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OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

Edwin C. Hostetter

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OT520.X1 Old Testament Introduction spring 2008 Asbury Theological Seminary
Edwin C. Hostetter (410) 242-0983 edwin_hostetter@asburyseminary.edu

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 via email 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:

Thursday, 9:00-10:00 pm ET (I'll be at "office hour for ot520x1" under the Course Information Center. You can also get there from Chats under Activities.)

Virtual Support Contact Information

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media** contact Information Commons: Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program**, contact Dale Hale: ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm>

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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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. Seven answers of up to 300 words apiece, each in response to another student's question which he or she has based on a chapter from among those designated in the Anderson textbook [see required reading list below]. Before writing every response, post your own question about a different chapter from Anderson for other students to consider answering.

2. Six essays of up to 300 words apiece, each on a discussion topic derived by me from the Collins and House textbooks [see required reading list below], and six reactions of up to 100 words apiece, each concerning another student's essay.

3. One book review of between 400 and 500 words on the Hayes & Holladay textbook [see required reading list below]. Consult, for example, <http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/LCC/HIS/review.html>, "How to Write a Book Review," for assistance.

Expectations:

In order to fulfill your assignments properly, you will need to access the course at least once if not twice 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.

(You are welcome to submit as many posts every module as you wish, although obviously I will grade only the required pair.)

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:

Basically I look for analysis (i.e., critical thinking), content (i.e., accurate data), and style (i.e., grammar, etc.). Every question/answer combination--first requirement--and every essay/reaction combination--second requirement--and the review--third requirement--count equally: namely, for one-fourteenth 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

[I count B as the norm. Since only at Lake Wobegon is everybody above average, some of you may fall below the norm. Feel free always to request feedback beyond what I routinely give each module.]

How To Submit Work:

Please insert all assignments within a message/document rather than attaching as a file.

Post your questions and answers, requirement 1, and your essays and reactions, requirement 2, in the appropriate modules under the Course Information Center. (You can also get there from Forums under Activities.)

Send your book review, requirement 3, via the appropriate module under the Course Information Center. (You can also get there from Assignments under Activities.)

Required Reading:

Bernhard W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, with the assistance of Steven Bishop (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999)

John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007)

John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 3d ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007)

Paul R. House, *Old Testament Survey* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992)

Supplementary Resources:

To the more curious I can recommend consultation of the Wabash Center's "Bible Related Bibliographies" at

http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/result_browse.aspx?topic=624&pid=619 (OR at http://www2.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/bible_biblios.htm) for further publications.

Course Schedule:

Spring 2008 session begins Monday February 11 and ends Friday May 23.

MODULE ONE

Between February 11 & 15 eastern time post your biography. Tell us whatever you want to say about yourself. Include a photograph if you like.

MODULE TWO

A. Between February 16 & 19 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter one or two or three or four in Anderson.

B. Between February 16 & 22 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE THREE

A. Between February 23 & 26 eastern time, after reading Genesis through Exodus (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and House), post your essay of 300 words or less on how Abraham's relationship with deity differs from Moses's.

B. Between February 23 & 29 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE FOUR

A. Between March 1 & 4 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter five or six or seven or eight or nine in Anderson.

B. Between March 1 & 7 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE FIVE

A. Between March 8 & 11 eastern time, after reading Leviticus through Deuteronomy (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and House), post your essay of 300 words or less on why Yahweh orders holy war.

B. Between March 8 & 14 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE SIX

A. Between March 15 & 18 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter ten or eleven or twelve or thirteen or fourteen or fifteen or sixteen in Anderson.

B. Between March 15 & 21 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE SEVEN

A. Between March 22 & 25 eastern time, after reading Joshua through Judges and 1 Samuel through 2 Kings (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and House), post your essay of 300 words or less on what Israelite concerns during the Babylonian domination these books reflect.

B. Between March 22 & 28 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE EIGHT

Between March 29 & April 4 eastern time turn in 400-500 words as your review of *Biblical Exegesis*.

MODULE NINE

A. Between April 5 & 8 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter seventeen or eighteen or nineteen or twenty or twenty-one or twenty-two in Anderson.

B. Between April 5 & 11 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE TEN

A. Between April 12 & 15 eastern time, after reading Isaiah through Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Hosea through Malachi (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and

House), post your essay of 300 words or less on how the calls of various prophets compare and contrast.

B. Between April 12 & 18 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE ELEVEN

A. Between April 19 & 22 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter twenty-three or twenty-four or twenty-five or twenty-six in Anderson.

B. Between April 19 & 25 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE TWELVE

A. Between April 26 & 29 eastern time, after reading Psalms and Job and Proverbs (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and House), post your essay of 300 words or less on why people fear God in these books.

B. Between April 26 & May 2 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE THIRTEEN

A. Between May 3 & 6 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter twenty-seven or twenty-eight or twenty-nine or thirty or thirty-one in Anderson.

B. Between May 3 & 9 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.

MODULE FOURTEEN

A. Between May 10 & 13 eastern time, after reading Ruth and Canticles and Qoheleth and Lamentations and Esther and Daniel and Ezra through Nehemiah and 1-2 Chronicles (plus their corresponding pages in Collins and House), post your essay of 300 words or less on what models for dealing with foreigners emerge in these books.

B. Between May 10 & 16 eastern time write your reaction of 100 words or less concerning another student's essay.

MODULE FIFTEEN

A. Between May 17 & 20 eastern time post a question which you base on chapter thirty-two or thirty-three or thirty-four or thirty-five or thirty-six in Anderson.

B. Between May 17 & 23 eastern time write 300 words or less to answer somebody else's question from a chapter other than the one you asked about.