

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction**

**Roger D. Cotton**

**Spring 2004**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An introduction to the content and background of the Old Testament, including the critical issues in the discipline of Old Testament Introduction, to enable one to pursue further study of the Old Testament at a graduate level.

**OBJECTIVES**

Upon the successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Construct a brief historical framework of the ancient Near East including succession of empires in relation to the Old Testament.
2. Outline the history of Israel including its prehistory in Genesis 1-11.
3. Define the cultural background concepts and practices that are significant for understanding major Old Testament teachings.
4. Explain the major historical, critical, and interpretative issues involved with the books of the Old Testament.
5. Summarize the message of each book of the Old Testament, in relation to Israel's context.
6. Distinguish the main features and principles of each genre of the Old Testament literature that must be understood for valid interpretation of the author's intended meaning.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**Required:**

Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan E. Beyer. Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.

Cotton, Roger D., ed. BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction Handouts. Springfield, MO.: By the Editor and AGTS, 2004.

Walton, John H. Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament. Rev. ed. Grand

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Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

### **Recommended:**

Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin. Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East. Rev. ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.

**OR**

Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan E. Beyer, eds. Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources For Old Testament Study. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

### **BASIC OUTLINE**

1. Authority, inspiration, reliability, canon, and the text of the Old Testament.
2. Overview of exegetical approaches to the text.
3. Geography and historical framework of the ancient Near East.
4. The Pentateuch and literary, cultural parallels.
5. The Writings and ANE religion.
6. The Former Prophets (O.T. History).
7. The Latter Prophets.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Lecture, discussion, reading, and analytical writing assignments.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class attendance is expected; maximum allowable absences is four (4) class periods. Please talk to the professor when you are absent and ask for any handouts.

1. Be prepared for each class to raise significant questions about the assigned readings. The textbook is to be read by the end of the course. The book of charts and the set of handouts are to be read as needed for the daily assignments and toward the final exam.

### **Assignment Calendar**

Class	Textbook	Assignment numbers from req. 2,
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readings	Chapters	below, to be turned in or discussed on the date listed
1. Thurs Jan 8		
2. Tues 13	1 (sections A,B,C)	1) ABC (read Gen 6-9, summarize)
3. Thurs 15	1D	
4. Tues 20	3B2	2) (read article)
5. Thurs 22		
6. Tues 27		3) AB (Gen 6:1-4 diagram)
7. Thurs 29	DAY OF PRAYER	
8. Tues Feb 3	2A	
9. Thurs 5	2B	4) (word study)
10. Tues 10		5) AB (read from Gilgamesh)
11. Thurs 12	3	6) (read about JEDP)
12. Tues 17		7) (response to article)
13. Thurs 19	4-5	
14. Tues 24		Kitchen article on Patriarchal Age
15. Thurs 26	6AB	Archer on the Date of the Exodus
March 1-5	SPRING BREAK	
16. Tues 9	6C	Kitchen on Covenant and Cotton on the Laws
(photocopies)		
17. Thurs 11		
18. Tues 16	7	
19. Thurs 18	8-9	
20. Tues 23	10-18	
21. Thurs 25		
22. Tues 30	19	
23. Thurs April 1	20-21	
24. Tues 6	22-23	
25. Thurs 8	24	Background reading and insights narrative due
26. Tues 13	25-31	Horton and Motyer on the unity of Isaiah; Harrison on the Book of Daniel
27. Thurs 15	32-34	Conclusion, Topics list due
28-30. Tues 20	7:30-10:00 am	FINAL EXAM

2. Series of assignments to experience basic exegetical steps and tools for Old Testament study as well as scholarly issues, using Genesis 6-9. (listed above, right col.)

1A) READ Gen. 6-9 in NIV and CEV by Tues, Jan.13.

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- 1B) TURN IN on Tues, Jan. 13 your summary list of the progression of topics in Gen. 6-9, giving chapter and verse references for your summaries (see 1 Chron. 10 handout)
- 1C) TURN IN on Tues, Jan. 13 your summary in a sentence or two of the theological point of Gen. 6-9--why was it written? (put on same page as 1B)
- 2) READ, by Tues, Jan 20, the article in the Handouts book, "Method in Pentateuchal Source Criticism" by G.J. Wenham from Vetus Testamentum 41, 1 (1991): 84-109. This is a first reading to note, for your own study, any questions you need to answer about the Genesis text, and scholarly jargon or references you do not understand that are important to understanding the article. You are to write a response by Feb 17 (see #7 below).
- 3A) TURN IN on Tues, Jan. 27 your flow of thought diagram (see instructions handout) of Gen. 6:1-4.
- 3B) TURN IN on Tues, Jan. 27 your summary of the theological point of Gen. 6:1-4, in the context of Genesis, in a sentence or two. Also, LIST the questions on specific points that need to be answered in order to understand the details of what the passage is referring to. Finally, LIST where else the Hebrew word "Nephilim" 6:4 NIV is used in the O.T.
- 4) TURN IN on Thurs, Feb 5 a 1-2 page word study on the Hebrew word for "repented" (KJV) ("grieved", NIV) in Gen. 6:6, (see instructions handout). The main two tools are (New) Englishman's Hebrew Concordance and NIDOTTE.
- 5A) READ the excerpts from Gilgamesh and Atrahasis in Old Testament Parallels by Matthews and Benjamin or the same passages (or more) in another edition of these ANE flood accounts. Watch for the similarities and the differences with Gen. 6-9.
- 5B) TURN IN on Tues, Feb 10 your list of similarities and differences between Gen. 6-9 and the ANE flood accounts of Gilgamesh and Atrahasis after reading: Wenham's commentary on Gen. 1-15 in WORD Biblical Commentary Series, pp. xlvi-1, 159-166; Kitchen, The Bible In Its World, pp. 27-30; and Walton's chart p. 81. The grading of the list will focus on additions to and improvements on Walton's chart. Also, WRITE your summary in a half page or so of how you believe the parallel ANE literature relates to Gen. 6-9—did either copy from the other?—including your view of the divine inspiration of Gen. 6-9 in relation to other flood accounts. Give a brief statement of what you see as significant about the differences between the two accounts.

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- 6) READ about the JEDP Theory of Pentateuchal authorship in: our textbook, the “Pentateuch” article (the section on JEDP) in ISBE (1980s), Wenham’s commentary on Gen. 1-15, pp. xxv-xlii; and skim Archer’s Survey of OT Introduction, 1995 edition, chapters 6-10 looking at titles, categories, charts, and main points, before doing #7.
- 7) TURN IN on Tues, Feb 17 a list of the arguments discussed in the article by Wenham (see 2) above) and a 3-4 page response analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments in the article for and against the theory that various sources were patched together to produce Gen. 6-9. Be sure to include the literary evidence from the ANE context. Also give your conclusion on the overall quality and results of Wenham’s article. Did he accomplish his purpose for writing the article? What have you learned about scholarship in OT studies? What is a healthy perspective on all this? (note this is 14% of the course grade)

Note: If you do any readings beyond those required be sure to list them at the end of the appropriate assignment. Otherwise, no bibliographies are needed for the assignments.

### 3. Additional Required Readings (on reserve in the library)

- 1) Kitchen, Kenneth A. “The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?” Biblical Archeology Review 21 (March/April 1995): 48-57, 88-95. Tues, Feb 24.
- 2) Archer Gleason L. A Survey of Old Testament Introduction. Rev. ed. 1994. on “The Date of the Exodus,” pp. 239-52. Thurs, Feb 26.
- 3) R.K. Harrison on “The Book of Daniel” in his Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1105-1134. (read for main points and key insights) Tues, April 13.

### 4. Background and Issues Reading – 300 pages total including:

- 1) Must include 225 pages on cultural or historical background from scholarly sources.
  - 125-150 pages must be from any one or combination of these on reserve in the library:
    - Hoerth, Mattingly, Yamauchi, Peoples of the OT World
    - Hoerth, Archaeology and the OT
    - Currid, Ancient Egypt and the OT
    - Chavalas, Younger, Mesopotamia and the Bible
    - Kitchen, The Bible In Its World (not including what was already assigned)
    - Von Soden, The Ancient Orient

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The other 75-100 pages must be scholarly, archaeological background reading focused on a specific topic and must include a scholarly, archaeological journal article and an article in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology.

TURN IN, on Thurs, April 8, a 3-5 page narrative of the helpful insights you gained for your understanding of the Old Testament from any of this reading but especially from the reading on a focused topic.

- 2) For the other 75 pages you may do more of the above readings or you may do some or all of it in scholarly treatments of a technical issue in Old Testament studies that interests you, or in original documents.

TURN IN, on Thurs, April 8, a list of all readings for these 300 pages with a grand total of the pages you read for this. Double column pages count as two pages.

5. TURN IN, on Thurs, April 15, a LIST of nine substantial, relevant, topics that are important for preaching, teaching, or counseling Christians today and that are clearly presented in particular sections (consisting of at least 7 verses) of Old Testament books. Three topics must be from history books, three from poetry and wisdom books, and three from prophets with at least one major and one minor prophet, (none from Pentateuch). You must not use a book more than once. Under history, choose one from Josh.-2 Kings, one from the rest, and another from either group. Be sure to give the book and passage where each topic is dealt with. (Sample: Numbers 11—Principles for leadership of God's people by the Holy Spirit.)
6. Write a final exam over the course, Tuesday, April 20, from 7:30-10:00 A.M. Bring your own paper for the essay portion, either 8½ x 11 (one side only) or blue book (both sides). Also bring your signed accountability sheet for the readings.

Late work will be penalized 1 point per day late including weekends using a 12 point scale (12=A, 1=F).

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Reading of the textbooks, articles, and class participation	16%
Progression of topics in Gen. 6-9	01%
Flow of thought diagram	03%
Word study	05%
Comparison to ANE flood accounts	04%
Response to Wenham article	14%
Relevant topics from OT books	05%
Reading of 300 pages on background and Narrative of background insights	19%
Final Exam	33%

**WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED TO ROGER COTTON**

The work must be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins and the right margin NOT justified, and be proof-read. Your writing should demonstrate good, formal, clear writing style (see Strunk and White). The format should follow Turabian 6th edition. If you need to cite a source you may choose which one of the three citation methods in Turabian you prefer to use: foot notes, end notes, or parenthetical. The length may exceed the limit by a page or so. Put the following information at the top of the first page or on a title page: Name, assignment, course, my name, date. Do not put anything but the page numbers at the top of the other pages. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date or the grade begins to drop (see above for late work). If the student does not have the assignment ready to turn in at the beginning of class, he or she must leave the class during the discussion of the assignment.

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Bimson, John J., and David Livingston. "Redating the Exodus." Biblical Archaeology Review 14 (Sept/Oct 1987): 40-68.

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**SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Roger D. Cotton, November 2003.