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OT 520A OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION

Bill T. Arnold

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FALL SEMESTER, 2004

5:30-8:20pm MON

Prerequisites: none

3 Units

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Having successfully completed this course, the student should be able to...

- apply adequate interpretive techniques to the Old Testament in general;
- arrange the events of the Old Testament in relative chronological order;
- relate the events of the Old Testament to the salient features of ancient Near Eastern history;
- state the general content of each canonical section of the Old Testament;
- identify the various literary forms used in the Old Testament;
- identify and trace key theological motifs as they run through the Old Testament;
- analyze and critique the current scholarly positions on such critical matters as the authorship, date and unity of key portions of the Old Testament;
- apply the Old Testament to Christian life and ministry;
- appreciate the unique message of the Old Testament;
- desire to do further study in the Old Testament as an authoritative source for Christian ministry;
- allow the principles of the Old Testament to enrich one's relationship with God and strengthen one's resolve to grow more into the likeness of the One who inspired it;
- share the information and insight gleaned from the study of the Old Testament with others.

COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance
Each student will take responsibility for his or her attendance. Students will be asked to report the number of absences on the final exam, indicating those that are excused due to illness or emergency. Attendance will affect the student evaluation if the grade is marginal. Students who abuse this procedure will be counseled with privately, with grade reduction and/or assignment of extra work possible.
- Required Readings
Assigned readings from the following required texts are listed on pages 4-5 below. Information from these readings will enhance the student's comprehension of the

lecture and research topics, so it is expected they will be read systematically during the process of the semester. A report on their completion will be submitted as part of the final examination.

LaSor, W. S., David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic Wm. Bush. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996.

Coogan, Michael David, editor. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

In general, ATS expects students “to invest two and one-half (2.5) to three (3.0) hours of work per week outside of class in preparation for every hour of credit to be earned” (*ATS Catalog*, 2001-2003, p. 25). In other words, you should spend approximately 7.5 to 9 hours of work per week on this class, in addition to the 2.5 hours of in-class time we spend together. If you find yourself spending significantly greater amounts of time, please see the instructor.

➤ Recommended Collateral Readings

Students should select one of the following recommended texts for the book review assignment.

Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995.

Baker, David W., and Bill T. Arnold, eds. *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1999.

Felder, Cain Hope, ed. *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

Newsome, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *Women’s Bible Commentary* (expanded edition). Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2003.

Perdue, Leo G., ed. *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

➤ Book Review

A book review of 750-1000 words is due October 25, at 5:30 pm. The book for review should be selected from the four volumes in “recommended collateral readings” above, or in exceptional cases a student may choose a different book in consultation with the instructor. The review must be well written, presented in standard form, clean and critical. The student should make sure his or her name is clearly visible on the first page of the paper along with the SPO number. The paper should be stapled in the upper left corner with no bindings or folders of any kind.

➤ Examinations

There will be three examinations. The schedule for the exams is included below.

➤ Term Paper

During the semester, the student will write a brief paper of no more than 2500 words (approximately 10-12 pages) on the topic of his or her choice from the list below. The paper should conform to “Chicago Manual Style,” chapter 7 in *Form and Style*, by Slade, Campbell, and Ballou (available in the bookstore). The student should make sure his or her name is clearly visible on the first page of the paper along with the SPO number. The paper should be stapled in the upper left corner with no bindings or folders of any kind.

The student should read a minimum of 300 additional pages in the process of researching his or her topic. At the end of the bibliography, the student should indicate the amount read from each source along with the total read for the research project, excluding the textbooks and collateral reading required above, and websites on the topic. The following list of topics is partial. Other topics may be chosen in consultation with the professor.

1. The geography of Mesopotamia (or Syria-Palestine, or Egypt) and its significance for Old Testament Studies.
2. The history of writing, including the development of the alphabet.
3. Survey of the Semitic languages.
4. The Atrahasis Epic, the Enuma Elish and comparisons with Genesis.
5. Survey some aspect (religion, socio-political structure, etc.) of one of the following: Sumerians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Hurrians.
6. Survey one of the following archaeological periods with special reference to the biblical connections: Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron II, Iron III.
7. Unique features of the ancestral narratives, and the questions concerning the dating of the Hebrew ancestors.
8. The nature of ancestral religion.
9. Some aspect of Hebrew religion (tabernacle/temple, sacrifice, festivals, law, etc.) as compared with a similar aspect in another ancient Near Eastern culture, or as detailed in the Pentateuch.
10. Origins of Yahwism.
11. History of Monotheism.
12. A theological theme of the Pentateuch (holiness, sin, atonement, righteousness, etc.).
13. The unique understanding of history in the Old Testament compared to other cultures of the ancient Near East.
14. Nature and role of holy war in the Old Testament.
15. Canon and Old Testament textual criticism.
16. Survey the history of Source Criticism in the nineteenth century.
17. History and methods of Form Criticism.
18. Methods of Tradition Criticism.

19. Biographical sketch of one of the following: J. Wellhausen, H. Gunkel, G. von Rad, M. Noth, W. F. Albright.
20. Models of Israelite conquest and occupation
21. Religion in pre-monarchic Israel
22. Joshua and Judges; a contrast in perspectives
23. Rise of monarchy in Israel; transition from judge to king
24. Sources in 1 and 2 Samuel, and the rise of Israelite historiography
25. David as ideal king
26. Role of the monarchy in Israelite religion
27. Kingship in Israel and the ancient Near East
28. Rise of prophecy in Israel
29. Redaction theories on the Deuteronomistic History
30. Eighth century prophecy and the fall of Israel
31. Wealth, poverty and the poor in the Old Testament
32. Higher critical issues of Isaiah
33. Reform movements in pre-exilic Judah
34. Jeremiah and "Deuteronomism" in Old Testament thought
35. Significance of the exile for Israelite religion
36. Kings and Chronicles; a contrast in perspectives
37. Persian period prophecy and the significance of apocalypticism
38. Ezra and Nehemiah and their roles in restoration
39. Characteristics and salient features of Hebrew poetry
40. Hermeneutical implications of the various types of Psalms
41. Wisdom's reflections on the problem of theodicy
42. Education in ancient Israel and the nature of "wisdom" in the Old Testament

STUDENT EVALUATION

Book review	15%
Examination #1	20%
Examination #2	20%
Final examination	25%
Term paper	20%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Sept 13	Coogan in Coogan 3-24 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 3-51; 585-618; 619-687 (skim)
Sept 20	Pitard in Coogan 25-57
Sept 27	LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 52-79 Redmount in Coogan, 58-89

Oct 4 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 80-127

Oct 4 EXAMINATION #1

Oct 11 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 131-164
Stager in Coogan, 90-131

Oct 18 Hackett in Coogan, 132-164

Oct 25 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 165-196
Meyers in Coogan, 165-205

Oct 25 BOOK REVIEW DUE, 5:30 pm

Nov 1 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 197-220

Nov 1 EXAMINATION #2

Nov 8 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 221-242
Campbell in Coogan 206-241

Nov 15 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 243-355

Nov 29 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 356-422
Cogan in Coogan 242-75

Dec 6 PAPERS DUE

Dec 6 LaSor/Hubbard/Bush 425-496
Leith in Coogan 276-316

Dec 13 FINAL EXAMINATION, 5:30—8:20pm