

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction

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Fall 2008
Mondays 7:30-10:15

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to graduate study of the Old Testament, including major background information, the critical issues in the discipline of Old Testament Introduction, and a summary of the contents of the OT, to enable students 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:

Cotton, Roger D. BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction Handouts 2008. (AGTS)

Walton, John H. Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

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

Recommended:

Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin. Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East. 3rd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006.

Walton, John H. Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

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 two (2) 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. Suggested dates for the chapters in relation to the classes are given in the calendar below in the center column, in italics. The book of charts and the set of handouts are to be read as needed for the daily assignments and finished by the final exam.

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Assignment Calendar

Class			Textbook Chapters	Assignment numbers explained in Req. 2, below, to be turned in or readings discussed on the date listed.
1. Mon	Aug	25		
Mon	Sept	1	LABOR DAY	NO CLASS
2. Mon	Sept	8	1,2	1) ABC read and summarize Gen 6-9
3. Mon		15		2A) read Wenham article 2BC) diagram Gen 6:1-4
4. Mon		22		3) word study
5. Mon		29	3	4AB) read from Gilgamesh
6. Mon	Oct	6		5A) read about JEDP 5B) response to Wenham article
7. Mon		13	4,5	Read Kitchen article on Patriarchal Age
8. Mon		20	STUDY WEEK	NO CLASS
Mon		27	6	Read Archer on the Date of the Exodus Read Handouts on Covenant
10. Mon	Nov	3	7	
11. Mon		10	8	
12. Mon		17	12	
13. Mon		24		NO CLASS professor gone to meeting; view Near Eastern pictures on library computer, to be included in reading grade; Background reading and insights narrative due by Weds. 26th
			9-15	
14. Mon	Dec	1	16-18	Read Horton and Motyer handouts on the unity of Isaiah; Harrison on the Book of Daniel; Conclusion; Topics list due
15. Mon		8	FINAL EXAM	

NOTE: on Nov. 17 the last hour of the class will be a chapel service.

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 Mon, Sept 8.

1B) TURN IN on Mon. Sept. 8 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, but do not imitate the stair step approach there)

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- 1C) TURN IN on Mon. Sept. 8 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)

- 2A) READ by Mon. Sept. 15 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 Oct 2 (see #7 below).

- 2B) TURN IN on Mon. Sept. 15 your flow of thought diagram (see instructions handout) of Gen. 6:1-4.

- 2C) TURN IN on Mon. Sept. 15 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.

- 3) TURN IN on Mon Sept. 22 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.

- 4A) READ for Sept. 29 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.

- 4B) TURN IN on Mon. Sept. 29, 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.

- 5A) READ for Mon. Oct. 6 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 5B.

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- 5B) TURN IN on Mon. Oct. 6 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 (no separate page needed). Otherwise, no bibliographies are needed for the above 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. Mon. Oct. 13.
- 2) Archer Gleason L. A Survey of Old Testament Introduction. Rev. ed. 1994. on "The Date of the Exodus," pp. 239-52. Mon. Oct. 27.
- 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) Mon. Dec. 1.

4. Background and Issues Reading

OPTION A – 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

Walton, John H. Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament.

The other 75-100 pages must be scholarly, archaeological background reading for OT (no later than 400 BC) focused on a specific topic and must include a scholarly, archaeological journal article and an article in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology.

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- 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, by Weds. Nov. 26, 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.

OPTION B

Read Walton, John H. Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

FOR BOTH OPTIONS, TURN IN, by Weds. Nov. 26, a 3-5 page narrative of the most helpful insights you gained for your understanding of the Old Testament from any of the above reading but especially from any reading on a focused topic.

5. TURN IN, on Mon. Dec. 1, a LIST of six substantial, relevant, specific 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. One topic must be from one of the history books, Joshua - 2 Kings; one from the rest of the history books, one from each of two different poetry and wisdom books, one from the major prophets, and one from the minor prophets. Be sure to give the passage where each topic is dealt with. (Sample: Numbers 11—Principles for leadership of God's people in the power of the Holy Spirit.)
6. Write a final exam over the course on Monday, Dec. 8. Bring your own paper for the essay portion, either 8½ x 11 (write on one side only) or blue book (both sides). Also bring your signed accountability sheet for the readings (previously handed out in class).

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 attitude	15%
Progression of topics in Gen. 6-9	02%
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	21%
Final Exam	31%

WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED TO ROGER COTTON

All work for me 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 handouts and Strunk and White or *Getting the Words Right*). The format should follow Turabian 7th 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. For assignments with specific readings, no bibliography is needed unless you want the professor to know about additional reading you did. If you need to cite a source that was assigned, just put the last name in parentheses with the page number. The length may exceed the limit by a page or so. 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 you do not have an assignment finished when it is to be discussed in class you must leave the class during the discussion of the assignment. 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. No title page is needed for work under 4 pages. Do not use a cover, just staple it.

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SPECIFIC DATA

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