process and interact with course material and prep for exams.

PRESENCE, preparedness and participation are always expected. Class absences will be considered in your final evaluation.
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
M. Weinfield, “תִּרְעָם b’rit” TDOT, pp. 253-79 (*265-276)
Frank Cross, “Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel” in From Epic to Canon, pp. 3-21
Kenneth Kitchen, Ancient Orient and Old Testament, 90-102. See the following website:
http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_ancientorient.html You are reading a section from chapter 5
“Hebrew Contacts with Eastern Religions.”

2/15  MORE ON COVENANT
Recommended: Deuteronomy 6:26-34:12 (i.e. the rest of Deuteronomy)
56  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: Readings from the Ancient Near East, “Enuma Elish, #6 pp. 31-50; Childs, “Male & Female as a Theological Problem,” 188-195

2/22  GOD’S FINAL INTENT: THE NEW JERUSALEM
Exodus 24:12-26:37 (looking for cherubim, rivers, and trees)
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 34

2/27  NOAH  quiz
Genesis 5:1-11:32
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51, “Genesis: Patriarchal History”
Atlas, 58-59
Dumbrell, “Introduction; Genesis” pp. 9-31
3/1  ABRAHAM
Genesis 12:1-36:43
Atlas, 14-17
Childs, “The Recipients of God’s Revelation,” 92-107
Reread Weinfeld TDOT, pp. 270-272
Recommended: Gary Knoppers, “Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?” Journal of the American Oriental Society 116/4 (1996): 670-97; K. Kitchen, “The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?” BAR (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this will be required reading later; this article can be accessed through the online library archives. Log onto Asbury Scholar>Biblical Archaeology Society Archive> enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields>viola!)

3/6  MOSES  quiz
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

3/8  EXCURSUS: THE TABERNACLE:  “So that I may dwell among them…” Exodus 25:8
G.R. Osborn, “Type, Typology,” pp. 1117-19
Exodus 24-34 (some review here)
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 80-98, “Leviticus”
Dumbrell, “Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers,” pp. 32-56
Recommended: de Vaux, pp. 274-311: “Semitic Sanctuaries,” “The First Israelite Sanctuaries”

3/13  DAVID  quiz
1 Samuel 16:1-2 Samuel 12:31
LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, “Deuteronomy – Former Prophets,” 111-137

3/15  THE NEW COVENANT:
Luke 1 1 Corinthians 15
John 1:1-34; 14:1-7  Hebrews, chptrs 8-11
Recommended: both of these are available through regular reserves at Info Commons
Jon Levenson, The Death & Resurrection of the Beloved Son, pp. 1-17; *25-31

3/20  Start Part II: Close Ups

3/22  MIDTERM EXAM
3/22  **THE PENTATEUCH: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**
The Book of Numbers
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 3-14 “Pentateuch”
“JEDP-in-a-nutshell” Handout
**Recommended:** *Face of OT Studies*, pp. 116-144, “Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm” (on regular reserves in the library)

3/27  **THE PATRIARCHS**  
*quiz*
Genesis 25:1-37:36
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “The Chronological Puzzle,” 632-640
*Reread LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 1-51
K. Kitchen, “The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?” *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this article can be accessed through the online library archives. Log onto Asbury Scholar>Biblical Archaeology Society Archive>enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields>viola!*

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”
Atlas, pp. 18-21, review p. 34-35
**Recommended:** J. Hoffmeier, “Egypt, Plagues in” *ABD* 2:374-78; de Vaux, “Slaves,” pp. 80-90

**READING WEEK, April 2-6**

4/10  **THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**  
*quiz*
Dumbrell, "Deuteronomy-Judges," 57-80
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:** Richter, “The Deuteronomistic History” *Dictionary of the Historical Books* IVP (pdf posted in course center)

4/12  **THE CONQUEST & SETTLEMENT: THE ERA OF THE JUDGES & THE TRIBAL LEAGUE**
The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 138-164 “Joshua” “Judges”
de Vaux, pp. 91-99, “The Israelite Concept of State”
**Recommended:** *Face of OT Studies*, “Historiography of the OT,” pp. 145-75 (on regular reserves in the library).

**Book Reviews due on Monday, 4/14 at 5:00 pm.**
4/17  THE RISE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY & ISRAEL’S GOLDEN AGE  quiz
1 Kings 1:1-9:9
Dumbrell, "Samuel-Kings," 81-104
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 165-196 “Birth of Monarchy,” “Golden Age”
“David Found at Dan” BAR 20/2 (March/April 1994): 74-87 (this article can be accessed through the
Biblical Archaeology Society Archive link at the library.
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 (available through BAS archive)
Anson Rainey, “’House of David’ and the House of the Deconstructionists,” 47 (available through BAS archive)

4/19  THE POETS & SAGES OF ISRAEL: THE BOOK OF PSALMS & THE WISDOM LITERATURE
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, 425-470
Dumbrell, "Psalms-Proverbs," 245-273
Wisdom Readings out of Readings from the Ancient Near East: "Instructions of Amenhotep," #69, pp. 187-189;
"Ludlul Bel Nemeqi (I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom)," #64, pp. 177-79 and "Babylonian
Theodicy" #65, pp. 179-82.
**Recommended:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 471-519 (read selectively)
de Vaux, “The Temple at Jerusalem,” pp. 312-330

4/24  THE DIVIDED MONARCHY  quiz
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. 100-138, “The Person of the King,” etc.
**Recommended:** Face of OT Studies, “The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments & Detours,”
pp. 207-235 (on regular reserves in the library)

4/26  THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET:
**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. 122-144
[Review TDOT, “cyrb,” pp. 276-279]
**Recommended:** Theodore Mullen, “Divine Assembly” ABD 2:214-17; (1 Kgs 22:1-40; Isa 6; Jer 23:18,
22; Amos 3:7, 8; Malachi 3:1)

5/1  THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS: CONTENT & HERMENEUTICS  quiz
Dumbrell, "Isaiah," 107-132
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Jeremiah," pp. 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
5/3  **The Collapse of the Monarchy & the Exilic Community: Daniel & Ezekiel**  
Malamat, “Caught Between the Great Powers: the Fall of Judah” *BAR* (July/Aug 1999): 34-41, 64  
(available through *BAS* archive)  
Atlas, pp. 88-89, “Nebuchadnezzar”  
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, “Daniel,” 566-582  
Dumbrell, "Ezekiel," 151-170  
Ezekiel chptrs 1-3, 10  
Daniel chptrs 1-4, 7  

5/8  **The Chronicler’s History: The Return & Restoration of The Post-Exilic Community**  
1 Chronicles chptrs 1-14, 23; 2 Chron 1, 9, 36; Ezra chptrs 1-6; Nehemiah 8-9  

5/10  **Catch-Up**  

**The Intertestamental Period Reading:**  
Atlas pp. 92-103; 1 & 2 Maccabees (read selectively)  
**Recommended:** de Vaux, ””The Priesthood (before & after the temple),“ pp. 372-405  

**Final Exam:** Wednesday May 21, 12:30-2:30 pm