



Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

OT-501

Introduction to the Old Testament I*

George M. Schwab, Ph.D.

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Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00pm

Office Phone: 864-379-8882

e-mail: schwab@erskine.edu

Office: Bowie Divinity Hall, Room 23

Seminary Fax: 864-379-3171

Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 668

Due West, SC 29639

http://acad.erskine.edu/facultyweb/schwab/sb_01_old_testament_1.htm

I. Course Description: This course surveys the history and literature of Israel to the end of the united kingdom. In dealing with Israelite economic, social, political, cultural, and religious life, the Old Testament is illumined by studies in archaeology, geography, and ancient Near Eastern texts. Introductory issues such as canon, historical-critical approaches, and the authority of the Old Testament are also treated.

II. Course Goals

A. General Mission of Erskine Seminary

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to “educate persons for service in the Christian Church.” To achieve this mission, the ability to understand the Bible in various contexts must be taught. These contexts include the Bible’s ancient Near Eastern cultural setting, the immediate context of the literary unit in question, the context of the book of the Bible at issue or the OT as a whole, its canonical context admitting the light of the NT that points to Christ, and the context of the whole counsel of God that includes the implications of the Word today. This course will seek to raise the students’ awareness of how to read the OT in these various contexts.

* Note: A colorful syllabus cover can be downloaded from my website. This is worth 1% of extra credit; 2% if printed on photo-quality paper. The cover is NOT the webpage picture. Right-click on the link that says “Syllabus Cover,” download (Save Target As), then print from Microsoft Paint or some such program. *Make sure the whole image prints on one page.*

B. Goals of this Course

1. This course will expose the student to the history and geography of the OT. Many of the names and places should become clear, and the timeline of events should crystallize the student's understanding of the progress of redemption. Along the way, insights from comparative studies will be discovered.
2. At appropriate points in the study of the material, the questions that generations of modern scholars have asked of the text will be raised and their answers supplied and critiqued. The strengths and weaknesses of these approaches will be considered, including the "grammatical-historical" method of interpretation.
3. The student will gain adeptness at relating the OT revelation to its fulfillment in Christ's person and work. How the NT influences our reading of the Old is an important consideration in this course. The "grammatical-historical" method is not the all-in-all of interpretation. The centrality of the gospel and the culmination of all the OT motifs and themes in Jesus will be discussed.
4. Finally, the importance of the OT in the formation of our contemporary theology, character, and wisdom will be placed before the student.

C. By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify the major geographical features and national entities of the ancient Near East over the course of Israel's history to the end of the united kingdom.
2. Outline the major events of Israel's history to the same.
3. Describe various critical approaches to the OT, their results and the reigning paradigms for present-day study of the Hebrew Bible.
4. Describe the contents and theology of each book from Genesis to 1 Kings.
5. Reflect meaningfully upon the biblical theology of one OT book.

III. Required Reading

A. Course Textbooks (**Note: The required textbooks may be ordered through the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.**)

1. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush. *Old Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
2. May, Herbert G. *Oxford Bible Atlas*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

B. Waltke, Bruce. "Date of the Conquest." *WTJ* 52 no. 2 (1990): 181-200.

C. Schwab, George. "Leviticus," in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1998.

D. The Bible

1. The student is required to reread the selected portions of the Bible in this semester

2. Previous readings of the selected material are not sufficient to meet this requirement

Exams and Assignments

E. Exams 60% total

1. "Genesis" Exam 20% The Genesis Exam will cover material presented in class or assigned to be read.
2. "Torah" Exam 20% The Torah Exam is not cumulative and will cover all material after the Genesis Exam.
3. Final Exam 20% The Final exam is not cumulative and will cover all material after the Torah Exam.

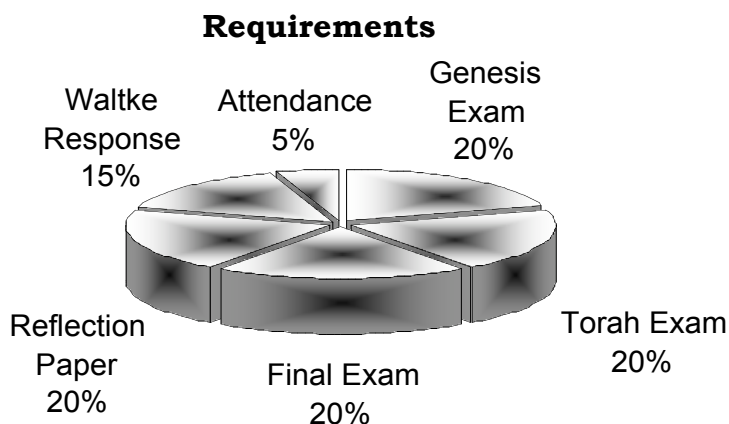
F. Reflection Paper 20%

1. There is a Reflection Paper due on the scheduled date.
2. The student will lose one grade point for each day it is late.

G. Waltke Response Paper 15%

H. Class Attendance and Participation 5%

1. 5% of your grade will be class participation, attendance, and punctuality with handouts
2. You will be held responsible for all material presented in class.
3. If you miss more than 3 class periods, you will be given a failing mark for the course. Sleeping in class = an absence.

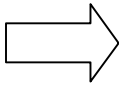


IV. Grading

A. The seminary's grading policy is as follows.

Grade	Value	GPA	Grade	Value	GPA
A	95-100	4.0	C-	78-79	1.7
A-	93-94	3.7	D+	76-77	1.3
B+	91-92	3.3	D	72-75	1.0
B	88-90	3.0	D-	70-71	0.7
B-	86-87	2.7	F	0-69	0.0
C+	84-85	2.3	I	Incomplete	
C	80-83	2.0			

B. The actual assignment of a letter grade will take into consideration the performance of the class as a whole (i.e. you may be graded on a curve).



C. I will grade emailed assignments, but not print them. Therefore, no comments or feedback will be given, so it is no fair complaining about your grade if you e-mail it. **Please put your name, the course, and the assignment in the subject line.**

D. To tape a lecture the student must acquire my signature on the proper form. Before I sign it, please write this out on the form, *"I agree that the recordings are for me alone. I will not make them available to church courts, e-mail them, or give them away. I will give them upon request to Dr. Schwab for copies."*

V. Seminary Policies

A. **Incompletes:** The grade of 'Incomplete' can be assigned as a final grade only when two conditions are met: 1) the student has completed the majority of the requirements for the course; 2) the student has been providentially hindered from completing the remaining requirements for the course. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form well before the semester's end and ask the professor to grant the request. An 'Incomplete' will automatically become an 'F' unless requirements are fulfilled by March 1.

B. **Withdrawals:** Once you have completed, signed, and submitted your registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and your billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a "drop/add" form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. Erskine will make no exceptions to this policy.

C. **Writing:** The style guide adopted by the seminary is that of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The seminary encourages making use of inclusive language. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

D. **Attendance:** the student is required to attend all classes. If the student misses more than 3 classes, an F will automatically be assigned. Sleeping in class = an absence.

E. **Language about God and Humanity.** Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds refer to Him with masculine language. The Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").


F. **Conduct in Theological Discussions:** There are no favorites at Erskine. Publicly rejecting this ethos with the result of making fellow students feel unwelcome will be considered unethical behavior, and is grounds for course failure on the level of cheating and plagiarism. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

G. **Chapel Attendance.** This class has a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the catalog or registration booklet for policy specifics. There is a fee for chapel truancy.

H. **Plagiarism.** This course does not include a research paper. You should not have to reference anything outside of the Bible. Do your own work, say things in your own words. Any deviation from this should conform to the catalog's plagiarism policy.

I. **Office hours:** Wednesday mornings. You can always reach me by email.

VI. Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
9/3	Introduction	La Sor, ch. 46; pp. 619-31
9/10	Primeval History: Creation	<i>Read Genesis 1-11</i> ; La Sor, chs. 1-2; Atlas, pp. 9-31, 48-53, 62-3
9/17	Sabbath, the Fall	<i>Read Genesis 12-50</i>
9/24	First hour in chapel Antediluvian history	<i>Read Exodus 1-24</i> ; La Sor, chs. 3-4; Atlas, pp. 58-9; chosen text
10/1	Patriarchal History: Abraham	<i>Read Exodus 25-40</i> ; La Sor, ch. 5
10/8	Exodus	<i>Read Leviticus</i> ; La Sor ch. 6
10/15	Genesis Exam Exodus	<i>Read Numbers</i> ; Genesis Exam
10/23	Leviticus, Numbers	<i>Read Deut. 1-26</i> ; La Sor, ch. 7; Schwab
10/29	Deuteronomy	<i>Read Deut. 27-33</i> ; La Sor, ch. 8; Waltke Waltke Response Paper Due
11/5	<i>Ford Lectures</i> Joshua	<i>Read Joshua</i> ; La Sor, ch. 9-10; Atlas, pp. 60-61
11/12	First hour in chapel Rise of Monarchy: Samuel, Saul	<i>Read 1 Samuel</i> ; La Sor, ch. 12
11/19	Torah exam Judges and Ruth	Torah Exam <i>Read Judges and Ruth</i> ; La Sor, ch. 11, 38
11/26	Thanksgiving Break 	
12/3	David and Solomon	Reflection Paper Due <i>Read II Samuel and 1 Kings 1-11</i> ; La Sor, ch. 13; Atlas, pp. 64-65, 80-1.
TBA	Final Exam	Final Exam

VII. Waltke Response Paper Description

In the Library, find issue 52, number 2, of the *Westminster Theological Journal*, from 1990. Read through Waltke's careful description of the different models that have been used to argue for various dates of the Conquest. What strengths or weaknesses does Waltke see in them? What theory does he prefer? Write a 2 – 4 page summary of his article, listing the models and answering these questions.

VIII. Reflection Paper Description

Pick a portion of an Old Testament book. Write a 4 – 6 page paper describing the following:

1. What is the text chosen?
2. What function does your selected text serve in its book?
3. What does the text teach about God?
4. How does the text point to Christ?
5. To what does the text call Christians today?

What 4 – 6 pages means

1. The length of your paper does *not* count the following material:
 - a. Any quotations, from the Bible or from your readings
 - b. Footnotes or endnotes
 - c. Bibliography, cover pages, or outlines
 - d. Blank spaces, including the blank space after your last period on the last page of content.
2. You must adhere to the following:
 - a. One inch margins all around
 - b. 12 point typeface
 - c. Double spacing
3. What I will do when you turn in your paper
 - a. I will take a ruler to it and measure the amount of actual content
 - b. If it is short, you will be *severely* penalized in your grade, and probably will be given an F.
 - c. You will *not* be given the opportunity to make up for the lack of content.
4. 4 – 6 pages of *content* means content original to you
 - a. *Say things in your own words*
 - b. Every year I catch students plagiarizing by typing what they have read straight out of a commentary. *It is obvious when the student uses language that is more sophisticated than the level at which the student is able to converse.*