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OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

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OT520.X3 Old Testament Introduction

fall 2004

Asbury Theological Seminary

Edwin C. Hostetter (410) 857-2560

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Welcome:

Hello there! I'm Edwin Hostetter, or you may call me Ed. I live just outside Baltimore, Maryland in the United States, and I'll be your instructor for Asbury Seminary's extended learning subject titled Old Testament Introduction, that's OT520.

My life's motto comes from Ezra 7:10. Personalized, it runs "I have devoted myself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws." Ezra was a priest and scribe, who lived around 2500 years ago in Jerusalem. He struggled to help the Jewish people improve their religious community after they had rebuilt God's temple. Since we too must exert effort to maintain our individual and group faith, it's great to be able to observe how somebody from the past (namely, Ezra) dealt with his situation.

Thus, as you can see, the Old Testament does have contemporary significance for us as God's Word. In this Introduction course we will encounter people and events and themes found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. The biblical content includes stories, songs, laws, letters, and more—about ancient Israel's relationship with God. Hopefully we can learn a lot to enhance our own spiritual standing.

Please let me know how I can help you on the class journey. As in my other web-based courses, I'm eager to work with you. It will be fun to get to know each other and to glean many insights from the Bible. You heard in my motto how much I truly enjoy teaching the Old Testament!

Office Hours:

Wednesday, 10:00-11:00 pm ET (I'll be in the chat center.)

ExL Contact Information:

For **general questions regarding the ExL program**, contact its director at ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu or

Extended_Learning@asburyseminary.edu.

For **technical support**, contact Jared Porter at

ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu.

For **library research support**, contact Information Commons at

Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu.

For **library loans**, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu.

Library/Information Commons Resources Link:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/library> Email:

[Information Commons@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu) Toll-Free: 1-866-454-2733

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries, if possible. However, library services are always available to students through the Asbury Seminary Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be made online by going to the following link: <http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html>. Advanced Research assistance is available by contacting Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu), which includes using various online databases, or doing research on a specific topic. To request material from the Asbury Seminary Library, please follow the instructions on the library loan page (<http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html>). Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials. Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) if the materials are not available in electronic format; however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (5 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!

Windows and Icons:

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules (No interaction takes place here. This is where the prof. posts course materials only).

The Discussion Center will be used for all public, class communication. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and the professor, you should post to the Discussion Center.

The OT520-XL-EH Office is for private correspondence between you and the professor. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates, including assignments, papers,

projects, and personal correspondence. This should not be used to ask general course-related questions.

The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. *Remember:* None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, chapel services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer, and a Real Audio Player.

Course Description:

An introduction to (1) the literature of the Old Testament in its socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts; and (2) critical study of the Old Testament.

Course Objectives:

At the end of the course, you should be able to

- 1) Itemize the major events of Old Testament history in relative chronological order, as well as the salient features of ancient Near Eastern history.
- 2) State the general content of each section of the Old Testament.
- 3) Identify key theological motifs as they run through the Old Testament.
- 4) Analyze several interpretive techniques to the Old Testament in general.
- 5) Evaluate current scholarly positions on such critical matters as the authorship, date and unity of the Pentateuch, the nature of the Deuteronomistic History, etc.
- 6) Apply the Old Testament to Christian life and ministry.

Course Requirements:

1. Five summaries of chapters in Samuel Schultz's *Old Testament Speaks* [see required reading list below]. During every module you must write 750 words or less to condense the Schultz chapters which I have specified under the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

2. Fifteen essays on questions about the *Tanakh* [see required reading list below]. Tanakh is simply another label for the Jewish Bible,

whose content equals that of the Old Testament used by Protestant Christians. Every week you must write 200 words or less to address a question you choose from among those which I have asked under the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

Expectations:

In order to fulfill your assignments properly, you will need to access the course at least once a week.

My aim is to check in every day or two, but I will never go longer than one week without reading your communication.

Online Etiquette:

I suggest you consult such webpages as <http://www.onlinenetiquette.com/> OR <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> for guidelines on how to conduct yourself within an Internet environment. I don't vouch for these particular sites!

Grading:

Each of the two requirements above counts for one-half of your course grade.

The four-point system is used to compute grade point standing. The grading system is

A 4.00 Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

A-

B+

B 3.00 Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

B-

C+

C 2.00 Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

C-

D+

D 1.00 Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

D-

F 0 Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

How To Submit Work:

Send your Schultz summaries to OT520-XL-EH Office.
Post your Tanakh essays to the Discussion Center.
Submitting either early or late will lower your work's score [see course schedule].

Required Reading:

Samuel J. Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000)

Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, student edition (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985)

Recommended Reading:

none

Course Schedule:

Fall 2004 session begins September 7 and ends December 17.

MODULE ONE

1. Summary requirement - Between September 7 & 24 eastern time (ET) write 750 words or less to condense Schultz's chapters I through V.

2. Essay requirement -

A. Between September 7 & 10 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the following questions. This essay should be an original post by you and should directly answer my question.

B. Between September 11 & 17 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the remaining questions. (For example, if you chose the question on Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers for essay requirement A, then you must pick either the question on Genesis or the question on Deuteronomy for this essay requirement B.) This essay should respond to another student's answer and hence should be a reply within an already existing thread. [The only exception would be if somehow everybody wrote on the same question for essay requirement A. Then of course you may have to start a new thread with your essay.]

C. Between September 18 & 24 ET write 200 words or less to address the final question left. (For example, in the parenthetical scenario above, if you selected Genesis for essay requirement B, then you must choose Deuteronomy for this essay requirement C.) Again, this essay should respond to another student's answer and therefore should be a reply within an already existing thread.

Questions:

on Genesis, "Why does Genesis include Joseph's story?"
on Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, "What were the functions of sacrifice?"
on Deuteronomy, "How does Deuteronomy serve as a bridge between the books before it and after it?"

MODULE TWO

1. Summary requirement - Between September 25 & October 15 eastern time (ET) write 750 words or less to condense Schultz's chapters VI through X.

2. Essay requirement -

A. Between September 25 & October 1 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the following questions. This essay should be an original post by you and should directly answer my question.

B. Between October 2 & 8 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the remaining questions. This essay should respond to another student's answer and hence should be a reply within an already existing thread.

C. Between October 9 & 15 ET write 200 words or less to address the final question left. Again, this essay should respond to another student's answer and therefore should be a reply within an already existing thread.

Questions:

on Joshua and Judges, "How was political power exercised in Israel during the period of the judges?"

on 1-2 Samuel, "What is the significance of Saul?"

on 1-2 Kings, "Why did the writer criticize the northern kingdom more severely than the southern?"

MODULE THREE

1. Summary requirement - Between October 16 & November 5 eastern time (ET) write 750 words or less to condense Schultz's chapters XI through XV.

2. Essay requirement -

A. Between October 16 & 22 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the following questions. This essay should be an original post by you and should directly answer my question.

B. Between October 23 & 29 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the remaining questions. This essay should respond to

another student's answer and hence should be a reply within an already existing thread.

C. Between October 30 & November 5 ET write 200 words or less to address the final question left. Again, this essay should respond to another student's answer and therefore should be a reply within an already existing thread.

Questions:

on Isaiah, "Which themes are most significant in the book of Isaiah?"
on Jeremiah and Ezekiel, "Why was Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians considered a watershed event?"

on Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, "What social conflict is evident in the twelve minor prophets?"

MODULE FOUR

1. Summary requirement - Between November 6 & 26 eastern time (ET) write 750 words or less to condense Schultz's chapters XVI through XX.

2. Essay requirement -

A. Between November 6 & 12 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the following questions. This essay should be an original post by you and should directly answer my question.

B. Between November 13 & 19 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the remaining questions. This essay should respond to another student's answer and hence should be a reply within an already existing thread.

C. Between November 20 & 26 ET write 200 words or less to address the final question left. Again, this essay should respond to another student's answer and therefore should be a reply within an already existing thread.

Questions:

on Psalms, "How may people approach God, according to the Psalter?"

on Proverbs, "What might the feminine imagery in Proverbs reflect about the role of women among Israelites?"

on Job, "How does the book of Job answer the problem of evil?"

MODULE FIVE

1. Summary requirement - Between November 27 & December 17 eastern time (ET) write 750 words or less to condense Schultz's chapters XXI through XXV.

2. Essay requirement -

A. Between November 27 & December 3 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the following questions. This essay should be an original post by you and should directly answer my question.

B. Between December 4 & 10 ET write 200 words or less to address one of the remaining questions. This essay should respond to another student's answer and hence should be a reply within an already existing thread.

C. Between December 11 & 17 ET write 200 words or less to address the final question left. Again, this essay should respond to another student's answer and therefore should be a reply within an already existing thread.

Questions:

on Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, "What adjectives would you use to describe your reactions to these five scrolls?"

on Daniel, "What is the purpose of the book of Daniel?"

on Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1-2 Chronicles, "Who were Nehemiah and Ezra?"