

OTS5511: INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT (PART 1)
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fall Semester, 2020

Wednesday, 8:30-11:30 a.m., Ashland and Online/Synchronous

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This course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes, and requirements of the traditional face-to-face semester offering of this course. For fall 2020, the sessions for this class may be offered 100% face-to-face in a physical classroom (with remote access for pre-scheduled students) 100% face-to-face virtually using technologies such as Zoom or Collaborate, as a combination of face-to-face sessions and digital activities/lectures (virtually or in-person), or as a combination of any of these elements. In the event of extended disruptions of normal classroom activities due to the pandemic, the format for this course may be modified to utilize 100% face-to-face virtual/digital classroom sessions

I. Course Description

This study focuses on the content, interpretation, and theology of the books of the Old Testament canon from Genesis through 2 Kings. Besides concerted study in the biblical text, the course explores aspects of the history, societies, and literature of the ancient Near East relevant to the interpretation of these books and their reception in the New Testament.

Prerequisite: Students must either have completed or be currently enrolled in BSG 5501: Engaging Texts and Contexts.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

- 1a. Demonstrate the ability to assess how the interpreter's context shapes interpretation
- 1b. Critically engage the text's language, literary forms, and flow of thought
- 1c. Access and utilize dependable secondary literature for historical information and alternative interpretations.
- 1d. Explain how the text came to be (from original composition to translation) and the import of this for interpretation.
- 2.-6. Are not assessed in this course.

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks: Required

A modern translation of the Bible: New Revised Standard (recommended), Today's New International Version, Tanakh (JPS), or English Standard Version.

*Davis, Ellen. *Opening Israel's Scriptures*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-0190948948.

*An e-book edition is available free of charge through ATS Library web page: eBook + Open Access Resources > Oxford Scholarship Online > Opening Israel's Scriptures

**Fretheim, Terence. *The Pentateuch*. IBT. Abingdon, 1996. 978-0687008421.

**Nelson, Richard. *The Historical Books*. IBT. Abingdon, 1998. 978-0687008438.

**E-book is available at no charge through the ATS Library web page: Ministry Matters Research Library > Biblical Studies > Old Testament > Book title.

Rasmussen, Carl. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*. Zondervan, 2013. ISBN: 978-0310318576

Recommended

Alexander, T. Desmond and David W. Baker. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.

Arnold, Bill T. and H. G. M. Williamson. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.

B. Attendance

According to the Student Handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected, unless the professor has been notified in advance and has approved the absence. Students should be on time and should stay through the duration of all classes. Any student missing more than three class hours will be required to do additional work. Absence from a cumulative nine class hours will result in loss of credit for the course.

Extensions and Incompletes will be granted only when unanticipated circumstances significantly impede the timely completion of course requirements.

A note about classroom etiquette

The practice of civility and the willingness to be fully present are fundamental to ministry. Please see this course as an opportunity to practice these virtues by giving your full attention to your classmates and professor.

- Arrive or login promptly
- Do not consume food during class.
- Turn off cell phones and other devices that connect you with the outside world.
- Keep you video on for the duration of the class. Check your audio and video beforehand to ensure that they are working.
- Resist the temptation to check email, surf the web, undertake online activities outside of the class while it is in session.

Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

Short papers. A series of short papers will introduce you to the tools of critical interpretation in increments. You will write an exegesis paper piece by piece. Guides will be available in the Course Materials folder on Blackboard.

1. *Structural Analysis.* 1-2 page paper describing the structural elements that configure the passage and connect it to the surrounding passages.
2. *Historical Study.* 2-3 page presentation of relevant historical, social, or cultural information.
3. *Word Study.* 1 paragraph discussion of the meaning of a key word or phrase.
4. *Detailed Exposition.* 5-6 page paper that works through the rhetorical and stylistic elements of the passage, in conversations with scholarly commentary.
5. *Theological Exposition.* 1-2 page paper that elaborates the theological meaning of the passage
6. *Contemporary Application.* 1-2 page paper that discusses how the passage shapes the faith and practice of the Christian communities.
7. *Final Exegesis Paper.* 10-12 page exegetical paper, incorporating revisions and additions to previous papers.

Discussion Forums. In preparation for every class after the first, a passage for the next week will be assigned for reflection. Students typically will be asked to post a response of one or two paragraphs to a writing prompt and to comment on posts by their classmates.

Writing Matters

Papers are to be *descriptive* and *analytical*, exhibit clear organization of thought, and give proper attention to style and grammar. Correct documentation of sources must be followed, as specified in the *ATS Writing Handbook*. Papers are to be typed and double-spaced with one inch margins and with font set at 12 point Times New Roman.

Evaluation of papers will be based on the depth of critical interaction with the topic, coherence and organization of ideas, clarity of writing, and informed incorporation of secondary materials. Papers will receive a deduction in grade if:

- The paper is less than or more than the assigned limits (1/3 grade deduction per page)
- The paper is submitted after the due date (1/3 grade deduction per week, full grade maximum).
- The paper does not follow the correct format for documenting sources (up to one grade deduction).

Submissions

All written work is to be uploaded to the assignment box on Blackboard. Some boxes may require completion of a short quiz. **NOTE: No written work will be accepted after 5:00 p.m., December 18** unless an Incomplete has been approved.

C. Calculation of Grade and Connection of Learning Outcomes

Assignments	Learning Outcomes	Percent of Final Grade
Structural Analysis	1b	10%
Historical Study	1c,d	10%
Word Study	1b	5%
Detailed Exposition	1b,c	20%
Theological Exposition	1a,b	10%
Contemporary Application	1a	5%
Exegesis Paper	1a,b,c,d	10%
Discussion Forums	1a,b,c	30%

IV. Course Schedule

Class sessions will alternate between face to face and synchronous sessions, beginning September 2.

Week	Date(s)	Lecture/Topic	Assignments for Class
1	September 2	The Old Testament and Its World	Davis, "Introduction" Rasmussen, Chs. 1-5
2	September 9	The Primeval Narrative	<u>Genesis 1-11</u> Fretheim, Ch. 3 through "The Primeval Story" Davis, "Genesis, "As Our Image," "Complementarity and Rupture" Rasmussen, Ch. 6
3	September 16	Patriarchs and Matriarchs	<u>Genesis 12-36</u>

			<p>Fretheim, Ch. 3 – “The Story of Abraham” to the end of the chapter Davis, “Beginning with Blessing” Rasmussen, Ch. 7 Structural Analysis Due</p>
4	September 23	The Challenge of History Composition of the Pentateuch	<p><u>Genesis 37-50</u> Nelson, Ch. 1</p>
5	September 30	The Exodus from Egypt	<p><u>Exodus 1-15</u> Fretheim, Ch. 4 Davis, “Exodus” Rasmussen, Ch. 8</p>
6	October 7	The Covenant at Sinai	<p><u>Exodus 16-40</u> Davis, “Becoming God’s People” Historical Context Paper</p>
7	October 14	Leviticus	<p><u>Leviticus 1-27</u> Fretheim, Ch. 5 Davis, “Leviticus,” “At-One-Ment with YHWH and with Land”</p>
8	October 21	Numbers	<p><u>Numbers 1-36</u> Fretheim, Ch. 6 Davis, “Numbers,” “Slowing Down for Violence”</p>
9	October 28	Deuteronomy	<p><u>Deuteronomy 1-34</u> Fretheim, Ch. 7; Nelson, Ch. 4 Davis, “Deuteronomy,” “Torah and Life in the Land” Word Study, Detailed Analysis</p>
10	November 4	Joshua	<p><u>Joshua 1-24</u> Nelson, Ch. 2: Israel’s Emergence; Ch. 5 Davis, “Joshua,” “The Big Upheaval”</p>
11	November 11	Judges	<p><u>Judges 1-21</u> Nelson, Ch. 6 Davis, “Judges” Rasmussen, Ch. 9 Theological Exposition</p>
12	November 18	1 Samuel	<p><u>1 Samuel 1-31</u> Nelson, Ch. 7 Davis, “1-2 Samuel and 1 Kings,” “The Tragedy of the Chosen” Rasmussen, Ch. 10 Contemporary Application</p>

	November 25	Thanksgiving Break	Class Does Not Meet
13	December 2	2 Samuel	<u>2 Samuel 1-24</u> Davis, "David in Perspective" Rasmussen, Ch. 11
14	December 9	1 Kings	<u>1 Kings 1-22</u> Nelson, Ch. 8 Davis, "The Sovereignty of the Prophetic Word" Rasmussen, Ch. 12 Exegesis Paper
15	December 16	2 Kings	<u>2 Kings 1-25</u> Davis, "Hating our Enemies" (to page 248) Rasmussen, Ch. 13

VI. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

1. Purchase relevant modules from Logos Bible Software.
<https://www.logos.com/pastors1?googleads&gclid=Cija1pTqnLOCFYt9OgodPDEA8g>
2. Utilize your alumni access to the Ashland University Library Page for: online resources through Ministry Matters and journal articles through the ATLA Serials and Academic Search Complete databases.
3. Regularly listen to a podcast or watch an online video featuring a lecture or discussion by biblical scholars on topics of interest. See particularly the Bible Odyssey site hosted by the Society of Biblical Literature at [Bible Odyssey](http://www.bibleodyssey.org).

VI. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary expects each student to uphold the Seminary’s core value of academic excellence by contributing to an environment that is both challenging and supportive. In such an environment a student will neither seek nor offer improper assistance. All students have an obligation to be forthright in their academic endeavors and to respect ethical standards. The work that one submits for academic evaluation must be one’s own, unless an instructor expressly permits certain types of collaboration. Academic integrity requires that each student will use one’s own capabilities to achieve one’s fullest potential and will neither offer nor accept aid that is not in keeping with regularly accepted standards of academic integrity. Failure to conform to this conduct shall constitute academic dishonesty. The full Academic Integrity Policy statement may be found in the *Student Handbook*.

B. Ashland Multiliteracy Center for Writing, Speaking, And Digital Communication

The Ashland Multiliteracy Center Service can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise your writing assignments in your graduate Seminary classes. Masters and doctoral qualified Consultants can advise you online or in person.

To schedule an appointment, visit [Ashland Multiliteracy Center](http://www.ashland.edu/multiliteracy) and select “Online and Graduate” from the schedule menu.

C. Accessibility Resources and Accommodations

It is Ashland University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please contact the Student Accessibility Center at [419-289-5904](tel:419-289-5904), or send an email to dservices@ashland.edu. The Student Accessibility Center office and the course instructor will work together in order to establish accommodations and to meet your learning needs.

ATS Grading Scale

Grade	Quality	Percent	Description
A	4.0	97-100	Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.
A-	3.7	92-96	
B+	3.3	89-91	
B	3.0	86-88	Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.
B-	2.7	83-85	
C+	2.3	80-82	
C	2.0	77-79	Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.
C-	1.7	74-76	
D+	1.3	71-73	
D	1.0	68-70	Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.
D-	0.7	65-67	
F	0.0	Below 65	Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.

Hawk's Interpretation of the ATS Grading Scale

- A** Signifies work that generally exhibits a depth of research, thought and critical thinking, and may include an insight I haven't thought of before or information I haven't encountered. Sparks are flying. You've got me thinking!
- B** Signifies work that exhibits thoughtful integration, a direct and careful engagement with the assignment, and sound critical thinking. I experience a deep sense of fulfillment that learning has taken place.
- C** Signifies a minimal engagement with the assignment characterized by a perfunctory or hackneyed response and shallow critical reflection. I yawn.
- D** Signifies gaps in thinking or a deficient response to the readings or written work. I reach for my Tums.
- F** Signifies failure to address the core components of the reading or written assignments. I turn on Green Acres in a vain attempt to restore my cheery disposition.

VIII. Select Bibliography

- Arnold, Bill T. and Richard S. Hess. *Ancient Israel's History*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Brown, William P. *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Old Testament Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2008.
- Dearman, J. Andrew and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. *Introducing the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2018.
- Goldingay, J. *Old Testament Theology*. 3 vols. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Gorman, M. J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Revised and Expanded. Hendrickson, 2010.
- Gorman, Michael J., ed. *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*. Baker Academic, 2017.
- Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016.
- Newsom, Carol A. et al., eds. *Women's Bible Commentary*. 3rd ed. Revised and Updated. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Patte, Daniel. *Global Bible Commentary: Biblical Interpretation from Worldwide Perspectives*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.
- Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Richter, S. L. *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Walsh, Jerome T. *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation*. Westminster John Knox, 2009
- Weems, Renita. *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible*. Philadelphia: Innisfree, 1988.
- Yee, Gale, ed. *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018.
- Yee, Gale, Hugh R. Page, Jr. and Matthew J. M. Coomber, eds. *Fortress Commentary on the Bible: Old Testament and Apocrypha*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.

Appendix 1: Hawk's Compositional Caveats

1. Each paper should present a thesis: an argument or perspective on the topic that will be developed in the paper. At some point (usually early on), the thesis should be articulated in a statement that clearly and succinctly defines the topic and your approach to it.
2. Your thesis should be developed in an organized and coherent fashion. Paragraphs should follow in logical order, with transitional sentences to guide your reader. To achieve coherence, you may find it helpful to make an outline of the paper before writing it.
3. Each paragraph should develop a *single* idea, introduced by a topic sentence.
4. Generally, paragraphs should comprise three or more sentences. Fewer sentences rarely allow the opportunity to develop an idea. Paragraphs, however, usually should not be longer than one page.
5. *Your* analysis and perspective should provide the primary focus and organization of the paper. Do not let secondary sources draw most of your conclusions for you. Use secondary sources to support and supplement your own research.
6. Support all assertions, conclusions, and assessments with relevant information. Give examples. Your position is stronger if you draw support from the biblical text rather than from secondary sources alone.
7. Be sure to spell out the implications of your observations. Draw explicit conclusions. Explain the significance of your findings. Always ask yourself, "So what?"
8. Information of a general nature should be synthesized from a number of sources and presented in your own words. Information unique to a particular source must be documented.
9. Use quotations sparingly – only when the information or perspective is unique or is presented in a distinctive and particularly helpful fashion.
10. Make sure all quotations are explained and integrated into the paper so that your reader can appreciate their relevance.
11. Present most information from secondary sources in your own words. Paraphrasing shows that you understand the material. Be sure to recast the information completely; changing a word here or there is not paraphrase but an inaccurate and unacknowledged quotation.
12. Document both quotations and paraphrases from secondary sources. Follow Turabian format *carefully*. If more than one of your paragraphs refers to the same source, document each paragraph.
13. Use good scholarly sources, those which not only give conclusions but define the issues, offer relevant supporting material, and/or survey scholarship on the topic. Don't neglect journal articles (through *ATLA* and *ATLA Serials*).
14. Avoid wordiness. Strive for clarity.
15. Use active voice whenever possible. Referring to yourself in the first person (as "I") is permissible as long as you do so sparingly and don't put yourself in the foreground.
16. Use complete sentences. Sentence fragments are rarely effective in formal writing.
17. Don't join independent clauses with a comma; use a semicolon, as in this sentence.
18. When beginning a sentence, a modifier must refer to the subject of the sentence, as in this example.
19. The pronoun "they" is still considered a plural pronoun in most formal writing. For inclusive language, use a plural noun with "they" or use a singular noun with "he or she."
20. Proofread your paper carefully! If you have difficulty doing this, find an editor.
21. Good writing is rewriting.