

Asbury Theological Seminary
ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange

Syllabi

eCommons

1-1-2002

OT 520 Foundations for Old Testament Study

Lawson G. Stone

Follow this and additional works at: <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Stone, Lawson G., "OT 520 Foundations for Old Testament Study" (2002). *Syllabi*. Book 130.
<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/130>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.

OT 520 FOUNDATIONS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

June 2002—A Three Hour Course Instructor: Lawson G. Stone

Digital Coordinates: (on campus) Lawson Stone
Off Campus: lawson_stone@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: 859-858-2271

Physical Coordinates: Office: BC 335
Open Office Hours: Immediately After Class
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. 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;
3. Employ specific knowlege of the the historical and cultural setting of selected OT books, traditions, and personages to illuminate passages of scripture;
4. Apply to selected texts of scripture a grasp of the background, concepts, and procedures and major claims of selected types of OT study: These 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*;
6. Discover study as a means of spiritual growth. This involves seeing our work as:
 - a. "Studying (hurry, hasten, be eager, take pains, make every effort) to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining (cut a path in a straight direction, cut a road across country, guide along the right path) the word of truth;" (2 Tim. 2:15)
 - b. Exploring practically how to love God with all our *mind* (*dianoia*) (Matt. 22:37));
7. Embrace and seek to exemplify certain integrative aspirations distinctive of ATS, including:
 - a. The implications of our commitment to the *Bible* as "the foundation, controlling center and formative concern of the entire curriculum (Catalogue, p. 15)."
 - b. The centrality in ATS' history, identity, and destiny of the *doctrine and experience of Entire Sanctification*.
 - c. The lost art of *expository preaching* as the norm and standard for pulpit ministry;
 - d. In opening prayers and openness to God's grace, seeking renewal in learning by the *revival spirit* which birthed this institution. Far from obstructing the full use of critical reason, revival should rather energize and focus it!

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

Means of Realizing Course Aspirations

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.

Basic Textbook:

Dillard, R. B. and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

A traditional OT introduction written by two evangelical scholars. An “introduction” to the OT is not a guide to the uninformed, but is a summary of current scholarly opinion about the authorship, date, origins, and composition of each OT book and the issues involved in their interpretation.

Required Supplementary Texts: Three additional textbooks are required for this course

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. Students may *omit* sections dealing explicitly with the New Testament.

F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations : The History of Israel from the Exodus to the Fall of the Second Temple*. InterVarsity, 1998.

This is a very fine short presentation of the history of biblical Israel. The middle section of the class will take you rather quickly through this material.

V. H. Matthews, D. C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 150-587 BCE*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.

In the lectures, we will take a rapid overview, in chronological order, of the world of the OT. This book complements that by covering the world of the OT from the perspective of social settings and institutions.

Several articles are in electronic form and will be on the lecture drive of the ATS Intranet

Required Access to Reference Materials: You will sometimes need to use one of the following multi-volume Bible encyclopedia sets. No substitutes are permitted. You do not have to own these, but they are a worthy addition to your library. Often one or the other is available in public libraries. The :Asbury Bookstore can facilitate purchase should you wish to do so, as well as other dealers in theological books.

The Anchor Bible Encyclopedia. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM in the Logos Library system or the Accordance software, but you must have an extra child to sell into slavery to afford them! This is also available through the ATS Library online site, though you'll need a very fast computer and a DSL or better Internet connection for it to be practical.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes. Note: *the version of ISBE that is published with software packages like Quickverse and Bibleworks is the 1920's edition, not the 1980's edition. Some of these packages list the copyright date in the 1990's but this applies to the CD version; the text is still the old 1920's edition.* Be sure to double-check your publication information. If the editor is listed as James Orr, you are using the 1920's edition. DON'T!

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

Mere completion of the reading constitutes 10% of the grade. While readings are correlated to specific days, it is recognized that students will not always be able to read the exact assignments for each day. If an article is part of a particular day's reading assignment, students will find the article especially helpful and relevant for that day and would profit from having read it prior to class. What is **required**, though is a midterm and a final reading report in which you will *indicate your completion of reading assigned to that date as a percentage*. The final reading report will be comprehensive. The two percentages will be entered as 5% of the student's grade respectively.

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 via a daily sign-in sheet. The professor assumes students will exercise the highest diligence and integrity in recording attendance.

Student attendance will be calculated as a percentage of all classes. For example, making allowance for the first week being inconsistent, there are 24 class sessions. Thus if you attend 19 sessions, this is 79% and will be entered in as 10% of the student's final grade. All absences count, and all may be made up, therefore no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" will be observed.

Any absence can be made up by contacting the instructor for a reasonable, brief written assignment to be completed by the student. Request for make-up work must be made by the student either ahead of time, or by Friday of the week in which the absence occurred. The make up work must be submitted within 7 days of the professor giving the student the make-up assignment. Completion of the make-up work will remove the absence.

Three Open Book/Notes Essays will be assigned, each of which will be 1000-1200 words, not counting notes, references, or bibliography. 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. *The essay topic and instructions will be posted on the Intranet "lectures" folder 2 weeks before it is due, per the schedule below. They will not be distributed in class.* Assignments will be in the form of Microsoft Word documents, which can be read on any workstation on campus and printed out.

Essays may be submitted two ways. *First*, you can print it out, double-spaced, with 1" margins, and submit it on the due date by 5:00 PM, either in class, or at my office. Electronic submissions must be dated by this time by the First Class system. Comments and grade will be written on the paper and it will be returned via the SPO. Electronic submissions might be commented on the document and returned as an e-mail attachment.

Second, work may be submitted electronically. At this time, I can only accept work produced on Microsoft Word, not Word Perfect, Works, or any other word processing program (Mac or Wintel is fine). If you can submit a document in MS Word, there are several advantages to you. *First, submission is easier.* Just attach your document to an e-mail and send it to me via your ATS FirstClass free e-mail account. Remember, I make no guarantees, nor do I accept any responsibility, for work submitted any other way.

No submissions on disk, please. A second advantage is that I will usually place my comments and grade on your paper via MS Word's "Comments" feature, which allows direct commenting on a document. I then return your paper via an E-mail attachment and you open it in MS Word and you'll see some words are highlighted. Placing your mouse pointer over the highlighted word will reveal the comment.

Final Exam Session: While there is no final examination in this class, the final examination session will be used for a class presentation based on the final essay assignment. Attendance at this session is mandatory and absence from it will result in a reduction of the student's final grade by a single degree (e.g. B+>B).

Grade Calculation: Attendance and reading scores are entered as percentages. Essays will be given letter grades which are converted to numerical grades for the purpose of calculating a total. Essays toward the end of the term count for more, so that a weak early performance can often be compensated for by harder work later in the term:

Attendance-----	10%
Reading Report-----	10%
Essay 1 -----	20%
Essay 2 -----	25%
Essay 3-----	35%

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.

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. 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. DIVINE REVELATION IN HUMAN LITERATURE: THE BASICS OF OT STUDY

- A. Who Needs the Old Testament? (Unit 1)
- B. Who Needs This thing called "Criticism?" (Unit 2)
- C. A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation (Unit 3)

II. SEVEN HISTORICAL TAPESTRIES FOR READING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Tapestry 1: A Long Time Ago, In A Civilization Far, Far, Away (Unit 4)
- B. Tapestry 2: Prince of Egypt? (Unit 5)
- C. Tapestry 3: The Godfather? (Unit 6)
- D. Tapestry 4: The Blues Brothers: Who's On A Mission from God? (Unit 7)
- E. Tapestry 5: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence (Unit 8)
- F. Tapestry 6: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile (Unit 9)
- G. Tapestry 7: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration (Unit 10)

III. FIVE CRITICAL VIEWPOINTS FOR STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. View 1: Textual Criticism: A Text in the Making (Unit 11)
- B. View 2: Source Criticism: Discovering the Diversity of the OT (Unit 12)
- C. View 3: Form Criticism: The Life Behind the Literature (Unit 13)
- D. View 4: Redaction Criticism: Out of Diversity, Unity (Unit 14)
- E. View 5: Literary Criticism: The Rhetoric of Divine Rule (Unit 15)

Proposed Schedule of Units and Assignments

June 4-Course Introduction, Unit 1 "Why the OT"

Read: G. Ernest Wright, "The Church's Need for the Old Testament" from *The God Who Acts* This is a MS Word document WRIGHT.DOC in the "Articles" folder of the Lecture drive.

Unit 2: Why Interpretation?

William Robertson Smith, "Biblical Criticism and the Theology of the Reformation" in the online lecture folder file ROBSMITH.DOC

Blomberg-Klein-Hubbard, pages xxi-51, and Dillard-Longman, pages 17-36

June 5 Unit 3: A Hebrew Teacher Looks at Creation

Read: Dillard and Longman, 37-56; Blomberg, Klein, Hubbard, 53-151; Bruce/Payne, 1-8; Matthews/Benjamin "Introductin" and 1-36

Essay 1 Assignment Posted by Sept 13

June 6-Unit 4: A Long Time Ago, in a Civilization Far, Far, Away

Read: Bruce/Payne none; Matthews/Benjamin 37-81; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 152-183; Dillard/Longman 57-90

June 7-Unit 5: Prince of Egypt? The Era of Moses

Bruce/Payne 9-31; Matthews/Benjamin 82-120; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 184-214; Dillard/Longman 91-128

June 11 -Unit 6: The Godfather? David and the Birth of the Kingdom

Bruce/Payne 32-58; Matthews/Benjamin 121-154; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 259-284; Dillard/Longman 129-168, chapters on Psalms, Proverbs

June 12 Unit 7: The Blues Brothers: Who's Really on a Mission From God?

Bruce/Payne 59-73; Matthews/Benjamin 155-186; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard None (Do I hear "Amen!"; Dillard/Longman: Amos, Hosea, Micah

ESSAY ONE DUE June 12

June 13-Unit 8: A New Hope: Judean Resurgence

Bruce/Payne, 74-89; Matthews/Benjamin, 187-226; Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 284-322
Dillard/Longman, Chapters on: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah

June 14-Unit 9: The Empire Strikes Back: The Babylonian Exile

Bruce/Payne 90-123

Matthews/Benjamin, 227-252

Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 377-400

Dillard/Longman, Chapters on Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Jonah, Job, Ecclesiastes

Essay 2 Assignment Posted by October 11

June 18-Unit 10: Return of the Judean: Moments in the Restoration

Reading: Dillard/Longman, chapters on Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

June 19-Unit 11 Textual Criticism

Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard 401-426

Dillard/Longman, 17-36

DO NOT FREAK OVER THE READINGS. You're not tested on them. Read them for the main ideas and issues.

ESSAY 2 DUE June 19

June 20-May 2-Unit 12 Unity and Diversity in the OT: Source Criticism

Read the WORD document *Source/Form.doc* posted on Intranet Lectures in the "Articles" folder. This is a chapter from a book I am writing on redaction criticism, and it summarizes the tasks of source criticism and form criticism in order to lay a foundation for approaching the more synthetic task of redaction criticism.

June 21 Unit 13 The Life Behind the Literature: Form Criticism

On the Lecture Drive in the "Articles" folder: "Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary History" H. Gunkel (GUNKEL.DOC)

June 25-Unit 14 From Analysis to Synthesis: Redaction Criticism

Read: the document *Redcrit.doc*, which is the next chapter in the book on redaction criticism. It discusses the procedure more specifically and with examples.

June 26-Unit 15 Back Home Again? Literary Criticism

Klein/Blomberg/Hubbard, 427-458.

June 27-28 CATCH UP (We *WILL* Get Behind and will need these days!)

ESSAY 3 DUE June 28, 5:00 PM

Reading Report Due June 28, 5:00PM

Attendance at the Final Exam period is required