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OT 520 OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

Fall 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 radically 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 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 covered 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")

To accommodate a variety of learning styles and to promote generally wholesome learning habits, the course grade will derive from a wide range of learning activities.

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.

Schniedewind, W. *How the Bible Became a Book*.

A genuinely intriguing and brief survey of writing and literacy in ancient Israel and how our views of the written nature of the Bible can be informed by the data.

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 reading report, which will be completed online at the end of the term.

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 report attendance by means of an online form. The class *will meet on the day of the final exam* for a final presentation and course evaluation. Attendance at this session is required, and *absence from this session will result in a 2 point deduction*.

Student attendance will be significant part of the grade, 25 points of a total. Each absence deducts 1 point. All absences “count,” *and up to 4 absences other than the final exam session may be made up*. Except in the most extreme circumstances, no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” will be observed. Up to 4 *absences can be made up* by listening to an audio recording of the lectures which will be in the Course Center in the form of MP3 files perfect for your iPod!

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. 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 given in the calendar, and will stay online for 72 hours. Each test will have 25 questions. *Note that tests can have questions drawn from the readings for the material covered. Make sure you read alertly*. Almost every test will have a few extra credit questions.

Two Open Book/Notes Essays will be assigned, each of which will be 5-7 page not counting front or back matter. These papers will be concrete exercises in which students will work with a passage of scripture or problem of biblical interpretation posed by the instructor in the light of specific issues focused in class. Students may consult class notes and textbooks, but no other sources unless the instructions so direct, for writing these essays. These are to represent your *very best thought and work*. Essays are to be the *student's own work* and students are asked not to consult, give, or receive any advice in conjunction with these essays.

Essays may be submitted two ways. *First, work may be submitted electronically*. At this time, I can only accept work produced on Microsoft Word. There will be an upload folder in the course center for receiving papers. Using the password feature of MS Word, you will password protect your paper using the last 5 digits of your student ID number for privacy.

Second, you can, of course, print it out, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and submit it on the due date as specified in the assignment, either in class, or at my office. Comments and grade will be written on the paper and it will be returned via the SPO. The grading rubric will be attached.

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-----	25 Points
Reading Report-----	25 Points
Exam 1 -----	25 Points
Exam 2 -----	25 Points
Exam 3 -----	25 Points
Exam 4 -----	25 Points
Essay 1 -----	25 Points
Essay 2 -----	25 Points
Total Points:-----	200 Points

Letter Grades are assigned by the following values:

	From	To
A	190	200
A-	180	189
B+	176	179
B	170	175
B-	160	169
C+	156	159
C	150	155
C-	140	149
D+	136	139
D	130	135
D-	120	129
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
4. Papers will normally be uploaded to the course center

These materials *will not be available elsewhere*. Therefore 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 impossible, I keep my door open and you are welcome to see me whenever I am in, without an appointment. Please feel free to drop buy and visit!

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. The Text and Canon of the Old Testament
- E. 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 the books 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. For grading purposes, a reading report at mid-term and final will be submitted in a form to be provided by the instructor.

Date	Topic	OTS	IBI	HCAB	HBB B	Article	Due
5-Sep	Organization	None	None	None	0	None	None
7-Sep	Why Study the OT?	OTS 583-597				Wright	0
12-Sep	Genesis 1: Structure	OTS 3-31				RobSmith StoneWhy	0
14-Sep	Genesis 1: Terminology		IBI 3-52				0
19-Sep	Genesis 2: What?		IBI 81-116			StoneSoul	0
21-Sep	Creation & Interpretation		IBI 117- 214				0
26-Sep	Text and Canon		IBI 377- 400	0		0	0
28-Sep	Text and Canon		0	0		0	Test 1
3-Oct	Archaeology	0	0	0			Essay 1 Posted
5-Oct	Archaeology	0	0	0			0
10-Oct	A Long Time Ago	OTS 619-657		HCAB 10-33			0
12-Oct	The Promise	OTS 32-51	IBI 259- 322			0	Essay 1 Due
17-Oct	Moses and Sinai-1	OTS 52-79		HCAB 34-45			0
19-Oct	Moses and Sinai-2	0	0	0		0	0
24-Oct	Conquest & Community	OTS 80-152	0	0			0
26-Oct	Conquest & Community	0	0	0			Test 2
31-Oct	A King Like the Nations	OTS 153-196		HCAB 46-61			0
2-Nov	A King Like the Nations	OTS 197-211		HCAB 62-77		Von Rad	0
7-Nov	The Fellowship Broken-1	OTS 212-220, 243-327		HCAB 78-81		0	0
9-Nov	The Fellowship Broken-2	OTS 221-230		HCAB 82-87		prophetic witness	0
14-Nov	The Judean State	OTS 328-380		HCAB 88-89			0
16-Nov	The Judean State	OTS 423-428, 447-519				0	Test 3
21-Nov	RdgWk	RdgWk	RdgWk	RdgWk		RdgWk	RdgWk
23-Nov	RdgWk	RdgWk	RdgWk	RdgWk		RdgWk	RdgWk
28-Nov	The Exile	OTS 381-422, 429-446		HCAB 90- 101	0	Smith	Essay 2 Posted
30-Nov	The Exile	OTS 231-242, 520-582	IBI 215- 258		0	Gunkel	0
5-Dec	Restoration	OTS 598-618	IBI 53-80		0	0	0
7-Dec	Restoration	OTS 688-694	IBI 401- 458		All	RedCrit	Essay 2 Due
	Final Class Session						Test 4