

Introduction to the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible
 OT 5000
 Trinity Seminary, Madison Extension

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1. Course Description

This course will survey of the biblical books of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible with emphasis upon the historical context, structure, and message of each book as well as the major theological themes developed in their canonical context. 4 Credit Hours

2. Course Goals

This course is designed to . . .

Cognitive

2.1 . . . familiarize the student with the structure, literary genre, purpose, contents, and theology of the books of the Old Testament.

2.2 . . . demonstrate the integrity of the entire Old Testament canon by relating each of these books to one another and to the overall themes of the Old Testament.

Synthetic

2.3 . . . assist the student in recognizing and identifying key figures, names, places, events, and passages contained in the Old Testament.

2.4 . . . enable the student to draw from these passages truths and principles which are applicable and relevant to contemporary life and ministry.

Affective

2.5 . . . give the student a greater appreciation for the coherence of the Bible's literary and theological integrity, and thus for the Bible's Master Author.

2.6 . . . provoke a sense of growing understanding and worship of God by seeing his character and plan displayed in these books.

3. Course Requirements

3.1 Exams

Two exams will be given through the semester. These will be take-home essay exams, consisting of (1) short answer questions about the content of the biblical books and (2) synthetic essay questions about the structure, theology, or themes of a given biblical book. You are to set aside three hours for each exam, which will be open book style (you can use a Bible and class notes). [3hrs each, 6hrs total]

3.2 Reading

- Required Readings:

The Bible. Any modern English translation is fine. I recommend using a translation that is new to you (the ESV, NRSV, or JPS Tanak). This often brings new and different things to your attention as you read.

LaSor, William Sanford, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, and Leslie C. Allen. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament.* 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996.

Thomas, Timothy L. "The Old Testament 'Folk Canon' and Christian Education." Pages 45-61 in *Asbury Theological Journal* 42 (1987).

- Course Reading

- Read the entire Old Testament in the order of the Tanak (Hebrew Canon)
- Read the assigned selections from the course textbook according to the class schedule.

3.3 Project *Choose ONE of the following options*

3.3.1 *Theological Theme Paper* An 8-10 page paper, typed, double-spaced; free of spelling errors. If you pick one of these, come talk with me about its content, structure, and goal. Topics to choose from include the following (the student may also seek instructor's prior approval for another topic):

- The Concept of Blessing in the *Torah* (Genesis - Deuteronomy)
- The Firstborn in the *Torah* (Genesis - Deuteronomy)
- The Significance of Naming in the Books of Genesis - Exodus
- Major Themes in Deuteronomic Literature (Deuteronomy - 2 Kings)
- The Land in Deuteronomy-2 Kings
- The Role of Love in Deuteronomy
- Analysis of a Failure: Samson
- A Literary Analysis of the Book of Ruth or Esther
- Characterization [or Irony...] in the Book of Esther
- The Analysis of a Failed Leader: Saul
- Irony in the Book of Esther
- God's Justice in the book of Job
- The Role of Nature in the Book of Job
- Evidence of Structure & Cohesion in the Book of Psalms
- The Problem of the Imprecatory Psalms
- The Messiah in the Book of Psalms
- Evidence of Structure & Cohesion in the Book of Proverbs
- An Analysis of the "Fear of the LORD"
- Insights on Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs
- The Leading Themes of the Book of Ecclesiastes
- An Evaluation of Interpretive Options for the Song of Songs (Solomon)
- The Theological Emphases of Chronicles
- Salvation and Light in Isaiah
- The Past, Present, and Future of Zion-Jerusalem in Isaiah
- The Role of the Nations/Peoples/Gentiles in Isaiah

The Branch-Messiah-David in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Zechariah
 Shepherds in the Prophets
 The Past, Present, Future of the Temple in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah
 The Covenants in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Sinai Covenant, Davidic Covenant, New Covenant)
 ??Something else?? (must acquire instructor's prior consent)

3.3.2 *Biblical Book Study Project*

Select a book from the Old Testament for an expositional analysis. After doing your own independent study of its structure, main themes, and message, (1) state what you believe is the main idea of the book; (2) identify the main parts of the book and discuss briefly how each part relates to the main idea [be sure to show how each section builds on the argument as it is developed through the book]; (3) create a chart which displays your stated main idea and how each section relates to that idea; (4) identify the leading themes in the book, and discuss how each of these themes relates to the main idea; (5) describe how the main theme of the book relates to contemporary life and ministry, listing 4-6 suggestions of how you or your church community should respond to the message of the book. The entire project should be about 8-10 pages, type-written.

3.3.3 *Creative Project*

Select a book from the Old Testament, and complete steps (1), (2), and (4) of the previous project (5-6 pages, typed). Produce one of the following:

1. A multi-part teaching series (specify your intended venue and/or audience) based on your study of the biblical book, including outline plans. This is meant to be something you can actually use in your own church communities.
2. Compose one/two songs based on the themes or message of the biblical book you've studied. This is also meant to be something you can actually use in your own church communities.

4. Attendance, Late Work, and Grading

The student is expected to attend every class session, arriving on time. If the project is turned in late, it will be received with a penalty—one full grade. Computer or printer problems do not constitute an acceptable excuse. The project *must* be turned in on the final day of class.

Course Grading Percentages

Reading	20%
Paper	20%
Mid-term	25%
Final	25%
Participation	10%

5. Course Outline

Weekend 1

Pentateuch

- *Old Testament Survey*, Chs. 1-3, 5-8
- Timothy Thomas, "The Old Testament 'Folk Canon.'"

Weekend 2

Josh-2 Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

- *Old Testament Survey*, Chs. 9-15, 41, 42

Weekend 3

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

- *Old Testament Survey*, Chs. 16-17, 21-22, 24-25

Weekend 4

- Midterm Exam due at the beginning of class

Minor Prophets, Psalms

- *Old Testament Survey*, Chs. 18-20, 23, 26-30, 31-32

Weekend 5

- Final Project due at the beginning of class

- Final exam handed out at the end of class

Wisdom: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes in dialogue

Ruth, Song of Songs, Esther, Lamentations, Daniel

- *Old Testament Survey*, Chs. 33-36, 37-40, 43