

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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Winter 2006

*Fridays 1:30-9:30 and Saturdays 9:00-5:00: January 13-14, February 10-11, March 10-11*

**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.

**COURSE 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 Hebrew Scriptures.
2. Outline the history of biblical Israel.
3. Define the cultural background concepts and practices significant to understanding major teachings of the Hebrew Bible.
4. Explain the major historical, critical, and interpretative issues involved with the books of the Hebrew Bible.
5. Summarize the message of each book of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, in context.
6. Identify the main features and principles of each genre of Hebrew biblical literature that must be understood to gain legitimate understanding of the inspired writer's intended meaning.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Birch, Bruce C., et al. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. **(To be brought to each class session).**

Williams, William C., ed. *They Spoke From God: A Survey of the Old Testament*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press/Gospel Publishing House, 2003.

**Recommended Text:**

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.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### WEEKEND ONE: JANUARY 13-14, 2006: THE PENTATEUCH

**SESSION 1:     FRIDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

Course Introduction

The Significance of the Hebrew Bible

    Canon and Canonicity

    Theories of Inspiration

    Transmission through the Ages

    Hermeneutical Principles for Interpretation

The Human Circumstance of the Hebrew Biblical Events

    Regions and Roads of the Ancient Near East

    Ancestry, Nationhood, Exile, Restoration

Torah: Origins of the Chosen People

    The Nature and Character of Torah “Pentateuch”

    Themes of Torah: God’s Sovereignty, Man’s Sin, Holiness and Salvation

    Authorship and Critical Approaches

**SESSION 2:     FRIDAY, 6:00-9:30 P.M.**

*Bereshith* “In the beginning”: Genesis: God, Mankind, and the Chosen People

    Genesis 1-11: Primeval History, Creation, and the Nature of Sin

    Genesis 12-50: Patriarchal History and Narratives: Election, Promise, Covenant

**SESSION 3:     SATURDAY, 9:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.**

*Shemoth* “The names”: Exodus: The Great Escape

    The History of the Miraculous Exodus

    Theological Meaning: Deliverance, Covenant, Divine Presence

*Vayiqra* “And He called”: Leviticus: Guidelines for Holy Living

    Background and Contents

    Levitical Themes: Torah, Sacrifice, Holiness

**SESSION 4:     SATURDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

*Bamidbar* “In the wilderness”: Numbers: Desert Wanderings

    Literary Structure and the Use of Numbers

*Devarim* “The words”: Deuteronomy: Covenant Renewal

    Literary Structure and Ancient World Parallels

    The Meaning of Deuteronomy in Torah and Historical Writings

**WEEKEND TWO: FEBRUARY 10-11, 2006: HISTORICAL BOOKS**

**SESSION 1: FRIDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

Introduction to the Historical Books

The Role of History in the Hebrew Scriptures

Authorship, Chronologies, Major Events, Dynasties, Themes

*Yehoshua*: Joshua; *Shoftim*: Judges; *Ruth*

**SESSION 2: FRIDAY, 6:00-9:30 P.M.**

*Shmuel* (I & II Samuel): The Monarchy and David's Reign

*Melakhim* (I & II Kings): Solomon's Glory and National Demise

**SESSION 3: SATURDAY, 9:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.**

*Divrei Ha-Yamim* (The words of the days): I & II Chronicles:

David and His Dynasty; the Temple and Worship of God

*Ezra & Nechemyah* (Ezra and Nehemiah); *Esther*

**SESSION 4: SATURDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

Common Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry; Ugaritic Parallels

Introduction to Wisdom Literature

Poetic Books: *Iyov* (Job) and *Tehillim* (Psalms)

Theological Themes of Job

Divisions and Classifications of the Psalms

**WEEKEND THREE: MARCH 10-11, 2006: THE PROPHETS**

**SESSION 1: FRIDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

Poetic Books: *Mishlei* (Proverbs); *Shir Ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs);

*Qoheleth* (Ecclesiastes)

Theological Themes

**SESSION 2: FRIDAY, 6:00-9:30 P.M.**

Introduction to the Prophets: Voices of God

The Biblical Heritage and Nature of Prophecy

The Historical Setting for the Hebrew Prophets

Major Prophets: *Yeshayah* (Isaiah); *Yirmyah* (Jeremiah); *Yechezqel* (Ezekiel)

The Prophetic Messages of the Major Prophets

**SESSION 3: SATURDAY, 9:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.**

Major Prophet: *Daniel*; Apocalyptic Literature and Theological Themes

Minor Prophets: Repentance and Promised Blessings

*Hoshea* (Hosea); *Yoel* (Joel); *Amos*

Divine Heartache, the Day of the Lord, and Social Justice

**SESSION 4: SATURDAY, 1:30-5:00 P.M.**

Minor Prophets: God's Plan for the Nations

*Ovadyah* (Obadiah); *Yonah* (Jonah); *Mikhah* (Micah);

*Nachum* (Nahum); *Chavaquq* (Habbakkuk); *Tzefanyah* (Zephaniah)

## Minor Prophets: Israel's Redemption

*Chaggai* (Haggai); *Zekharyah* (Zechariah); *Malakhi* (Malachi)

### **COURSE METHODOLOGY**

Class lecture with discussion, required readings, and analytical writing assignments.

Use of videos, computer-screened presentations, maps, etc.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Full participation in all sessions is required. The student is to arrive prepared and ready for class discussion.
2. Book reactions to the Williams and Birch texts are due February 10 and March 10 respectively. Neither a book review nor report, the student is to richly demonstrate interaction with the author's content. Strong agreement and disagreement is to be accented and justified.
3. At 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 14, each student is to obtain professor approval for two Hebrew words to be studied by submitting two Hebrew words and one alternate on three 3x5 cards. No two students can study the same word. Authorization will be issued that Saturday afternoon.  
 Five-page Hebrew theological word studies are due February 10 and March 10. Each study is to demonstrate effective bibliographic use of 8-10 sources and offer proper analysis of the Hebrew term and related theme as well as offer originality in an application to contemporary life.  
 Each student is to bring copies of his/her word study for distribution to the class on the day the assignment is due as well as two copies for the professor. This will result in a student file of 20 or more word studies readied for preaching or devotional usage for each student.
4. A 10-12 page high quality essay on the significance of Hebrew Bible knowledge to understanding New Testament theology is due April 10. This is to be emailed by attachment to the professor on the due date. Late papers will be penalized 5% for every day tardy.
5. A reading report on student personally chosen readings taken from the course bibliography, AGTS reserve shelf texts, AGTS library materials, or other professor-approved readings on the Old Testament is due by April 1. The report is to include the bibliographic data with page numbers of all reading sources to total 800 pages. This full bibliographic report indicating your choices in reading is to be submitted by email attachment.

### **GRADING METHOD**

Book Reactions (2)	50 points each
Word Studies (2)	75 points each
Final Essay	150 points
Personal Reading Report	100 points
<b><u>Total Possible Points</u></b>	<b><u>500</u></b>

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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