BS 504 Introduction to Biblical Studies: Old Testament

David Loren Thompson

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Course Description
This course orients the students to the discipline of Old Testament studies, stressing contemporary approaches to the historical and cultural settings, composition, authorship, and literary characteristics of the OT books. Attention will be given to the significance of the study of the Old Testament for the ministerial vocation represented in the master of arts programs, other than those specializing in Bible and theology.

Goals
Each student will:
1. Understand the theological story line in the Old Testament, and the theological connection between the OT and the NT.
2. Understand the major issues in OT interpretation and the basic historical–cultural background of the OT, and use this knowledge in the interpretation of the OT.
3. Begin integrating competent and responsible study of the Bible, particularly the OT, into the student’s vocation.

Procedures and Bases of Grade
1. Reading of extensive portions of the OT and supplementary materials.
2. Discussion (in class and in peer consultation) of key passages in their literary, historical, and cultural contexts and of select topics and questions germane to OT interpretation and appropriation.
3. Writing of two research papers, one on an OT–wide topic, the other on the interpretation of an OT book.

Resources
1. Required textbooks:
2. Other resources available on the course web page:

Academic Policies and Grades
1. Use of secondary sources, research and peer consultation figure prominently in this class. The use of secondary sources (formal and informal) is thus encouraged, indeed required. But when secondary sources are used, clear documentation will
appear. This is sufficiently important from methodological and instructional, not to mention moral perspectives that unacknowledged appropriation of significant information and ideas from secondary sources will be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism will certainly lead to a grade of zero for the specific project involved and may constitute grounds for failure in the course and other disciplinary action as provided in institutional policy.

This same principle also excludes undocumented use of any previous student’s work in the course and undocumented use of lecture notes from any previous semester of BS501 or other related courses. It is assumed that the student’s notes and all work submitted for this course is the student’s own work, done specifically for BS501, and not previously submitted as part of any other course’s requirements.

2. Format and Submission of Research/Reflection Papers
To facilitate handling by my office and especially by SPO personnel:
   a. Each paper should have a plain cover sheet, with the following material in this order in the upper right corner:
      • Student’s SPO
      • Student’s name (please print, SOLID CAPS)
      • Project name (Research Paper No. 1)
      • Date due/Date completed, e.g., “Due February 12 / Done February 11”
      On succeeding pages you need only put your last name and the page number. The placement and order of this information are important for SPO handling. Do not center your name and SPO down in the middle of the cover page. Do put this info in the upper right hand corner (portrait orientation). The plain title page is important for student privacy issues.
   b. Please write/print on one side only. Staple or paper-clip every multi-sheet work submitted. No guarantees made on preservation of unsecured “stacks” of paper submitted. Submit hard copy; no guarantee on email attachment preservation.

3. Grades
   a. Components
      • Research/reflection papers, 30% each;
      • Required reading report, 10%.
      • Discussion group write-up report, 15%;
      • Discussion group participation (peer evaluation), 10%;
      • Class participation, 5%.
   b. Grading Criteria and Criteria of Excellence
      Stated course objectives and the specific, written directions for each assignment become basic grading criteria.
   c. Assessment Reflected in Grades
      (See Seminarian: The Catalogue Edition for grade values.)
      A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course or assignment objectives
B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course or assignment objectives
C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course or assignment objectives
D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course or assignment objectives
F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.

d. Late work.
   Except in cases of emergency or by previous arrangement with the instructor, work submitted late may be accepted for credit but will not normally be graded.

4. Tentative Schedule

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS AND READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE: OLD TESTAMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/12 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Essays NOAB 453–507</td>
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<td>Canons of the Bible</td>
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<td>Textual Criticism</td>
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<td>Translation</td>
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<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>IN THE BEGINNING, HCAB 10–13</td>
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<td>02/19 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Cultural Contexts: ANE, NOAB 507–519</td>
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<td>Timeline, etc. NOAB 526–535</td>
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<td>Pentateuch Introduction, NOAB 3–8</td>
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<td>Genesis 1-11¹</td>
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<td>EMERGENCE OF ISRAEL, HCAB 14–19</td>
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<td>Genesis 12-50</td>
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<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>BETWEEN GENESIS AND EXODUS, HCAB 20–33</td>
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<td>02/26 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Exodus, Leviticus</td>
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<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>Numbers, Deuteronomy</td>
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<td>03/04 &amp; 06</td>
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<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN, HCAB 34–45</td>
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<td>03/11 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Historical Books, NOAB 309–313</td>
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<td>Joshua, Judges, Ruth</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ The reading for each biblical book in NOAB includes the introduction to each book, e.g., “Introduction to Genesis,” NOAB 10; “Introduction to Exodus,” NOAB 82–84. The assignment does not include the study notes at the bottom of each page of text.
WEEK 6  
**KINGDOMS OF SAUL AND DAVID, HCAB 46–51**  
03/18 & 20  
1 and 2 Samuel

WEEK 7  
**AGE OF SOLOMON, HCAB 52–61**  
03/25 & 27  
1 Kings 1–11

Poetic Literature, NOAB 721–725  
Proverbs, Song of Songs

Mar 28 (F)  
RESEARCH/REFLECTION PAPER NO. 1

READING WEEK: MARCH 31 – APRIL 4

WEEK 8  
**DIVIDED KINGDOM: ISRAEL, HCAB 62–77**  
04/08 & 10  
1 Kings 11–2 Kings 17, Isaiah

WEEK 9  
Prophets, NOAB 969–973  
04/15 & 17  
Hosea, Amos

WEEK 10  
**DIVIDED KINGDOM: JUDAH [& Judah Under Assyria], HCAB 78–83**  
04/22 & 24  
2 Kings 18–25, Nahum

WEEK 11  
**JUDAH UNDER BABYLON, HCAB 84–89**  
04/29 & 05/01  
Jeremiah, Lamentations  
Obadiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

WEEK 12  
05/06 & 08  
Ezekiel, Daniel

WEEK 13  
**PERSIAN PERIOD, HCAB 90–91**  
05/13 & 15  
Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther  
Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi,  
Jonah, Joel

WEEK 14  
**RESEARCH/REFLECTION PAPER NO. 2**  
05/22  
Due 5:00 p.m.

Reading List (See list posted on web site.)