

ST. AUGUSTINE'S SEMINARY: SAB1003HF L6101 (Toronto School of Theology)

**Introduction to the Old Testament** (online; Fall 2010)

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### 1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This online course provides an introduction to the Old Testament and its three main canonical divisions with an emphasis on theological interpretation, including creation, law, covenant, kingship, exodus, exile, prophecy, and monotheism. Students will be familiarized with the biblical books and their literary-historical context. The course also explores the history of biblical interpretation with an application to Old Testament texts. Development of exegetical skills. Lectures, assigned readings, online participation, assignments, final paper (assignment & exegetical paper).

### 2. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

An appropriate implementation of the course should enable students to:

- Understand the form and contents of the Hebrew Bible and its development.
- Identify the major events of Israelite history as they preserved on the pages of Scripture.
- Demonstrate a foundational knowledge of key figures, dates and places in the Old Testament.
- Articulate the major critical issues raised by contemporary scholars in Old Testament studies.
- Work diligently with the biblical text and develop the necessary exegetical skills.

### 3. PREREQUISITES:

There are no prerequisites for the course.

### 4. REQUIRED TEXTS:

- A modern English version of the **Bible** (e.g., NRSV, NIV, NAB).
- **Textbook:** Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr., Robert Wilson Crapps, David Anthony Smith. *People of the Covenant: an Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. A copy of this book can be purchased at Crux Books (Wycliffe College @ the ground floor).
- Recommended **software** for biblical studies you can download is the *NET Bible*, available as a free download from [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) (with extensive textual and exegetical notes).

## 5. COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- ✓ Remember that no textbook on the Old Testament ought to replace the reading of the primary materials, i.e. the biblical documents themselves. Therefore, students are expected to read through the Old Testament at least once during the term.
- ✓ Read the lecture notes (summaries) and complete all readings and assignments by the assigned dates.
- ✓ Be aware that this course is not self-paced. We will proceed as a group through units 1-12. Therefore, it is up to you to keep up with the course. Do not fall behind and make comments in the previous week's Discussion Board. Nobody will read them. Late postings will not be counted towards your final participation mark. In a case of problem, please contact the instructor.
- ✓ **Discussion Board (due weekly):**
  - 1) Log into the course at least three times a week: Monday (to engage the course content), Wednesday (to make your main contribution to the weekly discussion posted under *Discussion Board*), and Friday (to reply in a substantive way to your classmates' posting on the *Discussion Board*).
  - 2) Your participation grade will be based on your weekly 'postings.' It will reflect the extent to which you make relevant, informed, thoughtful and clear contributions to the discussions. More concretely, the following criteria will be used, when appropriate:
    - familiarity with unit content and vocabulary
    - appropriate use of relevant vocabulary
    - clarity and "reasonableness" of contributions (i.e., statements are supported by text and explicit reasoning and not merely asserted)
  - 3) Criteria also include ability to:
    - explain or elaborate on factual information
    - provide illustrations and examples when making a point
    - demonstrate understanding of key themes and principles
    - compare and contrast concepts
    - relate new knowledge to previously known ideas and concepts and organize information
    - subject newly acquired information to analysis
    - integrate newly acquired knowledge within a broader and deeper perspective
    - apply new concepts and principles when necessary to relevant issues
    - propose hypotheses and creative solutions to problems
    - justify or defend a position adopted or decision made

- ✓ **Written Assignments** (due Oct. 10, 2010; Nov. 8, 2010) Submit two written assignments: **Assignment 1 (Units 1-4)**; **Assignment 2 (Units 5-8)**. These assignments can be found in the *Assignments* area of the Blackboard. Papers should be typewritten, 6 pages long, double spaced with margins of no less than 1 inch and 12 point font (e.g., Times New Roman). Please submit your assignment through Blackboard. Do not use email to submit your assignment to your instructor. You can see your grade by entering *Tools* area of Blackboard and clicking on *My Grades*.
  
- ✓ **Final Paper** (due Dec. 1, 2010) Two major components: **Units 9-12** and **Exegesis Paper**. Develop an exegesis of Gen 3:1-7 using the information you have gained from the class lectures, the textbook and at least two commentaries (see the bibliography for suggested commentaries). The paper should be typewritten and not more than 10 pages long (6 pages for the questions and 4 pages for the exegesis paper), double spaced with margins of no less than 1 inch and 12 point font (e.g., Times New Roman). Please be reminded of the use of footnotes or endnotes, and of the seriousness of plagiarism in the preparation of essays and other assignments. Students may wish to consult *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turbian (Univ. of Chicago Press). A copy of this helpful guide can be purchased at Crux Books (Wycliffe College @ the ground floor). This final paper can be found in the *Assignments* area of the Blackboard. Please submit your paper through Blackboard. Do not use email to submit your paper to your instructor. You can see your grade by entering *Tools* area of Blackboard and clicking on *My Grades*.

## 6. OUTLINE OF WEEKLY UNITS:

- Sept. 9-12**     **Orientation Unit:** Learn how to use *Blackboard* and meet your classmates (familiarize yourself with this course; orient yourself to Blackboard and the homepage menus)
- Sept. 13-20**     **Unit 1:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 3-47  
(**Structure and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible**)
- Sept. 20-27**     **Unit 2:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 48-84, 85-132  
(**Setting the Stage; Israel's Theology of Beginnings**)
- Sept. 27-Oct. 4**     **Unit 3:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 133-168  
(**Israel's Patriarchs and Matriarchs (Gen 12-50)**)
- Oct. 4-11**         **Unit 4:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 169-220  
(**The Exodus and the Sinai Covenant**)
- Oct. 11-18**       **Unit 5:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 222-256  
(**Possessing the Land**)
- Oct. 18-25**       **Unit 6:** *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*, pp. 257-293  
(**United Monarchy: Rise of Davidic Covenant**)

**Oct. 25-Nov. 1**     **Unit 7: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 294-321  
 (Divided Monarchy: Zion vs. Sinai)

**Nov. 1-8**             **Unit 8: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 322-338  
 (The Prophetic Word)

[November 12 Last day to drop fall courses (HF and YF) without academic penalty]

**Nov. 8-15**          **Unit 9: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 339-354, 355-379  
 (Israel's Eighth-Century Prophets; Judah's Struggle for Survival)

**Nov. 15-22**        **Unit 10: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 380-405  
 (Judah's Last Days: from Heights to Depths (2 Kgs 21-25))

**Nov. 22-29**       **Unit 11: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 406-429  
 (The Exile: Covenant Community Rediscovered (Isa 40; 42; 45;  
 49-55; Ezekiel 1-4; 11; 18; 23; 37; 47; Psalm 137))

**Nov. 29-Dec. 6**   **Unit 12: Introduction to Hebrew Bible**, pp. 430-460, 461-506  
 (Covenant Community Restored; the Emergence of Judaism)

## 7. EVALUATION AND GRADING SCHEME:

- 20%     Online Participation (*weekly*)
- 15%     Assignment 1 (*due Oct. 10, 2010*)
- 15%     Assignment 2 (*due Nov. 8, 2010*)
- 50%     Final Paper (*due Dec. 1, 2010*)

The grading scheme for this course, as with all TST courses, is as follows:

- A+ 90-100     profound and creative
- A    85-89        outstanding
- A- 80-84        excellent
- B+ 77-79        very good
- B    73-76        good
- B- 70-72        satisfactory
- FZ 0-69         failure

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Brown Raymond E., et al. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Ellen F. Davis. *Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament*. Cambridge: Cowley, 2001.
- Estes Daniel J. *Handbook on the Wisdom Books and Psalms: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Baker, 2005.
- Fishbane Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- J. Jensen. *God's Word to Israel*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986.
- John J. Collins. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
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- Victor H. Matthews. *A Brief History of Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament*. Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).
- *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd Edition. Edited by I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer and Donald J. Wiseman (1996).