

OTS 5512 DL: Introduction to the Old Testament (Part 2)

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Please Note:

This course utilizes an online component (Blackboard) as a medium for assignment submission and to provide teaching material. Access to a reliable computer and the internet through a high-speed means (dial-up access does not usually work satisfactorily in this course) is required, as is familiarity with the use of Blackboard. For orientation, you will need to take time to study the following information available on your Blackboard homepage: (a) the “Video Help Center for Students,” located at the bottom of the center column, and (b) the “Student Orientation” information (right column, last entry under the heading “My Courses”). It is highly recommended that you be familiar with computer and web functions prior to starting the course since it is not advised to try to learn them while the course is in progress. On-line learning often requires more self-motivation than a regular class and is not suitable for every student. If you encounter technical computer or Blackboard difficulties, contact the AU help desk at 419-289-5405.

I. Course Description

This study focuses on the content, interpretation, and theology of the books of the Old Testament canon from Chronicles through Malachi. It will also explore the ancient Near Eastern context for these books and their relevance for the New Testament.

Prerequisites: Students must have passed BSG 5501 and OTS 5511.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Though online through Blackboard, this course format consistently meets the same quality, assessment, learning outcomes and requirements of the traditional course format.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and faithful interpretation and responsible use of Scripture in appropriate ministry and professional settings.
- 2-3. Not assessed in this course.
4. Employ theological reflection that is biblically faithful, historically grounded, contextually relevant, and integrated with life and ministry.
- 5-6. Not assessed in this course.

III. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks

Required Texts:

Arnold, Bill T., and Richard S. Hess. *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3930-0.

Longman, Tremper III, and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. ISBN: 9780310263418.

Holy Bible. Please utilize a modern translation, e.g. NAS, NIV, NRSV, NJPS.

Recommended Texts (to supplement your study and build your library. Plus, see note below on how to access the DOT resources free of charge):

Boda, Mark J. And J. Gordon McConville, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8308-1784-9.

Gorman, Michael. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2001. ISBN 1-5656-3485-3.

Longman, Tremper and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, & Writings*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008. ISBN 0-8308-1783-2.

B. Attendance

According to the student handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected unless the professor has been notified in advance. Any student missing the equivalent of six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade or withdraw from the class; this is at the discretion of the professor. As this is an online class, lack of participation in any form for a week will constitute missing 3 class hours. Extensions and Incompletes will be granted only when unanticipated circumstances (which do not include regular business, church, or family obligations) significantly impede the timely completion of course requirements.

A note about online educational etiquette

Since this is an online course, there needs to be the same etiquette and generosity of spirit as a traditional classroom. 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. Especially important is how one interacts with class participants on issues on which there is difference of opinion. An aspect of Christian critical thinking is to listen, understand, and respond with respect based on one's own well thought out position.

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

If the student wants to succeed in this class the following assignments of “papers, discussion boards, and projects” have been designed to help obtain the desired cognitive and affective outcomes of this course (where appropriate these will be expanded/elucidated in due time).

1. **Reading:** the student will read select portions of the Prophets and Writings, and the course textbooks. As the student reads them the student will write key observations that stand out from the reading. After reading each section the student will ask the text: what does this say? The student will write a one page summary response to that question, as she or he moves toward engaging the message of the text (20% of final grade; SLO: 1,4).
2. **Discussion Boards:** the student will engage the weekly OT prompt question, and articulate a substantial original post to the prompt, the original post is due on Thursday at Midnight. Then, the student will engage two other students in a critical and substantial reply post (20% of final grade; SLO: 1, 4)
3. **Issues in OT Scholarship:** the student will write a 5-7 page paper (double spaced) arising from a topic found in one of the chapters assigned for the Arnold & Hess textbook. Spend up to two pages summarizing what the textbook conveys concerning the topic you have chosen, then dig deeper in some aspect introduced in that chapter. Title that section “**1. Summary of textbook content.**”

Then research two or three additional scholarly resources related to the aspect you choose (list these resources in your footnotes, properly formatted). Note: these should be from specialized resources. Here are some sources that will be deemed **insufficient** (i.e., inadequate) for this assignment:

- One of the other course textbooks
- A one-volume Bible dictionary
- A one-volume commentary
- A commentary authored after 1950 (with some exceptions)
- An introduction to or survey of the Old Testament.
- General encyclopedias
- Generalist (insubstantial) web resources

In contrast, here are some resources that would be suitable:

- Journal articles that focus on your topic, found in scholarly journals
- Articles found in multiple-volume theological dictionaries (such as *IVP Dictionary of the OT* series)
- Monographs (single-volume works on a narrow topic) addressing
- Articles in specialized encyclopedias

What about using solid, recent commentaries? If your topic is thoroughly discussed (not briefly commented on in passing) then a commentary can serve as one of the resources for this assignment. Summarize these in a section titled, “**2. Digging deeper.**”

Then engage and critique the various perspectives (agree / disagree / shed more light than was presented in original volume). Title that section “**3. My Engagement and critical evaluation.**” Thus you will divide paper with three headings, clearly marked:

1. Summary of textbook content

2. Digging deeper [additional scholarly resources]

4. My interaction [with textbook and additional sources]

(20% of final grade; SLO: 1, 4)

3. **Exegetical Paper:** Since Scripture is one of the core values at ATS, the student will have the opportunity to explore a biblical text through the process of exegesis, and the writing of an exegetical paper. The student will explore the process of teasing meaning from the Bible as presuppositions are examined, and a greater presentation of the text to a current audience is emphasized. While rubrics and summaries of the so-called exegetical process may give an impression of a linear process, often this is not the case. There is as much “art” involved in understanding and expressing the text as “science.” One can begin this process from multiple places, and as the process continues it may be reason to re-think and re-shape previous ideas. Toward that end, this will be further discussed in class. Every student will submit a proposal for her or his exegetical paper. Further instructions will be forthcoming at the appropriate time, but a brief outline is as follows (20% of final grade; SLO: 1,4):

Preliminary: The student will select a self-contained passage of 15-20 connected verses from a prophetic book. The paper will be submitted in an orderly manner during the term for review, and in a 12-15 page paper provide the following:

I. Introductory material (limit yourself to no more than 2 pages)

- A. What attracted you to choose this passage? What are your presuppositions, interests, and commitments regarding the text, as you begin the study.
- B. What is your “educated guess” to what the passage might be about?
- C. Gather tools for in-depth study, both general (e.g., concordances and lexical) and specific (e.g., commentaries, journals, books).
- D. What marks it off as a self-contained unit? Are there any critical variant readings, or textual notes?
- E. Translate the text, compare English translations, and note possible lexical and grammatical issues that need study.

II. Literary background of the text and its transmission (1-2 pages)

- A. Examine and place the text in its literary context.
- B. Examine, if applicable, any signs of literary pre-history and redacting.
- C. Examine the form of the passage, the implications of the same for the determining its genre and purpose, and any signs of subversion of conventions.

III. Historical background (1-2 pages)

- A. What do we know about historical, socio-political and spiritual conditions surrounding this prophet's ministry? Did he have any prophetic colleagues? Any adversaries?
- B. Character of the prophet. Briefly discuss what sort of person this prophet may have been, any information we may have concerning his personal life. Contrast with what we know of other prophets (how was he unique?).
- C. What possible inter-texture issues are involved in the presence of the text?
- D. How might comparative literature influence or inform this text?
- E. Book Outline. Divide the book into sections, providing your own book title and section headings with chapter:verse references for each level. Within it, give a more detailed outline of your passage (not more than one page total for both outlines).

IV. Exegesis of the passage - so-called "verse-by-verse (about 4-5 pages)

- A. Comment on literary features within the passage. Give the significance for each feature.
- B. Comment on grammatical-syntactical features in the passage.
- C. Explain any elements of geography, religion, etc. we need to know to understand the passage.

V. Exegesis as a means to engaging the larger, and more intimate, conversation (s) (about 2 pages)

- A. Read and evaluate what other scholars have learned about the text and how they arrived at their conclusions, and how have you allowed, or not, others to form your reading. Note that you will want to be conscious and intentional to read scholars who study from a variety of social and global locations.
- B. Re-examine your assumptions and presuppositions, noting where these have been confirmed or challenged.
- C. Revisit the hermeneutical lens you have used or encountered in the exegetical process, and embrace a combination of approaches, e.g., womanist, Postcolonial, author-centered, text-centered, reader-centered.
- D. Summarize the message.
- F. Discern and communicate the Word to new audiences.

Form: Follow the guidelines for accepted form for footnotes (in-text or footnote) and bibliography (10-source minimum). Study notes in Bibles are not eligible as part of the 10

sources, students should use academic, critical sources. Aim to include two journal articles. See the schedule below for submission due dates.

4. **Final Exam:** the student will take a final exam at the last class period (20% of final grade; SLO: 1).

D. Calculation of Grade

Assignments	Learning Outcomes	Percent of Final Grade
Bible Reading & Writing	1, 4	20%
OT Discussion Boards	1, 4	20%
OT Issue Paper	1, 4	20%
OT Exegetical Paper	1, 4	20%
Final Exam	1	20%

V. Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic of session	OTS Reading and Assignments	Ancient Israel's History readings
August 31	Introduction to course/Jonah	OTS 16: Prophets and Prophecy, 27: Jonah	AIH Ch. 8. "Biblical Prophets in Historiography," pp. 262ff.
September 7	Amos	17. Heb. Poetry; 18. Amos	AIH Ch. 9. "Late Tenth- and Ninth-Cent. Issues," pp. 286ff.
September 14	Hosea, Micah	19. Hosea, 20. Micah,	AIH Ch. 10. "Eighth-Cent. Issues," pp. 319ff.

September 21	Isaiah 1-39	21. Isaiah: Background	AIH Ch. 11. “Judah in the Seventh Cent,” pp. 350ff.
September 28	Isaiah 40-66	22. Isaiah: Message	
October 5	Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk	23. Zeph., Nah., Hab.	AIH Ch. 12. “Sixth-Cent. Issues,” pp. 383ff.
October 12	Jeremiah	24: Jeremiah	AIH Ch. 13. “Fifth- and Fourth-Cent. Issues,” pp. 406ff.
October 19	Lamentations, Obadiah, Joel	39. Lamentations 26. Obadiah and Joel	AIH Ch. 14. “The Hellenistic Period,” pp. 426ff.
October 26	Ezekiel	25. Ezekiel	Issue Paper: Summary
November 2	Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi,	28. Haggai, 29. Zech., 30. Malachi	Issue Paper: Engagement
November 9	Daniel	OT Issue Paper 43. Daniel	
November 16	Psalms	31. Introduction to Writings 32. Psalms	OT Exegetical Paper: Points I and II
November 23	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	33. Wisdom Literature 34. Proverbs 36. Ecclesiastes 37. Songs of Songs	OT Exegetical Paper: Points III and IV

November 30	Job, Ruth,	Exegetical paper 35. Job 38. Ruth	OT Exegetical Paper: Points V; Global revision
December 7	Esther, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah	Exegetical Paper Bible reading log 40. Esther 41. Chronicler's Perspective 42. Ezra-Nehemiah	
December 14	Course synthesis		Final Exam

VI. Other Course Instructions

The professor will utilize video, Blackboard, and email to communicate with the students.

VII. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

In many ways this course just begins a long journey of learning and growth in the Old Testament. As you continue your studies some few steps will help solidify the outcomes of this class, and keep you on a path of lifelong learning:

1. Read a chapter a week in the Prophets.
2. Plan a teaching time in your local assembly in the area of the Old Testament twice a year.
3. Read quality journal articles in the area of the Old Testament.
4. Subscribe to *Biblical Archaeological Review*.
5. Read 2 books a year in the area of Old Testament (see the bibliography below).
6. Read an entry a week in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*.
7. Take an elective at ATS in the area of the Old Testament (highly recommended!)

VIII. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary seeks to model servant leadership derived from biblical standards of honesty and integrity. We desire to encourage, develop, and sustain men and women of character who will exemplify these biblical qualities in their ministry to the church and the world. As members of the seminary community, students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity. All students, therefore, are expected to abide by the academic integrity standards outlined in the *Student Handbook*.

B. Ashland Multiliteracy Center

The Ashland Multiliteracy Center 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](#) 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, 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.

D. 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.

IX. Selected Bibliography (see the current bibliographies in the course textbooks)

[*How to access the IVP Bible Dictionaries for FREE Called "Credo Reference (IVP Bible Dictionaries)" or simply "IVP Bible Dictionaries," this set is a full text online resource consisting of several volumes which is available free of charge to students through the Ashland Theological Seminary Library. You can look up topics, places, Bible books, scholarly debate issues. These

are quite current, and come with valuable bibliographies at the end of each article, which you may use for deeper study (many of those secondary resources, however, will not be online). You may use these in your short papers. Here is one way to access this through the ATS library: go to <http://libguides.ashland.edu/atslibrarysuggesteddatabasesUnder> the bold heading "Ashland Theological Seminary Library Suggested Database Listing : A-C", you will see 8 blue/white tabs. The tab marked A-C should be clicked by default and open to that page. If not, click it. Scroll down to view the A-C entries. Toward the bottom, in alpha order, will be "CREDO REFERENCE: IVP BIBLE DICTIONARIES". Click it and enter your ATS login information. The Credo page will appear. First opens a page where you can do research by subject. Just enter a topic and numerous references to it will popup. To access the individual dictionary volumes, toward the top left find and click on the three horizontal lines and then click on the drop down 'All Titles'. Now you will see the multiple dictionary volumes comprising the IVP set. For our studies in this course, two volumes will be most relevant. Click on either "The IVP Bible Dictionary Series: Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch" or "The IVP Bible Dictionary Series: Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books." On the next page, the list of articles in that book will appear. Click on an article that interests you, e.g., in the Pentateuch volume, "Sexuality, Sexual Ethics." Note: to cite an article from a resource like this, go to the top of the article (where title "Sexuality, Sexual Ethics" appears). To the right of the title there is a series of icons: save, citation, print, share, etc. Select the 'Citation' symbol. This will give you a pre-formatted citation for the online source. I would recommend the MLA option, as it appears closest to the Turabian that we specify for seminary work. Cut and paste this citation into your paper.]