



OT-501

Introduction to the Old Testament I*

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Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00pm, Room 12

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Due West, SC 29639

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. Required. 3 hours.

II. Course Goals

A. General Mission of Erskine Seminary

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to “educate persons for ministry 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 OT.
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

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

IV. Exams and Assignments

A. Exams 60% total

1. "Genesis" Exam 20% The Genesis Exam will cover material presented in class or assigned to be read.
2. "Torah" Exam 25% The Torah Exam is not cumulative and will cover all material after the Genesis Exam.
3. Final Exam 15% The Final exam is not cumulative and will cover all material after the Torah Exam.

B. Biblical-Theological Paper 20%

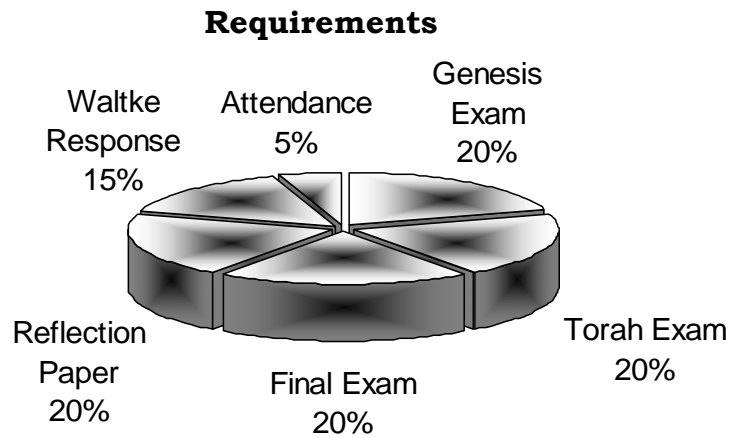
1. There is a Biblical-Theological Paper due on the scheduled date.
2. The student will lose one grade point for each day it is late.

C. Waltke Response Paper 15%

1. 1% off for each late day until:
2. The cut off date, which is when we discuss it in class.

D. 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.



V. 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	E	66-69	0.0
C+	84-85	2.3	F	0-65	0.0
C	80-83	2.0	I	Incomplete	

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."*

VI. Policies

A. Seminary policies are found here:

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf

B. **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.

C. **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.

D. **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.

E. **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.

F. **Office hours:** Wednesdays. You can always reach me by email.

G. **Required Textbooks.** Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. Check out <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html> for links to familiar vendors. ETS SBA gets a small percentage from purchases through this portal. Please also check out the Erskine Campus Bookstore, which carries and orders required texts.

VII. Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
8/31	No class	
9/7	Introduction	La Sor, ch. 46; pp. 619-31
9/14	Primeval History: Creation	<i>Read Genesis 1-11</i> ; La Sor, chs. 1-2; Atlas, pp. 9-31, 48-53, 62-3
9/21	Sabbath, the Fall	<i>Read Genesis 12-50</i>
9/28	Antediluvian history	<i>Read Exodus 1-24</i> ; La Sor, chs. 3-4; Atlas, pp. 58-9; chosen text
10/5	Patriarchal History: Abraham	<i>Read Exodus 25-40</i> ; La Sor, ch. 5
10/12	Genesis Exam Exodus	Genesis Exam <i>Read Leviticus</i> ; La Sor ch. 6; Schwab
10/19	Exodus	<i>Read Numbers</i> ; La Sor, ch. 7
10/26	Leviticus, Numbers	<i>Read Deut. 1-26</i> ; La Sor, ch. 8
11/2	Deuteronomy	<i>Read Deut. 27-33</i> ; Waltke Waltke Response Paper Due
11/9	Joshua	<i>Read Joshua</i> ; La Sor, ch. 9-10; Atlas, pp. 60-61
11/16	Torah exam Judges and Ruth	Torah Exam <i>Read Judges and Ruth</i> ; La Sor, ch. 11, 38
11/23	Thanksgiving Break 	
11/30	Rise of Monarchy: Samuel, Saul	<i>Read 1 Samuel</i> ; La Sor, ch. 12
12/7	Final Exam David and Solomon	Final Exam Reflection Paper Due <i>Read II Samuel and 1 Kings 1-11</i> ; La Sor, ch. 13; Atlas, pp. 64-65, 80-1.

VIII. 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 3 – 5 page summary of his article, listing the models and answering these questions.

IX. Biblical-Theological Paper Description

1. To prepare for writing this paper, first read the Joshua paper that is posted in the moodle site. This should give you some idea of the assignment.
2. Pick a paragraph to write about. It must come from a historical portion of Numbers, Joshua, or Judges. Ideally, between 4 and 12 verses long.
3. Write about a page describing the historical situation it describes, and how it moves forward its book's story. What function does it serve?
4. Then find in it a biblical theme that has connections throughout Scripture, and write several pages on how this theme is developed. Ideally (but not always) start with pre-fall Genesis and trace it through Israel to fulfillment in Christ, what it means to the church, and its consummate meaning in the eschaton. Don't neglect how the theme works in its own time.
5. Do this with several themes. The paper should have in the end between 6 and 8 pages of *original and creative material*. The actual length of the paper will be longer, since it will have extra elements like quotes and a title page.
6. Nothing outside the Bible is wanted. Please do not use commentaries or articles of any kind. It is not a research paper in that sense.

What 6 – 8 pages means

1. *Original and creative material* does *not* count the following:
 - 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. 6 – 8 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.*

X. Supplemental Readings For Further Study

- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. NY: Basic Books, 1981.
- Anderson, A. A. *2 Samuel*. Word Biblical Commentary Vol 11. Dallas: Word Books, 1989.
- Baldwin, Joyce G. *1 and 2 Samuel*. Downer's Grove: IVP, 1988.
- Barker, William and Robert Godfrey. *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1990.
- Davies, Douglas. "An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus," *ZAW* 89 (1977): 387-399.
- Davis, John J. *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986.
- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Roulledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Ellis, Carl. *Beyond Liberation*, IVP, 1983.
- Exum, Cheryl J. "‘You Shall Let Every Daughter Live’: A Study of Exodus 1.8-2.10," *Semeia* 28 [1993] 63-82.
- _____. "Second Thoughts About Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8-2.10," *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy* (A. Brenner ed.; The Feminist Companion to the Bible 6; Sheffield: SAP, 1994) 75-87.
- Hurley, James. *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Kline, Meredith. *Images of the Spirit*, 1986.
- _____, *Kingdom Prologue*, 1993.
- _____, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*.
- Kroeger, Richard and Catherine. *I Suffer not a Woman*.
- Mullen, E. Theodore Jr. *The Assembly of the Gods*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 24. Scholars Press, 1980.
- Poythress, Vern. *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1991.
- Schwab, George. "Books of Samuel," in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1998.
- Speiser. *Genesis*. The Anchor Bible. NY: Doubleday, 1964.
- Trible, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *The Book of Leviticus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

XI. Calculate the age of the Earth

Take the genealogies of Genesis 5:1-32, beginning with Adam, and Genesis 11:10-26, ending with Abraham (called Abram). Assume that Abraham was born about 4000 years ago; say in the year 2000 BC. If you prefer, you can work backwards, like this:

Abraham		Gen 11:26	born 2000 BC
Terah	fathered Abraham at age 70	Gen 11:26	born 2000+70=2070 BC
Nahor	fathered Terah at age 29	Gen 11:24	born 2070+29=2099 BC

... until you get to Adam. What year did you come up with? Or, you could start at the beginning, with Adam, like this:

Adam	fathered Seth at age 130	Gen 5:3	Earth: 130 years
Seth	fathered Enosh at age 105	Gen 5:6	Earth: 130+105=235 years
Enosh	fathered Kenan at age 90	Gen 5:9	Earth: 235+ 90 =325 years

... until you get to Abraham (Abram). Then add 4000 years. What age did you come up with?