# Preliminary Syllabus North Park Theological Seminary OLD TESTAMENT I GENESIS – ESTHER BIBL 6120

Fall 2013 @ NPTS

Three Semester Hours A core requirement for all seminary degrees

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## **Introductory Comments/Course Description**

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.

## **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).

# Assignment Grading

#### Requirements in Brief

Completion of weekly reading (about 100 pages/week) and writing assignments (ten short papers), class attendance, participation, mid-term exam, and final exam. This three-semester hour course requires approximately six (6) hours of preparatory work outside of class each week for a minimum total of nine (9) hours per week.

#### Grading

Writing Assignments 30%; Class attendance/participation 10%; Mid-Term 30%; Final Exam 30%. Late writing assignments will be marked down by 2% per day.

A	93-100
В	86-92
C	78-85
D	70-77

### **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.

## **Specific Course Objectives**

- Grow in appreciation of the passion and the power of the narratives and law contained in the primary biblical documents.
- Develop a personal facility for interpreting Old Testament biblical texts in the context of the Christian Church.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate another person's perspective fairly and accurately.
- Analyze, evaluate, and gain new perspectives on issues raised in reading difficult biblical texts.
- Evaluate the significance of specific books of scripture in their literary contexts.
- Explain the significance of individual texts in their historical context.
- Synthesize understanding of the content of the primary and secondary source reading with personal perspective on the subject matter.
- Master the use of the précis format for summarizing reading.