INTERPRETING OLD TESTAMENT I*

COURSE SYLLABUS

(BIBL 6120-I1-S1-10)

North Park Theological Seminary
Fall Semester, 2011
Online Course

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Course Description:
This course seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the first two corpora within the Old Testament canon (i.e. Torah/Pentateuch and Former Prophets/Historiographic Books) with special attention to the content and message of the individual books as well as their relevance to the contemporary Christian.

Course Objectives:
In view of the course description, this class endeavors to provide each student with the ability to do the following:

(1) Articulate the basic *content* of the individual books within the first two sections of the Old Testament canon, including the major events, characters, and theological themes delineated in each document.
(2) Understand the main *critical problems* with which scholars have wrestled in exploring these books and for which they have proposed solutions.
(3) Understand the world out of which the Old Testament speaks as well as the basic *cultural background* or *conceptual environment* that illuminates that meaning of the individual books.
(4) Appreciate the literary beauty of the Old Testament text and the significance of that appreciation for Bible study.
(5) Apply *basic principles of biblical interpretation* and *inductive Bible study methods* into your reading of the Old Testament in order that you may be able to discover the original meaning, theological value, and contemporary significance of the biblical text.
(6) Understand the nature and function of narrative literary genres as well as basic principles for interpreting them.
(7) Grow in your love for the Old Testament and its unique contribution to the life and theology of the Church.

Required Texts:

The Holy Bible (preferably a modern translation)

William W. Klein, Craig, L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Nelson, 2004). ISBN 785252258 (**Abbr.** IBI)

J. Gordon Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament Vol. 1: A Guide to the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008). ISBN 0830825517 (**Abbr**. EOT1)

J. Philip Satterthwaite and J. Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament Vol. 2: A Guide to the Historical Books* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008). ISBN 0830825525 (**Abbr.** EOT2)

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* The structure and content of this course was produced by Dr. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. While Dr. Ansberry has modified the language of the syllabus as well as certain modules within Moodle, the course's design and substance remains Dr. Hubbard's.

R.L. Hubbard, Jr. "OT Faith I Lecture Notes" (posted on Moodle under each week's folder).

Recommended Texts:

Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Altas* (rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1977).

D. A. Baker and B. T. Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999). (on reserve; below listed as FOTS)

S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTS 70; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 218-237 (on reserve)

John Bright, *A History of Israel* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 2000).

Hope Cain Felder, *The Stony Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

Terence E. Fretheim, *Deuteronomic History* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983).

___. *The Pentateuch* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

John Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

Isaac Kalimi, *Ancient Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 46; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005). (On reserve; below listed as *Ancient Historian*).

Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988).

Iain Provan, Tremper Longman III, and V. Philips Long, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster, 2003).

G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Volume I (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

Letty M. Russell, ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985).

R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margin* (Interpreting the Bible in the Third World; Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991).

Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

R. Norman Whybray, *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

V. Wimbush, ed., *African Americans and the Bible* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

Office/Moodle Hours:
As noted above, I am available to discuss any academic or personal questions you may have on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. (CST). You may contact me via email, phone, or Skype (by appointment). If these times do not work with your schedule, please let me know. We can set up an alternative time that suits your schedule. In addition to office hours, I will be active in this course on

weekday mornings in general and weekday afternoons in particular. If you notice that I am online, please do not hesitate to contact me regarding any questions you may have.

Course Procedures:

A. **Moodle:** The course content and requirements for each week are posted in the center column on Moodle. Within each week, you will find materials to review (i.e. readings, lecture notes, and powerpoints) as well as assignments or activities to be completed. It is important to note that exams will also be posted and taken on Moodle. In addition, inductive Bible study groups may choose to meet in a chat room on Moodle in order to complete their assignments (see below).

B. **Inductive Bible Study:** Students are required to participate in a small group (i.e. "clan") chosen by the instructor in order to complete the inductive Bible study assignments. The group is expected to meet *at least twice* outside of class to discuss each of the three assigned biblical passages and to submit a written report. The three passages under investigation are Exodus 20:1-17, Joshua 23, and 2 Samuel 7. For instructions pertaining to the inductive Bible studies, see the "Inductive Study Instructions" link at the top of our course Moodle page. For a list of individuals in your tribe/clan, see the "List of Tribes and Clans" link at the top of our Moodle page. In addition, for instructions and suggestions concerning communication with members of your "clan" for the project, see the "Instructions for Class Group Communication" link at the top of our Moodle page.

C. **Chat Room:** In the event that the instructor perceives students are confused about course content or requirements, the instructor reserves the right to schedule an occasional plenary chat room to clarify course matters. To the extent possible, the discussion will be scheduled at a time convenient for class members.

D. **Exams and Papers**: Students are expected to meet the deadlines listed below for papers and examinations. If a situation arises in which the student is unable to meet the deadline, he/she must arrange an alternate option with the instructor *in advance*. If an emergency intervenes, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

E. **Quizzes:** The course includes several ***optional*** quizzes pertaining to the required readings. While these quizzes are optional, students are encouraged to take them, for they seek to reinforce the substance of the readings.

Course Requirements:
In order to achieve the objectives of the course, students are responsible to complete the following requirements for the class:

A. **Assigned Readings (*50 points*):** Students are expected to complete *all* of the required readings delineated under the "Required Texts" category above. At the end of the semester (week 15), students will report in writing the percentage of the reading completed.

B. **Inductive Bible Study Group** (***75 points/25 points each***): Students must participate in at least 90% of the small group inductive Bible study discussions in order to share in the grade of the three written reports.

C. **One Short Paper (*50 points*):** Students will select a paper from the options presented below and formulate one short paper during the course of the semester. The paper will be 5-7 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times or Times New Roman. The papers available for investigation

include the following:

(1) Comparison Paper: The student will select one of the comparative options listed below and formulate a paper that includes four basic elements: (1) a description of the *similarities and differences* between the parallel texts; (2) a discussion of possible literary explanations—the student's own and those of scholars—that account for the similarities and differences; (3) an explanation of the rationale or purpose for the uniqueness of each text (i.e., literary, ideological, theological, etc.); and (4) a conclusion concerning the relationship (if any) between the two texts. The texts available for comparison include (**Due Thursday of Week 6—October 6th—by 5:00 p.m. [CST]**)

(a) The creation accounts in Genesis 1 vis-à-vis Egyptian and Babylonian creation accounts
(b) The flood accounts in Genesis 6-9 vis-à-vis the Gilgamesh Epic
(c) The Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 vis-à-vis the regulations in Exodus 34:1-28
(d) The Decalogue in Exodus 20 vis-à-vis the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5
(e) The report concerning Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:1-18 vis-à-vis the account in 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

(2) Short Exegesis Paper: The student will produce an exegesis paper based on their examination of a specific short passage of scripture from a list provided by the instructor. At minimum, the paper must include the following elements: (1) a declaration of the main point of the original text; (2) a homiletical "big idea" (i.e., the main point for a sermon); (3) an application of the text for Christian living today; and (4) a bibliography. Students who have studied Hebrew or who can use computer programs (e.g., BibleWorks, Logos, etc.) are encouraged somehow to integrate a brief word study in their report. This assignment is ***not*** recommended for students with ***no prior seminary courses in Bible***. (**Due Thursday of week 9— November 3rd—by 5:00 p.m. [CST])**

(3) Book Report: The student will produce a critical review of a book or section of a book (300 pages minimum length) from the "Recommended Texts" delineated above. In essence, the paper must include the following elements: (1) a summary the book's contents; (2) a critique of the work that addresses its strengths/contributions as well as its weaknesses; and (3) a reflection on the work's relevance for ministry. For more detailed instructions concerning the paper, see the "Rubric for Book Reflections" link at the top of our Moodle page. (**Due Thursday of Week 11—November 17th—by 5:00 p.m. [CST]**)

(4) Negotiated Alternative: The instructor will consider any proposal for an alternative short paper submitted by a student in writing *no later than the last class of Week 3*. **(Due Thursday of week 6— October 6th—by 5:00 p.m. [CST])**

The key to a successful paper is clarity and brevity. The paper will be graded on both the quality of its composition (e.g., conciseness, use of proper English, inclusive language) as well as its content. In addition to the Brandel Library catalogue, a good Old Testament bibliography is available at http://www.denverseminary.edu/dj/articles2006/0100/0101.php.

If you have any questions pertaining to these papers, please feel free to contact me. We are in this together and I am here to help! **(NB:** the individual papers are due at different dates during the semester).

D. Midterm and Final Exams (*200 points/100 points each*): Students will take both Midterm and Final examinations on Moodle in accordance with the dates listed on "Course Calendar" (see below). Instructions for the exams and study sheets for each are posted on Moodle.

E. **Discussion Board (*112 points*):** With the exception of two weeks, students will participate in a discussion board each week with members of their "Tribe." These discussions seek to reinforce general content and provide students with a way in which to stimulate discussion on specific topics under investigation. Students are required to answer the question(s) posted on the weekly discussion board. In addition to this "original" or individual post, students should respond to at least one of the posts of their peers. Similar to the papers, the key to a successful post is clarity and brevity. That is, the quality or substance of the post should take precedence over the length of the post. The discussion board posts are due on the Friday of each week for which they are scheduled.

In the end, **all course work must be completed by Thursday of Week 15—December 15th—by 5:00 p.m. (CST).**

Instructor Responsiveness:

The instructor will make every effort to support students and help them achieve the objectives of the course. To this end, the following represent the most significant features of the instructor's responsibilities:

(1) The instructor will respond to all student emails and phone calls within 48 hours of their receipt.
(2) The instructor will provide reactions to student responses on the weekly discussion boards as appropriate in order to clarify important ideas and concepts.
(3) The instructor will read and critically assess students' assignments and provide feedback within 3-5 days of their receipt.

Grading:

The student's final grade is based upon the percentage of the total points possible (487) that the student earns. The *grade scale* is as follows:

A = 452 (93%)	C = 379 (78%)
B = 418 (86%)	D = 341 (70%)

Course Calendar:

The following schedule represents our course calendar. The individual weeks run from Monday through Sunday. In view of the course requirements presented above as well as the schedule below, the papers and exams are due at specific points during the semester. All other assignments (i.e. readings, discussion board posts, and inductive Bible study reports) are due on Friday's by 5:00 p.m. (CST). If you wish to work ahead in the course, the content for each week is available for your review. If you have any questions pertaining to the schedule or the constituent assignments, please let me know.

Week	Topics	Reading	Dr. Hubbard's Lecture Notes	Due
Week 1 8/29-9/4	Course Introduction Why Study the Old Testament? Introduction to Biblical Interpretation What is Hermeneutics?	IBI 3-21, 23-62, 116-131, 135-168	Why Study the Old Testament? Hermeneutics: Introduction (Powerpoint) The Interpreter (Powerpoint)	Do an internet search for photographic introductions to Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syro-Palestine Post self-introduction on the "Abram's Tent" discussion board.

	The Interpreter			In clans, begin Inductive Study of Exod. 20:1-17
Week 2 **9/5-11**	Preunderstanding The Goal of Interpretation Unique Interpretive Perspectives	IBI, pp. 169-209 Cain Hope Felder, *Stony Road We Trod* (ch. 9; compare with Trible) Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror* (ch. 1) R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Voices from the Margin* (chs. 16 & 17) L.M. Russell, *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (ch. 6)	Preunderstanding (Powerpoint) The Goal of Interpretation (Powerpoint)	Discussion board postings
Week 3 **9/12-18**	Recent Social-Scientific Approaches General Hermeneutics: Prose Hermeneutics: Conclusion	IBI, pp. 63-101, 213-272	Hermeneutics: The Main Things (Powerpoint)	Discussion board postings Optional: Quiz 1 (hermeneutics only)
Week 4 **9/19-25**	The World of the Bible: The Fertile Crescent Introduction to OT Narrative Literature The Interpretation of Narrative Literature Old Testament Narratives The Old Testament World The Old Testament: An Overview The Pentateuch: Its Origin and Purpose	IBI, pp. 323-341 B.O. Long, "Introduction to Historical Literature," *1 Kings* (FOTL 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 1-8 (on reserve) S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTS 70; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 218-237 (on reserve) http://studentorg.cua.edu/cbib/341syl.htm (survey of narrative genres) EOT1 1-8, 145-58, 159-86, 187-96 (Pentateuch)	OT Narrative Literature Introduction to OT Narratives (Powerpoint) The Old Testament World (Powerpoint) The Pentateuch	Inductive Study #1 (Exodus 20:1-17) Discussion board postings In clans, begin Inductive Study of Joshua 23
Week 5 **9/26-10/2**	The Book of Genesis: Its Background and Meaning The Primeval History (Genesis 1-11)	Genesis 1-3; 6-9; 11; 12; 15; 18; 28; 31; 35; 37; 50 EOT1 9-34, 35-56	The Primeval History (Gen. 1-11)	Discussion board postings Optional: Quiz 2

	Genesis: The Patriarchal History (Genesis 12-50)	G. Wenham, "Pondering the Pentateuch," FOTS, pp. 116-144 J. O'Brien and W. Major, *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, and Greece* (ASR 11; n.p.: Scholars Press, 1982), pp. 9-44, 69-104. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook03.html#Babylonia (For translation of ancient creation accounts)	The Story of the Ancestors (Gen. 12-50)	
Week 6 10/3-9	The Book of Exodus: Introduction The Exodus (Exodus 1-15) The Great Sinai Transactions (Exodus 16-40)	Exodus 3-6:13; 11-13; 15:1-18; 19-20:17; 25; 40 EOT1 57-80 IBI 341-351 The Code of Hammurabi, *ANET*, pp. 163-180 The Hittite Laws, *ANET*, pp. 188-197 http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook03.html#Babylonia (For translations of ancient law codes)	The Great Escape (Exod. 1-15) The Transactions at Sinai (Exod. 16-40)	Short Paper Option: Comparison or Negotiated Paper Inductive Study #2 (Joshua 23) Discussion board postings
Week 7 10/10-16	Israel's Cultic Life: Leviticus The Wilderness Wanderings: Numbers Deuteronomy: Moses' Farewell Speeches	Leviticus 1-2; 4-6; 11; 16; 18; 25; 26 Numbers 1-2 (skim); 6; 11-12; 14; 20; 22; 24; 34 Deuteronomy 1-4; 5:1-21 (skim); 6; 8; 12-13; 15; 17-18; 21-22; 24-25; 27-31 EOT1 81-101 (Lev.), 103-22 (Num.), 123-44 (Deut.), 197-98	The Book of Leviticus The Book of Numbers The Book of Deuteronomy 1	Discussion board postings In clans, begin Inductive Study of 2 Samuel 7
10/17-23	Mid-Semester Break			
Week 8 10/24-30	Deuteronomy (Continued) The Land & Archaeology of Israel	Joshua 1-3; 6-8; 11; 13; 24 EOT2 41-72 (Joshua), 199-219 (DH)	The Book of Deuteronomy 2 The Book of Joshua The Land of Israel (Powerpoint)	Midterm examination Due: by Thursday, October 27th at 5:00 p.m. (CST) Optional: Quiz 3

	The Deuteronomistic History (DH) The Book of Joshua: Conquest and Settlement	K. Lawson Younger, "Early Israel in Recent Biblical Scholarship," FOTS, pp. 176-206 http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft596nb3tj/ **or** http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history_community/Ancient/TheStoryTO/ConquestOfCanaan.htm		
Week 9 10/31-11/6	The Era of the Judges The Book of Judges The Book of Ruth	Judges 1-3; 5; 6-8; 13-16, 18, 19, 21 EOT2 73-104 (Judges), 220-30 (Ruth)	The Book of Judges The Book of Ruth Humor: The Real "Dr. Ruth" (Powerpoint)	Short Paper Option: Exegesis Paper Discussion board postings
Week 10 11/7-13	The Books of Samuel: Composition and Purpose The Lives and Legacy of Samuel and Saul	1 Samuel 1-3; 4-6; 8-10; 12; 15; 16; 31 EOT2 105-46	1 Samuel	Discussion board postings Optional: Quiz 4
Week 11 11/14-20	The Life and Legacy of David The Books of Kings: Introduction and Theology The Reign of Solomon	2 Samuel 1; 5-7; 11-12; 18; 20; 24 Psalms 78, 110, 132 1 Kings 1-3; 5; 8; 10; 11-12 EOT2 1-28, 29-40 G. Knoppers, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy," FOTS, pp. 207-36	2 Samuel 1 Kings	Short Paper Option: Book Report Discussion board postings
Week 12 11/21-27	The Monarchy: The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17)	1 Kings 18-19; 21; 2 Kings 2; 5; 10; 18-19; 22-24; Psalms 2, 72, 110, 132 EOT2 147-98	2 Kings	Inductive Study #3 (2 Sam 7) Discussion board postings
Week 13 11/28-12/4	Fifth Century Israel The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah The Books of Chronicles	Ezra 1; 3-5; 9-10 Nehemiah 1-2; 4; 6; 13 1 Chronicles 1-9 (skim); 16; 21:28-22:1; 2 Chronicles 1; 3; 19:4-21:20; 29-33; 34; 36	Post-Exilic Judah Ezra and Nehemiah Chronicles	Begin review for the final exam Discussion board postings Optional: Quiz 5

		EOT2 244-65 (Ezra-Nehmiah), 266-90 (Chronicles) I. Kalimi, *An Ancient Historian*, 19-39.		
Week 14 12/5-11	The Books of Chronicles (End) The Book of Esther	I. Kalimi, *An Ancient Historian*, 143-157. Esther 1-10 EOT2 231-43 Barry Webb, "Reading Esther as Holy Scripture," *Reformed Theological Review* 52 (1993), 23-35. Museum tour of Persia at http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/	Esther Persia and Esther: An Introduction (Powerpoint)	Discussion board postings
Week 15 12/12-18	The Book of Esther (End) Review Final Exam			Final Exam Due: Thursday, December 15th at 5:00 p.m. (CST) Reading Reports Online Course Evaluation

"Apply yourself wholly to the text; apply the text wholly to yourself."
– Johann Albrecht Bengel

Addendum: Extra Credit

Students desiring to improve their final course grade may earn extra points by doing *one* of the following additional assignments:

300 pages of reading	5 extra points maximum
A field trip	2 extra points maximum
Website suggestion	2 extra points maximum
Written Report on a public lecture	2 extra points maximum
Book review (5-7 pp.)	10 extra points maximum
Term paper (12-15 pp.)	10 extra points maximum

NB: The maximum number of extra credit points a student may earn is 11, including points earned in inductive studies (see the Inductive Studies Instructions at the top of our Moodle course page).