

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction

Roger D. Cotton

Fall 2001

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.

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Cotton, Roger D., ed. BOT 530 Old Testament Introduction Handouts. Springfield, MO.: By the Editor, 2001.

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

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 the 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.

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Assignment Calendar

Class	Textbook Chapters	Assignment numbers under 2, below to be turned in or readings discussed
1. Thurs. Aug. 30		
2. Tues. Sept. 4	1 (sections A,B,C)	1) ABC
3. Thurs. 6	1D	
4. Tues. 11	3B2	2)
5. Thurs. 13		
6. Tues. 18		3) AB
7. Thurs. 20	2A	
8. Tues. 25	2B	4)
9. Thurs. 27		5) AB
10. Tues. Oct. 2	3	6)
11. Thurs. 4		7)
12. Tues. 9	4-5	Kitchen article on Patriarchal Age
13. Thurs. 11		
14. Tues. 16	6AB	Archer on the Date of the Exodus
15. Thurs. 18	6C	Kitchen on Covenant and Cotton on the Laws (photocopies)
16. Tues. 23		
17. Thurs. 25	7	
18. Tues. 30	8-9	
19. Thurs. Nov. 1	10-18	
20. Tues. 6		
21. Thurs. 8	19	
22. Tues. 13	20-21	
23. Thurs. 15	22-23	
24. Tues. 20	24	Background reading and insights narrative due
Thurs. 22	Off	Thanksgiving Break
25. Tues. 27	25-26	Horton and Motyer on the unity of Isaiah
26. Thurs. 29	27-31	Harrison on the Book of Daniel
27. Tues. Dec. 4	32-34	
28. Thurs. 6	Conclusion	Topics list due
29-30. Thurs. 13	7:30-10:00	FINAL EXAM

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2. Series of assignments to experience basic exegetical steps and tools for Old Testament study as well as scholarly issues using Genesis 6-9.
 - 1A) READ Gen. 6-9 in NIV and CEV by Tues. Sept.4.
 - 1B) TURN IN on Tues. Sept.4 your summary list of the progression of topics in Gen. 6-9.
 - 1C) TURN IN on Tues. Sept. 4 your summary in a sentence or two of the theological point of Gen. 6-9--why was it written?
 - 2) READ by Tues. Sept 11.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 4 (see #7 below).
 - 3A) TURN IN on Tues. Sept. 18 your flow of thought diagram (see instructions handout) of Gen. 6:1-4.
 - 3B) TURN IN on Tues. Sept. 18 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 Tues. Sept. 25 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 Thurs. Sept. 27 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 will focus on additions to and improvements on Walton's chart.

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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.

- 6) READ about the JEDP Theory of Pentateuchal authorship in: our textbook, the “Pentateuch” article 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 Thurs. Oct. 4 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: If you do any readings beyond those required be sure to list them at the end of the appropriate assignment.

3. Additional 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. Oct. 9.
- 2) Archer Gleason L. A Survey of Old Testament Introduction. Rev. ed. 1994. on “The Date of the Exodus,” pp. 239-52. Tues. Oct. 16.
- 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) Thurs. Nov. 29.

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:
Hoerth, Mattingly, Yamauchi, Peoples of the OT World
Hoerth, Archaeology and the OT
Currid, Ancient Egypt and the OT

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Kitchen, The Bible In Its World (not including what was already assigned)

Von Soden, The Ancient Orient

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 Nov. 20, a 3-5 page narrative of the helpful insights you learned from this reading for your understanding of the Old Testament.

- 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 Nov. 20, 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. Dec. 6, 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; and you must not use a book more than once. Be sure to give the book and passage where each topic is dealt with.
6. Write a final exam over the course, Thursday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 A.M. Bring your own paper for the essay portion, either 8_ 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	04%
Comparison to ANE flood accounts	04%

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Response to Wenham article	16%
Relevant topics from OT books	04%
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.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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De Vaux, Roland. Ancient Israel. Vol. 1, Social Institutions. Vol. 2, Religious Institutions. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961; paperback edition, 1968.

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SPECIFIC DATA

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