

**North Park Theological Seminary**  
**OLD TESTAMENT I GENESIS – ESTHER BIBL 6120**  
Fall 2012 Online  
Three Semester Hours    Core Requirement

**Course Facilitator:** James Bruckner, Ph.D., Professor of Old Testament  
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**Introductory Comments/Course Description:**

**Welcome to the Course**

*Welcome to Old Testament I.* I look forward to our interaction with the texts of Genesis-Esther. Old Testament I is a graduate-level seminary course on the basic theological literature of the Hebrew Bible (we will use English translations).

This three hour graduate course requires a substantial amount of reading and writing. Please read the syllabus thoroughly for details. It is your roadmap. You will need access to a good Old Testament library to do your research projects. If you do not have access, you will need at least two (2) Bible Dictionaries, two (2) Introductions to the Bible, and one (1) book for deeper historical background *in addition to your textbooks*. (See recommended list below.)

The power and passion of the narratives and law we will read are essential parts of the “Scripture” to which 2 Timothy 3:16 refers. You should begin by reading the primary biblical document from Genesis through Esther.

This course surveys the story of the people of God in the first twelve books of the Old Testament known as the Torah and the former prophets. It also includes the second Temple historical books, covering the return of the Jews from exile (Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther). It seeks to provide a beginning knowledge of the over-arching narrative content (events, characters, themes). Attention will be given to historical and cultural background, critical problems, and literary genres as they aid interpretation of specific texts. The goal is to prepare students to appreciate, interpret, and teach from these books in ministries of the Church.

**Participant Learning Objectives:**

1. Comprehend fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
2. Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.
3. Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

**Required Textbooks**

*The books listed below can be found at many online bookseller site (amazon.com, buy.com, half.com).* You will also need access to a good Old Testament library to do your research projects. If you do not have access, you will need at least two (2) Bible Dictionaries, two (2) Introductions to the Bible, and one (1) book for deeper historical background in your personal library *in addition to your textbooks* (see recommended list in this syllabus).

*The Holy Bible.* Any modern translation. Good advanced student study editions are *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the *Harper Collins Study Bible*.

Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005). paperback 9780687066766

Coogan, Michael D. editor. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). paperback 0195139372

Provan, Long, and Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). paperback 0664220908

*Articles provided in Moodle:* Much of the required reading comes from these articles. They will be important for your assignments, midterm, and final exam preparation.

### **Additional or Recommended Readings**

D. N. Freeman editor. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. Please note that the ISBN is 0802824005. Everyone should want this one volume goldmine. It is a reliable resource that will serve you well for a lifetime. Also valuable for preparation for the midterm and final exams.

If you have not previously studied the Bible at the college level, a basic introduction should also be read in conjunction with lectures. The following text is very useful and accessible: Bandstra, Barry L. *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1995 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2003; 4<sup>th</sup> ed. March, 2008).

### **Course Schedule**

Every week the assigned readings, student forum responses, and other writing assignments will be posted in the weekly modules. Officially, the “Week” runs from Sunday at midnight to the next Sunday at midnight. Please begin your reading at the beginning of the week so that you have time to write well before Sunday night. It is expected that students in a three (3) hour master’s level seminary course will spend nine (9) hours each week to accomplish the reading and the writing. *Forum responses and written assignments are due before Sunday at midnight at the end of each module-week.*

### **Course Requirements In Brief.**

Successful completion of this course will include:

- 1) **Forum Response to Professor’s Weekly Posting**
- 2) **Journal Responses to Required Reading**
- 3) **Weekly Writing assignments**
- 4 and 5) **Two objective Exams: a midterm and a final**

### **Course Requirements: In Detail**

**Note:** All writing assignments are due before midnight on Sunday.

Since you can’t do your work all in one day, please schedule your work week accordingly. The general guideline is nine (9) hours of work per week for a three (3) credit hour class.

#### **1) Forum Response to Professor’s Weekly Posting**

Due before midnight on Sundays. (10% of grade)

Read the weekly lectures (two or three, depending on the week). You must post a short (50-100 word) response each week to each of the lectures for the whole class to read in “**Discussion Board > Response to Lecture**” by the end of the week (Sunday at midnight). Simply state what you found most engaging, troubling, or enlightening. If you have questions, you can e-mail the instructor.

#### **2) Journal Responses to Required Reading**

Before you read the lectures for the week, you should read the Bible and the secondary literature assigned as background information. You may not always be able to discern a connection between them but as the course progresses the cumulative effect may become evident. Keep track (simple notes) of the main points of the secondary reading for future reference in exam preparation.

#### **3) Weekly Writing Assignment Instructions**

Due before midnight on Sundays to jbruckner@northpark.edu. See the Class Schedule (below) for topics and due dates.

Format: 500 words. Cite all sources.

Content: Your short essays should be informed reflections on the 1) reading, 2) biblical texts, and 3) questions assigned in the “Class Schedule.” For some assignments you will want to consult sources listed under “Recommended reading.” Cite all sources and texts.

#### **4 and 5) Two objective Exams: a midterm and a final.**

I will post brief study-guides for you several weeks before the exams (see Schedule). The guides will give you an idea of what may be included, though it may not be comprehensive. It will also include the protocols for taking an on-line exam on Blackboard. You will be able to choose your exam time during the week.

### **Assignment Grading based on 100 percentage points**

A final grade for this course will be computed according to your successful completion of the following assignments:

- |    |   |                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Forum Response to Professor's Weekly Posting</b> | <b>10 percentage points maximum</b> |
| 2. | <b>Journal Responses to Required Reading</b>        | <b>10 percentage points maximum</b> |
| 3. | <b>Weekly Writing Assignments</b>                   | <b>20 percentage points maximum</b> |
| 4. | <b>Mid-term Exam</b>                                | <b>30 percentage points maximum</b> |
| 5. | <b>Final Exam</b>                                   | <b>30 percentage points maximum</b> |

### **Course Grading**

At the completion of this course, you will receive a letter grade reflecting your performance in this course. Letter grades (from A – F) will be awarded according to the existing policies of North Park Theological Seminary. The final course grade will be computed according to the total number of percentage points earned for all assignments as shown below:

<u>Total Points Earned</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
98-100	A+
95-97	A
93-94	A-
91-92	B+
88-90	B
86-87	B-
84-85	C+
81-83	C
78-80	C-

### **Computer Requirements**

In order to effectively participate in and successfully complete this course, each participant will need to have access to a computer and a high-speed internet connection. Please visit <http://www.northpark.edu/Current-Students/Computer-Services/Network/Minimum-Requirements.aspx> for information on computer requirements.