



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

OT 502

Introduction to the Old Testament II*

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Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00pm

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Due West, SC 29639

I. Course Description: This course traces the history and examines the literature of the Israelite people from the division of the kingdom through the development of Judaism. Topics treated include canon, criticism, content, interpretation, and unity of the Old Testament. *Required. 3 hours.*

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.
2. Outline the major events of Israel's history.
3. Describe the various 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 1 Kings through Malachi.
5. Reflect meaningfully upon the biblical theology of one prophetic 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. Articles

1. George Schwab. "The Proverbs and the Art of Persuasion." *JBC* 14 no. 1 (1995): 6-17.
2. _____. "Ecclesiastes and Counsel Under the Sun." *JBC* 15 no. 2 (1997): 7 - 16.
3. _____. "The Book of Job and Counsel in the Whirlwind." *JBC* 17 no. 1 (1998): 31 - 43.

C. The text of the Old Testament from 2 Kings through Malachi

IV. Exams and Assignments

A. Exams 55% total

1. 20% The History exam will cover all material presented in class or assigned to be read up pertaining to the historical books.
2. 20% The Prophecy exam will cover all material presented in class or assigned to be read up pertaining to the prophetical books
3. 15% The Poets exam will cover all material presented in class or assigned to be read up pertaining to the poetical books.

B. Papers 40% total

1. Reflection Paper 20%

- a) There is a 4 – 8 page Reflection Paper due the last class meeting of the semester, one week before the Final Exam.
- b) The student will lose one percentage point for each day it is late.

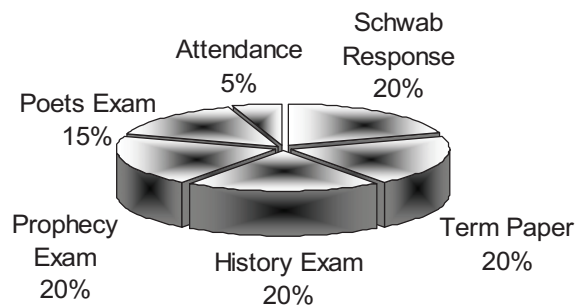
2. Response paper 20%

- a) A 4 – 6 page response paper on the Schwab articles is due in conjunction with the presentation of the poetical books
- b) The student will lose one percentage point for each day it is late.

C. Class Attendance and Participation 5%

1. 5% of your grade will be class participation, attendance, and punctuality with assignments.
2. You will be held responsible for all material presented in class.
3. Attendance: the student is required to attend all classes. If the student misses a class, he or she will be required to do work equivalent to the number of class hours missed. It is contingent on the student to seek out the professor for this compensative work to avoid losing credit for those hours.
4. If you miss more than 3 class periods, you will be given a failing mark for the course.

Requirements



V. Grading

A. Erskine's grading policy is as follows.

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

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

C. The grading of papers and exams sometimes includes an E, which is a high failing grade.

D. E-mailed assignments will be graded, but I will 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.**

E. 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. 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 August 1.

B. **Drop/Add and 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. 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.

H. 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.

I. 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.

J. Office hours: Tuesday afternoons. You can always reach me by email.

VII. Reflection Paper Description

Pick a text from a prophetic book. Write a 4 – 8 page paper describing the following:


1. What is the text chosen?
2. What role does the text serve in its book?
3. Provide an outline of the prophetic book that highlights the place of your text.
4. What does the text teach about God?
5. How does the text point to Christ?
6. To what does the text call Christians today?

What 4-8 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. 4-8 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.*

IX. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	2/2	Introduction	
2	2/9	Kings I	LaSor ch. 14-15, read 1-2 Kings
3	2/16	Kings II	LaSor ch. 41, 49, read 1-2 Chronicles
4	2/23	Chronicles I	LaSor ch. 42, Atlas, pp. 74-9, read Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
5	3/2	First Exam Esther	First Exam LaSor ch. 16-17, read Isaiah
6	3/9	Chronicles II Ezra, Nehemiah	Your text for your reflection paper is due. LaSor ch. 21-22, Atlas, pp. 70-1, Jeremiah
7	3/16	The Prophetic Office	LaSor ch. 25, 43, Read Daniel
8	3/23	Interpretation of Prophecy	LaSor ch. 24, Read Ezekiel
9	3/30	Second Exam Ecstasy	Second Exam LaSor ch. 18-20, Read Hosea-Micah
10	4/6	Covenant Lawsuit	LaSor ch. 23, 26-30, Read Nahum-Malachi The outline of your reflection paper is due.
11	4/13	<i>Spring Conference</i> Selected Motifs	<i>Spring Conference</i> LaSor ch. 31, Read Psalms
12	4/20	No Class, Spring Break 	
13	4/27	Wisdom Books	LaSor ch. 32, Read Proverbs Response paper on Schwab articles.
14	5/4	Psalms	LaSor ch. 33-37, Read Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs Reflection Paper Due
15	TBA	Final Exam	Final Exam

VIII. Supplemental Reading

- Cohen, N. "An 'Enthusiastic' Prophetic Formula." *ZAW* 99 (1987): 219 – 232.
- Dillard, Ray. "The Reign of Asa (II Chronicles 14-16)." *JETS* 23 (1980): 207-218.
- Kline, Meredith. *Images of the Spirit*. Gordon-Conwell Seminary, 1986.
- Payne, "Validity of Numbers in Chronicles." *BibSac* 136 (1976): 109-128.
- Poythress, Vern S. *Symphonic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Academic, 1987.
- Rad, G. Von. "The Deuteronomic Theology of History in I and II Kings," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 205-221.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Dispensationalism Today*. Chicago: Moody, 1981.
- Theile, E. *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*.
- VanGemenen, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*. Grand Rapids: Academic, 1988.
- Wenham, "Large Numbers in the Old Testament." *TynBul* 18 (1967): 19-53.
- Wilson, Robert R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Phila.: Fortress, 1980.