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BS 501 Introduction to the Old Testament

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Area of Biblical Studies

BS501X 3 hours
INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES--1

David L. Thompson
Fall 2004

I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The two-course sequence of BS 501-502 comprises three interrelated sections:
(1) an introduction to the concept and significance of the canon of Scripture, the discipline of hermeneutics, and a contextual, text-centered approach to biblical interpretation;
(2) an introduction to the Old Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and
(3) an introduction to the New Testament in its historical, literary, and canonical contexts. Course participation, reading, and projects will be configured in part so as to reflect the character of the degree specializations represented among the course participants. In order to achieve credit for either course, the full, two-course sequence must be completed successfully. Required of all M.A. except for those in Biblical Studies. BS 501 focuses on the Old Testament.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. The student will trace the development of canonization, discuss the meaning and significance of the canon and of canonicity, especially the canon and canonicity of the Old Testament, and articulate the major issues involved in the relationship between the testaments.

The student will become conversant, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the historical background of the Bible, including the historical setting of the biblical story, and especially the story of the Old Testament, and the critical historical issues surrounding the production of the various Old Testament books, and will demonstrate the ability to make appropriate use of this historical information in the interpretation of the biblical text.

- B. The student will be conversant with the major issues in hermeneutics (i.e., will be able to identify these issues, articulate the main contemporary positions surrounding these issues, and present in a reasonable and informed fashion his/her own perspective regarding these issues), and will demonstrate the ability to make use of these hermeneutical insights in the actual interpretation and application of the Old Testament text. Among these hermeneutical issues will be the role of the cultural placement of the reader in the process of interpretation and application and the importance of exposure to multicultural perspectives for understanding of the text.
- C. The student will demonstrate, in at least a basic and rudimentary way, the ability to observe, interpret, and apply the Old Testament text, and to show the significance of this interpretation and application of the biblical text

for the tasks of his/her ministerial vocation. Specifically, the student will (a) identify the macrostructure of a biblical book (including the structural development of the book in terms of its units and sub-nits, and major structural dynamics within the book) and will show the significance of these insights for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (b) engage in a “close reading” of individual passages so as to make relevant observations useful for interpretation; (c) employ various kinds of exegetical determinants, e.g., context, word usage, historical background, literary genre, the history of interpretation for the interpretation of the Old Testament text; (d) move from interpretation of the Old Testament passage to specific and creative application to contemporary Christian life, including the exemplifying of principles that must be kept in mind in the use of the Old Testament for Christian application.

- D. The student will show how the teachings of individual passages within the Old Testament contribute to the flow of biblical revelation in the large, and will trace, in at least a general way, the development of major biblical themes and motifs throughout the whole of Scripture so as to articulate a biblical theology of these major themes and motifs.
- E. The student will demonstrate rudimentary ability to integrate the study of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, to his/her vocation.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

A. Required Texts

Bauer, David R. *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Hendrickson, 2003.

Drane, John Introducing the Old Testament. Completely revised and updated. Fortress Press, 2001. Abbreviated IOT in the syllabus.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Introduction to Biblical Interpretation. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. Introduces essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Students may *omit* sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament. (= IBI in syllabus) There is a new, enlarged and revised edition just published. Uncertainty about its availability for the class led us to stick with the previous edition for this fall's class.

Revised Standard Version of the Bible or New American Standard Bible or some other contemporary, formal (vs. dynamic) equivalence translation with minimal editorial clutter in the layout. NRSV and NIV are also fine.

Thompson, David L. Bible Study That Works. Revised edition. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1994. Gives a brief, non-technical overview of approach to “inductive biblical studies” commended by the class. (= BSTW)

B. Course Materials

I want to acknowledge here my debt to Dr. Lawson G. Stone, my colleague and friend in the area of Biblical Studies here at Asbury Seminary, for permission to use his OT Tapestries and selected other materials. Dr. Stone is professor of Old Testament. He and I collaborated in teaching the first sections of BS501 offered on campus some time ago. At that time, I found his “tapestries” an invaluable outline of a thoughtful, evangelical approach to matters germane to study of the Old Testament. With his permission I am using his tapestries yet again this fall. Thanks also to Dr. Sandra Richter, also an Old Testament colleague here at Asbury, for permission to reproduce and use her excellent chart on OT Chronology.

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. Course Emphases. Three major streams of instruction converge to form the BS501X experience: (1) critical introduction to the study of the Old Testament and its historical, cultural environment; (2) hermeneutics (i.e., the study of human communication, in this case through ancient written documents); and (3) inductive biblical studies which amount to applied hermeneutics, emphasizing skill and craft development in the careful reading and redemptive use of the Old Testament. The first two we will approach through assigned reading and discussion. The last we will engage through our own direct work with the Old Testament text.
- B. Course Organization and Other Help.
1. First Class Learning Space Setups
 - a. Course Center. When you open your BS501X first class folder, The “Course Center” icon will be obvious. All primary materials relating to the class can be found here: syllabus, assignments, all reading materials.
 - b. Care and Prayer Room. When you post an email to “BS501-XL-DT” First Class puts your note in what amounts to the “mail box” for the course. All items posted here are open to all members of the class. Nothing regarded as confidential should be placed here. We will call this the “Care and Prayer Room” and use it for sharing questions about the course or assignments, for sharing concerns and prayer requests and for posting prayers for the class.
 - c. Team Center. This is the location we will use to carry on our discussion of questions and topics raised by the readings and the class in general and for sharing ideas regarding the inductive biblical studies. Materials here can be accessed only by the course instructor and his assistant(s) and designated team members. Each team will have its own folder inside this space.

- d. Office Center. Private communication between me and individual students transpires here. If for some reason you want confidential communication with me, this is the place to post your note. Only I, or persons authorized by me, have access to materials in the "Office."

We can develop other spaces as we find need of them.

2. Graduate work, graduate load, graduate people. This is graduate theological education, with expectations for penetrating insight and interaction and study investment appropriate to it. Regarding interaction, in our discussions and feedback we will look for significant questions, thoughtful comments and insights to help and probe one another. We will avoid clichés and bland generalities: "I like that!" "Great thought!" "I have questions about that." Say specifically what you liked and why. Indicate specifically what you thought was "great" and on what basis. State clearly what your questions are, and so on. We will find this more enlightening.

Regarding load. BS501X carries graduate load expectations. By accreditation mandates this course aims to be "comparable" to the on-campus course of the same number. Students on campus typically invest 10-12 hours per week, including class time, in their work. A similar investment will be necessary to thrive in the ExL environment.

This will not be news students experienced in ExL. It probably amounts to a "no-brainer" for newcomers as well. I include the information from watching some students get caught off guard who were expecting something more like a continuing education experience. So there you have it.

This all means we are graduate people as well. This class will be an important theme for us in the fall of '04. Even so, we have lives outside of this class. We are gifted but not superhuman. We have 168 hours in a week and no more, no matter what end of the email line we may be on. We have relationships and other responsibilities to which we will attend. We will expect much of each other. We will also pray for each other and encourage one another.

3. **HELP WITH TECHNICAL MATTERS AND ALL SORTS OF QUESTIONS.**

Happily we have an skilled, well-informed and kind support team to help us when the going gets tough or just plain muddled at points technical.

- a. For general questions regarding the ExL program, email ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu or call 859/858-2191.
 - b. For technical support, email ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu.
 - c. For library research support, contact Information Commons at Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu
 - d. For library loans, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu 859/858-2353 or 2230
 - e. Buying books. Email EXLBOOKS@asburyseminary.edu, or call Cokesbury toll free at 1-866-855-8252.
- C. On Line Office Hours and Response Expectations.
1. I will plan to respond to email and other communication Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, and Eastern Standard Time after October 31. Please limit messages to 50 words or less, if possible. If you have a truly urgent matter, label it “URGENT.” I will attend to it as soon as possible.
 2. All the due dates include a due time, EDT until EST, as above. Work posted up to that time will be considered on time.
 3. Our course week will run from 12:01 a.m. Tuesday through the following Monday midnight.

V. GRADE COMPONENTS AND GRADING INFORMATION

- A. Exams. Six exams will provide accountability for the readings (including Tapestries). The exams will cover the readings week by week, with the exception of the last exam, which will cover the readings for both week 13 and week 14. The exam in week 7 will also cover Dr. Sandra Richter’s chronological chart. Consult the course calendar. Students may earn up to twenty points each or a total of 120 points on these exams.
- B. Inductive Bible Studies. We will use six lessons as a laboratory for hands-on practice of inductive Bible study. We will devote weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14 to these studies, which will be integrated with the readings and class discussion being carried on as well. See the course calendar. You will find directions for doing these lessons in the weekly assignment folder. The lessons will be worth thirty points each, contributing a possible total of 180 points to the semester grade.
- C. Class Discussions and Class Support. Thirteen of the fourteen weeks of the semester, we will engage in informed discussion of selected questions and topics. Week 14 (finals week), we will not do this discussion. Teams of five or six people will carry on these conversations. Participation is mandatory and will be graded, with five points per week possible to be

earned, contributing a total of 65 points to the semester grade. In this arena we will also pray for one another regularly. The prayer contributions will not be graded.

- D. Late Work. Late work may be accepted for credit but will not be graded, except in cases of emergency or by special arrangement me.
- E. Grade Values. Grades in the class follow the assessments published in the seminary ATS Catalog, p. 28, e.g., A = “Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.”

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

- A. Course Schedule Overview. The following chart will give you an overview of the flow of the course, which materials to read, the weeks exams will be given and those devoted to inductive biblical studies. The “Weekly Assignment” folder will give you week by week guidance for your work.

WEEK	DATE	CLASS PROCESS
1	9/07-13	<u>Bible Study That Works</u> (128) [128] What Make of OT? (ppt) Why OT Criticism? (ppt)
2	9/14-20	IOT, 1. Introducing the OT, 11-35 (25) IOT, 9. The Living God, 228-251 (24) IOT, 10. God and the World, 253-276, (24) KBH, 8. Genres of the OT, Narrative, 259-273 (14) KBH 10. Using the Bible Today (Theology), 382-390 [114] <i>Tapestry 1</i> <i>EXAM</i>
3	9/21-27	IBS #1. GENESIS 2:4-4:26 Survey
4	9/28-10/4	IOT, 2. The Founding of the Nation, 36-61 (26) IOT, 3. A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, 62-86 (25) KBH, 1. Need for Hermeneutics, 3-20 (18) KBH, 2. History of Interpretation, 21-52 (32) KBH, 3. Canon and Translations, 53-68 (14) [115] <i>Tapestry 2</i> <i>EXAM</i>

5	10/05-11	<i>IBS #2. PSALM 78 Survey</i>
6	10/12-18	IOT, 4. A King Like Other Nations, 87-119 (33) IOT, 11. Living as God's People, 277-305 (28) KBH, 4. The Interpreter, 81-116 (36) KBH, 5. Goal of Interpretation, 117-154, (38) [135] <i>Tapestry 3</i> EXAM
7	10/19-25	IOT, 5. The Two Kingdoms, 120-146 (27) IOT, 12. Worshiping God, 12. 306-330 (25) IOT, 13. From Hebrew Bible to OT, 338-362 (25) KBH, Appendix: Modern Approaches, 427-458 (32)[109] <i>Tapestry 4</i> EXAM
8	10/26-11/01	<i>IBS #3. AMOS BOOK SURVEY</i>
9	11/02-08	IOT, 6. Judah and Jerusalem, 147-172 (26) KBH, 6. General Rules of Herm.—Prose, 155-214 (60) [86] <i>Tapestry 5</i> EXAM
10	11/09-15	<i>IBS #4. PSALM 89</i>
11	11/16-29	IOT, 7. Dashed Hopes and New Horizons, 173-206 (34) KBH, 7. General Rules of Herm—Poetry, 215-258, (44) [80] <i>Tapestry 6</i> EXAM
11/22 - 26 FALL READING BREAK		
12	11/30-12/06	IOT, 8. The Challenge of a New Age, 207-227 (21) <i>Tapestry 7</i> <i>IBS #5. AMOS 9:7-15 INTERPRETATION</i>
13	12/07-13	KBH, 10. Using the bible Today, 377-400 (24) KBH, 11. Application, 401-426. (26) [50] EXAM for wks 12-13
14	12/17	<i>IBS #6. AMOS 9:7-15 Evaluation-Application</i>
		All work due Friday, December 17, 5:00 p.m. Semester ends.

LAWSON STONE'S OT PRESENTATIONS & TAPESTRIES (PPT format).

Introduction

1. Why Study the OT?
2. Why Old Testament (Biblical) Criticism?

Tapestries

1. Long Time Ago in a Civilization Far, Far Away. The gold age of ANE culture; the world of the OT
2. Prince of Egypt? Moses and the Covenant Nation.
Birth of the nation; Egyptian bondage; Exodus-Sinai-Wilderness, Settlement in Canaan.
3. Godfather? The House of David and Israelite Imperial Aspirations
Iron I 11200-921 BC

4. The Blues Brothers. Who's on a Mission from God? Conflict in the Covenant.
The Divided Kingdom Period, 921-721 B.C.
5. A New Hope!
The Judean State Period, 721-587 BC
6. The Empire Strikes Back
Singing Yahweh's Son in a Strange Land.
597-521 BC. The Babylonian Exile
7. The Return of the Judean
The "Crisis" of the Restoration, 539-300 BC

B. Weekly Assignments for BS501X