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# OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

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## OT 520 OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

June 2006—A Three Hour Course    Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

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Appointments are Also Available

### Course Aspirations and Place in the Curriculum

**Aspirations:** OT 520 seeks to equip students for ministry by providing selected tools fundamental to responsible interpretation of the OT. The course neither offers a comprehensive approach, nor emphasizes direct textual study, but *enhances* both by developing a framework within which competent interpretation can take place. Students explore contemporary approaches to the literary character, historical and cultural setting, composition, authorship, and literary unity of these books, their various literary types, settings, and functions, and how these affect Christian reading of the OT. A central axiom of the class is that the OT emerges from a cultural and ethnic setting that is significantly different from those of any contemporary culture. Thus to study the OT in connection with the settings of its emergence is to learn to *receive* God's word cross-culturally, which forms a necessary preparation for *testifying* to the message of God's word cross-culturally. Thus the very act of responsible and holistic interpretation involves grasping, affirming, and moving creatively between the text's ethnic and cultural framework and our own. Because the OT is a multi-dimensional text, embracing language, literature, culture, religion, politics—all seen as media for divine revelation—biblical exegesis must of necessity be multi-disciplinary, hence we will draw eclectically, but not chaotically, from a wide range of subject areas.

Students who realize these aspirations will be able to :

1. Show how a close reading of the the OT itself provides the stimulus and basis for OT studies;
2. Illustrate how a knowledge of Hebrew and sensitivity to the OT's literary character enhance OT study by providing an exercise in *listening* to voices of testimony from another culture as a preparation for *speaking* a word of witness cross-culturally;
3. Recognize specific information concerning the ethnically diverse and culturally alien historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages as it is applied to understanding OT;
4. Recognize how the social and cultural location, assumptions, claims, procedures and conclusions of selected types of contemporary OT study affect interpretation. Methods touched upon include: archeology, Textual criticism, Source criticism, Form criticism, Redaction criticism, Selected contemporary literary approaches

5. Identify, clarify, and strengthen essential convictions regarding *biblical theology and authority* in a manner that is faithful to the framework of the text and relevant to the contemporary practice of ministry;
6. Discover study, especially study of the text's pre-Christian and pre-western character, as a stimulus for spiritual growth.

The instructor prays this course fosters theological, intellectual, and spiritual renewal at ATS.

### **Means of Realizing Course Aspirations (AKA "Course Requirements")**

**READING** in the literature of OT studies from many perspectives, from “mainstream” (i.e. non-conservative) OT criticism as well as evangelical scholars. Some readings *are difficult* and not always *obviously* relevant to, say, sermon preparation or youth ministry.

LaSor, W. S., D. A. Hubbard, F. W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

A Book-By-Book overview of the content and interpretation issues of the OT books followed by a section on general issues. Since this course is not organized in a book-by-book fashion, we will be reading this text "out of order" so pay close attention to the Course Schedule.

W. W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg, R. L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Waco: Word, 1993.

Introduces essential issues involved in biblical interpretation and the methods employed with specific types of material. Our assignments skip sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

Pritchard, James, Ed. *HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible*. Harper, 1991.

Much more than maps, a good atlas (like this one) is a concise guide to the geography, history, culture, and lifestyle of the people it treats. Try to go beyond reading with this book, and spend time enjoying the maps and sheer glory of factual data presented in a fairly small space.

Several articles are in electronic form and will be in the Course Conference icon. Full citations and filenames are given in the schedule. All are Adobe Acrobat PDF files. To read these, you use the free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

**Recommended Bibliographical Resource:** Bauer, David. *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. Wilmore, Revised 2nd Edition, 1995.

Completion of the reading constitutes a significant portion of the grade. While readings are correlated to specific days, students will not typically read the exact assignments for each day. What is **required** will be a final reading report, which will be completed online.

**LECTURES** are a vital component of the course. Note that instead of directly expounding readings, lecture often presents *analyses* of issues and supplementary material.

**Attendance Policy:** Occasional absences are a normal part of academic life, but attendance is vital. Attendance will be taken daily, and students will be asked to maintain their own record of attendance. At the end of the course students will report attendance by means of an online form.

For the summer term, each day counts for 2 points, one for each half of the day's session. All absences "count," and up to 6 points lost due to absence *may be made up*. Except in the most extreme circumstances, no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" will be observed.

*An absence can be made up* by contacting the instructor. Make-up work will normally involve listening to an audio recording of the lecture, which will be available in the Course Center.

**Four Examinations** will be given. Exams will be multiple choice, and will range from simple recognition of factual information to questions that require of students a careful weighing of several pieces of information and the selection of the best from among several potentially correct answers. Study helps will be provided in the form of PDF versions of PowerPoint files and a "Factoid Sheet" that will summarize some of the most important factual data of the class. In addition, a small set of actual questions such as appear on the test will be provided. These exams will be taken online. Instructions will be provided. Tests will go online on the dates below, and will stay online for 72 hours. Each test will have 25 questions.

Test 1: June 8

Test 2: June 13

Test 3: June 16

Test 4: June 20

**Grade Calculation:** Grading is by a Total Points System. Attendance, readings, exams, and essays are all worth a certain number of points, with the total being 200 Points.

Attendance----- 50 Points  
 Reading Report----- 50 Points  
 Exam 1 ----- 25 Points  
 Exam 2 ----- 25 Points  
 Exam 3 ----- 25 Points  
 Exam 4 ----- 25 Points  
**Total Points:----- 200 Points**

Letter Grades are assigned by the following values:

	From	To
A	190	200
A-	180	189
B+	174	179
B	168	173
B-	160	167
C+	154	159
C	148	153
C-	140	147
D+	134	139
D	128	133
D-	120	127
F	0	119

Office Hours will be announced, but you are welcome at any time to speak to me personally, call or e-mail me with a question or to make an appointment. *As a courtesy, I ask you not to try to see me about course business prior to the start of the class session, particularly when I am setting up the computer and projector.*

**The Course Conference.** On the opening day of class, students will find an OT 520 Conference icon on their FirstClass desktop in the ATS e-mail system. This conference serves several roles:

1. It is where several articles, audio, and other course materials will be posted
2. A discussion forum to allow for your questions, further discussion of issues raised in class, etc. I check this several times per day and usually can respond immediately to issues raised.
3. Announcements to the class as a whole will be made here

It is essential for students to have an ATS e-mail account (free) and avail themselves of the computing services offered at ATS if they do not have e-mail access from home.

**OFFICE HOURS:** On the Wilmore campus, I make every effort to have an open door policy. Except when absolutely necessary due to grading, writing, or preparation responsibilities, I keep my door open and you are welcome to see me without an appointment.

### **Course Assignment Due dates**

The outline of the course and modules of study are listed below. It is very important for students to establish a regular discipline of work and study. This is graduate school, brothers and sisters! It will require of all of us discipline and effort, but working together we can achieve great things.

### **Sequence of Lecture Unit Topics**

The outline below provides a picture of the structure and flow of the course's lecture topics. We will try to integrate covering the basics of interpretation and the overall history of the OT with a very general conceptualization of the OT material.

Note that not all blocks of lecture are the same length, and so some will be combined in due-dates. The schedule of online assignments and turned-in work is on the last page. The assignments are sequenced so that much reading is done early in the course, gradually tapering a bit toward the end as you collapse in complete exhaustion.

#### **I. THE QUEST: DIVINE REVELATION IN HUMAN LITERATURE**

- A. What Do We Make of the Old Testament?
- B. Who Needs Biblical Criticism? (reading unit)
- C. A Hebrew Teacher Looks at the Creation Account
- D. Digging Up the Dirt on the OT: Archaeology

#### **II. FORMATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP: A UNION OF TENSIONS**

- A. "Before Abraham Was..." (Creation-2000 BC Stone Ages, Early Bronze)
- B. The Ancestors and the Promise (2000-1550 BC Middle Bronze Age)
- C. Moses and the Covenant (1550-1200 BC Late Bronze)
- D. Conquest and Community (1200-1000 BC Iron I)
- E. King and Empire (1000-921 BC Iron IIA)

#### **III. BREAKING OF THE FELLOWSHIP: FROM DIVISION TO DISASTER**

- A. The Breaking of the Company: Divided Kingdom (921-721 BC Iron IIB)
- B. The Failure of the Promise Bearer: The Judean State (721-587 BC Iron IIC)

#### **IV. RENEWAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP: REINVENTING THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

- A. The Empire Strikes Back: The Furnace of Exile (597-539 BC)
- B. Return of the Judean: Reinventing the People of God (539-165 BC)

### Schedule of Units and Assignments

Note: the readings in OTS, IBI, and HCAB are given to pace students through the course and to generally match lecture topics, but are not directly correlated to each day's material. Note also that the sequence of topics is fluid, depending on student interest and interaction.

Date	Topic	OTS	IBI	HCAB	Article	Tests
5	Organization Why Study the OT?				Wright StoneWhy	
6	Genesis 1	583-597 3-31	3-62		Robertson- Smith	
7	Genesis 2		135-168 169-272			
8	Archaeology Before Abraham Was...	619-657 32-51	323-398	10-33	Barr	Test 1
9	The Ancestral Era Moses and Covenant	52-79 80-152		34-45		
12	Conquest and Community	153-196 197-211		46-61 62-77		
13	King and Empire	212-220, 243-327		78-81		Test 2
14	Divided Kingdom	221-230 328-380		82-87 88-89	Smith	
15	The Judean State	423-428, 447-519 381-422, 429-446,		90- 101		
16	The Babylonian Exile	231-242, 520-582 598-618	273-319  103-131		Place  Gunkel	Test 3
19	Restoration		451-475		VonRad	
20	The Text of the OT (Time Permitting)	688-694	477-504 63-101		RedCrit	Test 4