

BI 501

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Urbana Theological Seminary
Fall Semester, 2010

Kenneth H. Cuffey, Ph.D.
Urbana Theological Seminary
314 E. Daniel, 3rd floor suite
217-365-9005
www.urbanaseminary.org

Tuesdays
6:00-9:00 PM

**The mission of Urbana Theological Seminary is
to provide graduate theological education
which prepares people for Christian ministry and leadership,
equipping them to love, know, and serve God.**

Course Description: An introduction to the literature, content, and history of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with reference to Israel's setting in the Ancient Near East. An analysis of the coherent message of and critical issues in interpretation of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and an overview of the history of the religion of Israel.

This is an introductory survey course to help the student gain an understanding of and appreciation for the whole of the Old Testament and its study. As a result, the course will be conducted primarily in a lecture format, with opportunity given to interact and ask questions. The field of Old Testament studies is broad and the Old Testament itself includes diverse materials that reflect many years of history and development. The course will attempt to maintain a balance between learning important specific details and facts and giving the student a broad and synthetic grasp of the overarching story developed by the text.

Credits: Three semester hours credit.

Course Goals:

1. To love God more deeply in response to a clear understanding of the “big picture” of the unfolding story of God’s work with humanity as related in the pages of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
2. To know God more profoundly through developing an ability to listen to the biblical text, discerning its message on its own terms. This will entail knowledge of the Near Eastern background, the contents of each book, and the literary features of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
3. To equip the student to serve God more effectively by developing a framework for studying and interacting with the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament for the rest of his/her life.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Articulate the story of God’s work with humanity told in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
2. Differentiate the genres of literature and canonical sections which are found in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and explain their implications for reading and understanding the text.

3. Describe for each book of the Old Testament introductory critical issues (such as authorship, date, setting), literary features (such as literary structure and development, genres), contents, and message.
4. Know the significance of selected and strategic persons, places, and events found in the Old Testament.
5. Read the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in the context of its ancient Near Eastern setting—its history, culture, and geography.
6. Understand in greater depth one area in Old Testament studies of particular interest to the individual student.
7. Use a framework for approaching the text and interpreting its meaning that will equip the student to study and interact with the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament for the rest of his/her life.

Student Assessment:

Assessment	Related Objectives	Percent of grade
Primary source readings	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	5
Journal	7	5
Textbook readings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	5
Participation	1,2 3, 7	5
Textual assignments	2, 7	10
Quiz 1	3, 4, 7	10
Quiz 2	3, 4, 7	10
Mid Term Essay Exam	1, 2, 3, 5, 7	10
Research Paper	6	20
Final Essay Exam	1, 2, 3, 7	20

** The *Integrative Essay* that is part of the final is to be included as a Personal Growth Indicator in the Student Portfolio for assessment. **

Class Textbooks:

Required:

- Bruce, F. Revised by Payne, D. Israel and the Nations: The History of Israel from the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. (=B in reading assignments)
- Hill, Andrew and Walton, John. A Survey of the Old Testament (third edition). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. (=HW in reading assignments)
- Richter, Sandra. The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008. (=EE in reading assignments)
- A modern translation of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
 Packet of class notes on “The Old Testament,” available through TIS Bookstore.

Highly Recommended:

- Dillard, Raymond and Longman, Tremper III. An Introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. (= DL in reading assignments)
- Walton, John. A Survey of the Old Testament (Zondervan Get an A! Study Guides). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Wright, Paul. Holman QuickSource Bible Atlas with Charts and Biblical Reconstructions. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2005.

Class Schedule:

See the separate Schedule.

Course Expectations and Grading:**Course Expectations**

Attendance at class is assumed. If the student can not be present on any particular evening, taping of the lecture is encouraged for the student's use. The student is responsible to provide the equipment and arrange for someone to run it.

The format of this class, as one of the introductory synthetic ("big picture") courses in the curriculum, is primarily lecture. However, *participation and interaction* are encouraged, whether in the discussions around specific assigned texts, in the asking of questions, in seminar sessions, engaging the professor in discussion after class or at his office, or in the formation of study groups to reinforce learning of the materials. *Attendance and participation in the seminar sessions* is required. The purpose of these meetings is to give you the opportunity to collect personal thoughts about the scheduled issues and discuss them with other graduate students. The aim is not to add further assignments, but to allow you to synthesize the reading you have already done, the lectures you have heard, and the questions this has generated.

All work is to be turned in *on time and in hard copy* (no e-mail submissions). In the event of significant unforeseen circumstances, particularly health or tragedy, the student is encouraged to make arrangements with the professor to have a different due date. Submission of work after the deadline may result in a lower grade.

All policies of Urbana Theological Seminary regarding *extensions* and *grading* are in effect. Consult the *Seminary catalog* if there are questions about these matters.

Assignments

1. Primary Source Readings and Journal. Due with Final Exam, December 14
Read the Old Testament (5 points) and complete a personal interaction journal (5 points).

10 points

2. Textbook Readings

To be reported on Final (December 14): You will be asked what percentage of the assigned readings you have completed.

5 points

3. Graduate Participation

The student's faithful attendance of class, preparation for and participation in class discussions and seminar sessions will be rewarded. Also included in this evaluation will be the student's presentation of the research paper in seminar session.

5 points

4. Textual Assignments (Due on November 16)

The student is to complete the study, observation and reflection on the six passages assigned at various points through the semester. The passages are listed in the schedule and are each printed on a page in the syllabus of notes purchased at the beginning of the semester in order to make it easier to work with the text through activities such as marking the text with colored pens to trace themes or important repeated words, marking off the structure of the passage, or recording your observations about what and how it communicates. After the final one has been completed the student is to staple all together and turn them in to the professor.

Genesis 1-2

(August 31)

Genesis 3 (September 7)
 2 Kings 2:23-3:27 (October 5)
 Psalm 19 (October 19)
 Proverbs 26:1-28 (October 26)
 Amos 9:1-15 (November 9)

10 points

5. Objective Quizzes

Objective content questions.

Quiz 1 covers introductory materials and Pentateuch. (October 12)

Quiz 2 covers Historical Books, Wisdom and Prophetic literature and the history of Israel during the monarchy and in the exile and post-exilic periods. (December 14)

20 points (each worth 10 points)

6. Mid-term Essay (Receive in class October 12; Due on October 19)

Covers the introductory material and the Pentateuch.

10 points

7. Research Paper (Choose topic by September 21; due on November 9; presentations at a time and place to be determined)

Write a 10-12 page research paper on a topic that interests you from the Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament. This paper is to be well-researched and completed in an accepted term paper format with footnotes and bibliography. Suggestions for possible topics will be provided in class.

20 points

8. Final Essay Exam (Receive in class in Master Essay List; Due on December 14)

Essay: Comprehensive

20 points

Grading

Urbana Theological Seminary's grading system shall be used for this course:

A	4.00	92.5 - 100
A-	3.67	89.5 - 92.4
B+	3.33	86.5 - 89.4
B	3.00	82.5 - 86.4
B-	2.67	79.5 - 82.4
C+	2.33	76.5 - 79.4
C	2.00	72.5 - 76.4
C-	1.70	69.5 - 72.4
D+	1.30	66.5 - 69.4
D	1.00	62.5 - 66.4
D-	.70	59.5 - 62.4
F	0.00	0.0 - 59.4