

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM
BOTD 530 OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION
(3 credits)

Daniel Crabtree, D.Min.
dcrabtre@cbcag.edu

Summer 2008

July 17, 24, 31, Aug. 7, 12*
Thursday evening 6:00-10:00 p.m.
*class meets Tuesday evening 6:00-10:00 p.m.

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. Explain major historical, critical and interpretive issues involved in the books of the Old Testament.
2. Construct an historical framework of the ancient Near East including the succession of empires in relation to the Old Testament.
3. 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.
4. Understand the significance and chronological sequence of Old Testament events.
5. Demonstrate familiarity with the basic content of each Old Testament book.
6. Define the cultural background, concepts and practices that are significant for understanding major Old Testament teachings.
7. Employ the Old Testament more effectively in teaching and preaching.
8. Utilize the Old Testament as a resource for personal edification and spiritual growth.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Merrill, Eugene. *Kingdom of Priests. A History of Old Testament Israel.* 2nd edition, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. (527)

Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Christ of the Prophets.* Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004. (502 pages)

Williams, William C. ed. *They Spoke From God: A Survey of the Old Testament.* Springfield, MO: Logion Press/Gospel Publishing House, 2003. (837 pages)

BASIC OUTLINE

Unit 1 – Pentateuch

Unit 2 – Historical Books (Joshua-United Kingdom)

Unit 3 – Historical Books and Prophets (Divided Kingdom)

Unit 4 – Exile and Return

Unit 5 – Wisdom and Poetry Literature

UNIT OUTLINE

Unit 1: Pentateuch

Readings: *They Spoke from God*, pp. 19-356
Kingdom of Priests, pp. 19-159
The Christ of the Prophets, pp. 9-90

At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the different theological approaches to the Old Testament.
2. Discuss the authorship of Pentateuch.
3. Describe the historical setting of the ancient Near East and its influence on the patriarchs.
4. Explain key theological themes found in Pentateuch, including redemption and covenant.

Unit 2: Historical Books

Readings: *They Spoke from God*, pp. 357-510
Kingdom of Priests, pp. 160-371
The Christ of the Prophets, pp. 91-188

At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:

1. Outline the course of events from Joshua through the United Kingdom.
2. Describe ancient near eastern kingdoms and their influence on Israel.
3. Explain the significance of ancient near eastern customs and practices for Old Testament exegesis.
4. Discuss key theological concepts found in the historical books, including kingship and covenant.

Unit 3: Historical Books & Prophets

Readings: *They Spoke from God*, pp. 555-800
Kingdom of Priests, pp. 372-443
The Christ of the Prophets, pp. 189-282

At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:

1. Outline the course of events from the beginning of the Divided Kingdom to the fall of Jerusalem.
2. Describe the Assyrian and Babylonian empires and their impact on Israel.
3. Summarize the message of the prophets in relation to Israel (Isaiah-Zephaniah).

4. Discuss the theological concerns of the prophets.

Unit 4: Exile and Return

Readings: *They Spoke from God*, pp. 801-838
Kingdom of Priests, pp. 444-528
The Christ of the Prophets, pp. 283-502

At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:

1. Outline the course of events from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the Old Testament.
2. Summarize the message of the post-exilic prophets (Haggai-Malachi).
3. Describe the impact of the Persian Empire on Israel.
4. Discuss the theological concerns of Ezra and the prophets.

Unit 5: Wisdom and Poetry Literature

Readings: *They Spoke from God*, pp. 511-554

At the conclusion of the lectures and reading assignments, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the nature and theological significance of Hebrew poetry and wisdom.
2. Explain the purpose and message of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.
3. Explain the structure of the Psalms and their use in Jewish life.
4. Explain the themes and contribution of the book of Ecclesiastes.
5. List and discuss the various interpretations for the Song of Songs.

METHODOLOGY

The course will make use of lectures by the professor, class discussion, reading and analytical writing assignments. The primary focus of the course will be to chronologically survey Israel's history while examining the key theological theme of redemption.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Attendance*: The student is expected to attend all class sessions. Absences should be for extreme circumstances only.
2. *Reading*: The student should complete the reading assignments as they are due (see the Course Outline above) and **submit a report detailing all readings** on a form to be supplied by the professor. Failure to complete the reading assignments will reduce the final grade for the course.
3. *Presentation Reports*: Each student will prepare a written paper for sessions two through four – a total of three. The papers should be two to three double-spaced pages in length and may be a basis for discussion or a possible oral report (depending on class size and quality of the papers) to one or more sessions of the class beginning with Unit 2. Each of the papers is to be written on one of the prophets listed below under “Report Topics.” Each paper is to address the

following: (1) authorship (including biographical information concerning the prophet, if such can be known), (2) date of composition (including historical situation), (3) key theological themes, and, (4) a brief (one paragraph) well-reasoned application to contemporary Christian life and ministry. **Due beginning of each class session (2-4).**

4. *Final Paper*: One of the three presentation reports must be expanded into a research paper of not less than 12 pages, employing not less than ten sources and written in standard Turabian form. Note: This makes four total papers. **The final paper is due at the beginning of the last class session.**

Possible Presentation Report Topics:

In addition to (or expanding upon) the topics that may be derived from the outline and objectives of Units 2-5, the student may wish to consider the following for a presentation report:

Unit 2 Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jonah, Obadiah

Unit 3 Nahum, Joel, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habbakkuk

Unit 4 Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

GRADING PROCEDURE

Presentation Reports (each worth 15%) 45%

Final Paper 55%

Grades are recorded and averaged on the basis of the following grade scale:

A = 94-100	B- = 80-83	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C+ = 77-79	D = 64-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 74-76	D- = 60-63
B = 84-86	C- = 70-73	F = 0-59

Prompt and timely completion of the assignments is essential to the degree completion program. Late work will be accepted only by pre-arrangement with the professor in compliance with program standards and only on sufficient grounds. Late work submitted beyond agreed-upon dates, if accepted, may be penalized by one letter grade per week late. All assigned work for the course must be submitted for the student to receive a passing grade for the course. The grade of I (incomplete) will be granted only for extenuating circumstances upon the written request of the student. Except in the case of severe extenuating circumstances the course grade will be reduced by one letter.

Note: A \$30.00 fee will be charged to the student's account for every grade change even if the instructor has approved an extension for completing the work. Any exception to this policy will be made by the registrar.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- _____. *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
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- _____. *The Bible In Its World: The Bible and Archeology Today*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977.
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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by Daniel Crabtree, March, 2008.