

BS 120, Course Syllabus
INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

John Leland Center for Theological Studies

Fall Semester 2023

Class Meetings: Thursdays, 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm, Bonsack Baptist Church. (See the Schedule)

Instructor: Rhon Williams, MDiv

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Course Description: This course is an application of the critical methodology to the history, literature, and religion of the ancient Hebrews. Attention is given to the historical context and the message of the Hebrew faith. The course will also survey the books of the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible, providing a systematic overview of each book highlighting their contents and major themes within the original contexts.

Course Goals and Objectives:

By the end of this course the student should be able to:

- Identify and list, in the order of the Christian Bible, all 39 books of the Old Testament
- Be conversant with and understand key terms, concepts, people and major events of the Old Testament
- Understand the historical and theological foundation of the Old Testament
- Understand the literary characteristics and quality of the Old Testament
- Gain a basic understanding of the message of the Old Testament as a whole and relate the various books to that message
- Understand how the individual books are organized or structured
- Appreciate the history and religion of the Jewish people
- Understand the importance of the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament

Course Prerequisites: None.

Required Textbooks and Supplemental Materials:

- *Encountering the Old Testament* (EOT), 2nd Edition, Bill T. Arnold and Brian E. Beyer, Baker Academic, copyright 2008, Grand Rapids, MI
- A copy of the Bible. No particular version is required; however, one of the following is recommended: ESV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NASB (a paraphrase is not recommended).
- Additional short reading assignments may be assigned from material provided by the instructor (no additional cost)

Course Requirements:

- **Class attendance**—Attendance requirements are those outlined in the *John Leland Center Student Handbook*. Students may not miss more than three days per semester unless there are mitigating circumstances. Regardless of the circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to make up any work missed. Class attendance and participation will be factored into the student's final grade.

- **Reading assignments** (see Schedule)—Although lectures compose an important part of the course, a major objective is to involve students in discussion. Consequently, students are expected to have all reading assignments for the week completed by the time they come to class. The class schedule specifies the weekly reading assignments and when they are due. Because we will be following the order of the books of the Old Testaments as they appear in the Hebrew Bible, the student should pay particular attention to the sequence of the reading assignments in the Class Schedule.
- **Bible-Reading Worksheets**—There are six worksheets throughout the semester that are based upon the reading assignments from the books of the Old Testament. These worksheets are questions that come from the reading and require only a short answer. These must be completed and turned in as specified in the Class Schedule.
- **Tests/Papers**—There are three tests/papers during the semester. Each test/paper covers a major section of the Hebrew Bible; the Law (Pentateuch), the Prophets, and the Writings. These tests will focus on the textbook readings, assigned topics and/or lectures. Paper length will be assigned in class.

Policies:

- **Late Work**—All the assigned reading, submissions, and exams are due on their scheduled dates. Make-up exams for excused absence due to mitigating circumstances will be arranged with the instructor at the soonest opportunity and will not suffer a grade penalty. Make-up exams for unexcused absence will have the grade reduced by 5 points for each day late. The late submission of other assignments will result in a reduced grade of 5 points for each day they are late unless there are mitigating circumstances. Mitigating circumstances will be determined at the discretion of the instructor. All course requirements must be completed in order to pass and receive credit for this course.
- **Grading**—A numbered grading system is used for this course and will be applied to all papers and exams. At the end of the course, your total number of earned points will be converted to a letter grade according to the following scale:

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| A+ | 98-100 | (4.3) | The student has demonstrated outstanding mastery of the material and its application |
| A | 95-97 | (4.0) | |
| A- | 93-94 | (3.7) | |
| B+ | 90-92 | (3.3) | The student has demonstrated above average mastery of the material and its application. |
| B | 87-89 | (3.0) | |
| B- | 85-86 | (2.7) | |
| C+ | 82-84 | (2.3) | The student has demonstrated the required mastery of the material and its application. |
| C | 79-81 | (2.0) | |
| C- | 77-78 | (1.7) | |
| D+ | 74-76 | (1.3) | The student has demonstrated below average mastery of the material and its application. |
| D | 71-73 | (1.0) | |
| D- | 69-70 | (0.7) | |
| F | 68-below | (0.0) | The student has failed to master the material and its application. |

The proportional value of the requirements for the course are as follows:

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| Test/paper #1 | 25% |
| Test/paper #2 | 25% |
| Test/paper #3 | 25% |
| Worksheets | 15% |
| Class participation | 10% |

- **Academic honesty**— STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. The John Leland Center for Theological Studies affirms the worth of every individual. In order to be a Christian community, each student is expected to maintain exemplary behavior with moral, ethical and academic integrity. Self-discipline and mutual respect are regarded as fair principles of conduct. Each student is responsible for his/her behavior. Any student’s participation in the Leland Center may be subject to formal review if any of the above expectations are not met. A student may request a formal review and action by the Program Director of the Southwest Virginia Site. If upon formal review a student’s conduct is found to be in violation of the above stated expectations, then the student may be subject to probation, suspension or dismissal. If the decision of the Program Director is regarded as unsatisfactory by the student, then the matter may be referred to the Dean of the Leland center. A further appeal may be made to the Appeals Committee, whose decision is final.

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CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

BS 120, Introduction to the Old Testament, Fall 2023

| Week | Date | Reading Assignment Due | Topics/Assign Due/Tests |
|-------------|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | Aug 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 1, What is the OT? ●Bible: Gen 1-4 | Introduction and Course Overview (assignments, requirements and reading). The Hebrew Bible Its Formation and Canon |
| 2 | Sept 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 2, Where and When? ●Bible: Gen 6-9 | Ancient Near Eastern Culture The Land and Archeology |
| 3 | Sept 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 3, Pentateuch ○ Chs 4-5, Genesis ●Bible: Gen 13; 15; 37 | The Pentateuch (<i>Torah</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Its Authorship and Literature ○ Genesis Worksheet #1 due. |
| 4 | Sept 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 6, Exodus ○ Ch 7, Leviticus ●Bible: Ex 1:1-2:15; 3; 14; 19-20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exodus |
| 5 | Sept 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 8, Numbers ○ Ch 9, Deuteronomy ●Bible: Lev 19; Nu 13-14; Dt 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leviticus ○ Numbers ○ Deuteronomy Worksheet #2 due. |

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| 6 | Oct 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 10, Historical Books ○ Ch 11, Joshua ○ Ch 12 (pp 181-187) Judges ○ Chs 13-14 Samuel ○ Chs 15-16 Kings ●Bible: Josh 1; 6; 24; Ju 2; 16; 1Sam 8; 17; 2Sam 5; 7; 11-12 | <p>Test/Paper #1, The Torah</p> <p>The Prophets (<i>Navi'im</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Former Prophets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conquest & Joshua ▪ Judges ▪ Samuel |
| 7 | Oct 10 | None | ○ Reading Week/Fall Break |
| 8 | Oct 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 24, Prophets ○ Ch 32 (pp 439-449) Hosea, Amos ○ Chs 25-26, Isaiah ●Bible: 1Kg 3; 11-12; 18; 2Kg 17-19; Am 6; 8; Hos 1; 4; Is 1; 5; 6; 40; 53; 55; 61 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Former Prophets (cont) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kings ○ The Latter Prophets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amos ▪ Hosea ▪ Isaiah <p>Worksheet #3 due.</p> |
| 9 | Oct 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 33 (pp 452-454) Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah ○ Chs 27-28, Jeremiah ○ Chs 29-30, Ezekiel ●Bible: Mic 6; Zeph 3; Jer 7; 31; Hab 2; Ez 7; 37 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Latter Prophets (cont) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Micah, Zephaniah Nahum ▪ Jeremiah, Habakkuk ▪ Obadiah, Ezekiel |
| 10 | Oct 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 34, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi ○ Ch 32 (pp 443-444) Joel ○ Ch 33 (pp 453-454) Jonah ●Bible: Hag 1-2; Zech 3; 9; Mal 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Latter Prophets (cont) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Haggai, Zechariah, Joel ▪ Joel, Malachi ▪ Jonah <p>Worksheet #4 due.</p> |
| 11 | Nov 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 18 (pp 263-271, 276) Ezra, Nehemiah ○ Ch 19, Poetical Books ●Bible: Ez 1-4; 7; Neh 1; 9 | <p>Test/Paper #2, The Prophets</p> <p>The Writings (<i>Kethuvim</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ezra ○ Nehemiah |
| 12 | Nov 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 21, Psalms ○ Ch 22, Proverbs ●Bible: Ps 8; 23; 116; 6; 137; 72; 97;73; 51; 22; Prov 1; 6; 10; 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psalms ○ Proverbs |
| 13 | Nov 21 | None | ○ Thanksgiving Break |
| 14 | Nov 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch 20, Job ○ Ch 23 (pp 325-330) Ecclesiastes ●Bible: Job 1-2;19; 23; 38; 42; Eccl 1; 3; 7; 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Job ○ Ecclesiastes <p>Worksheet #5 due.</p> |

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| 15 | Dec 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT ○ Ch 12 (pp 187-193) Ruth ○ Ch 28 (pp 402-405) Lamentation ○ Ch 23 (pp 330-335) Song of Sol. ○ Ch 18 (pp 272-277) Esther ●Bible: Ru 1-4; Song 1; 6; 8; Es 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ruth, Lamentations ○ Song of Solomon, Esther |
| 16 | Dec 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●EOT ○ Ch 17, Chronicles ○ Ch 31, Daniel ●Bible: 1Chr 10-11; 14; 29; 2Chr 6; 9; 32; 33; Dan 1-3; 7-9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chronicles ○ Daniel <p>Worksheet #6 due.</p> |
| 17 | Dec 15 | None | Test/Paper #3, The Writings Final Exam |