



School of Theology and Christian Ministry

BIB 1001 (Sec. 9): Old Testament History and Religion

2 Units

Spring 2024

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 2:30PM - 4:20PM

Meeting location: Mid-City Church of the Nazarene

4101 University Ave, San Diego CA 92105

City Heights Sanctuary

Instructor:	Rev. Prof. Kevin Portillo, M.Div.
Email:	kportill@pointloma.edu
Office Hours:	By Appointment (Please Email Me)

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Foundational Explorations Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

Community Classroom Mission

The mission of *Community Classroom* is to immerse students in a multicultural setting to nurture their Christian formation academically and vocationally. *Community Classroom* supports the mission and vision of PLNU by engaging students in current issues outside the classroom and encouraging a global perspective as a student, follower of Christ, and global citizen to enhance their academic pursuits.

Each class will engage in a common book reading alongside the other *Community Classroom* classes. For Spring 2024, our common book reading will be: *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. Part of the educational experience of *Community Classroom* will be evening gatherings or “Community Dinners” that will provide opportunities to engage with the intercultural richness of City Heights through presentations, stories, and conversations across the semester.

Community Dinner #1: Thursday, February 15th 2024. 5PM - 6:30PM

Community Dinner #2: Tuesday, April 9th 2024. 5PM - 6:30PM

More information will be provided by the Community Classroom Director, Rev. Kevin Portillo, as the semester unfolds. The context of City Heights will be our classroom as we engage the Old Testament through the lens of the intercultural setting of San Diego.

Course Description

Catalog Description: “Within the context of Christian origins, an overview of the canonical literature of the Old Testament with special attention to its literary history and theological themes.”

This Old Testament course is designed to introduce academic study on the OT by providing its social, historical, literary, and theological context. Additionally, this course will uniquely interpret the Old Testament as a theological drama (theo-drama). This interpretation of the OT will increase knowledge, devotion, and participation in God and the theological drama of salvation. Viewing the Old Testament as a theological drama integrates Old and New Testament as a continuous whole centered on Jesus Christ. My hope is to form students so that they are able to view the Old Testament as necessary and indispensable in the Christian life and faith in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Without the Old Testament, Christianity becomes unintelligible.

Cognitive development will be cultivated through textbook readings, classroom discussions/lectures, and periodic quizzes and examinations. Social development will be encouraged through small group discussions and presentations through the relating of biblical revelation to contemporary issues. Students will be equipped with the tools and skills necessary to continue reading God’s drama throughout their life.

From the time of Jesus Christ, Christians have always held the Old Testament as central to their worship and were shaped by God through it, and our prayer is for God to continue to use the Old Testament as God’s drama to challenge, teach, and shape us as participants.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- 1.) Describe and Articulate the Old Testament as Theological Drama and Canon;
- 2.) Identify the historical, cultural, literary, and theological context of the Old Testament;
- 3) Articulate and appreciate the ways in which the Bible, understood as given by divine inspiration, functions as the Church’s central norm for Christian allegiance, discipleship, and practice;

4) Articulate the unity of the Biblical Canon as well as the basic content of the books of the Old Testament

Foundational Explorations Learning Outcomes (FELO)

This course fulfills **FELO 3**: Students will demonstrate an understanding of Christian Scripture, Tradition, and Ethics, including engagement in acts of devotion and works of mercy.

Community Classroom Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Through *Community Classroom*, you will:

PLO #1: *Develop* a concrete, ethical understanding of community in general and the City Heights community in particular (Assessment: Participation, Community Dinners, OT Group Projects, Integrative Experiential Assignments, Quizzes, and Final Exam)

PLO #2: *Discern* key factors in the life of a community in general and City Heights in particulars and the drivers of progress and decline.

PLO #3: *Deliberate, Evaluate, and Decide* on a responsible collaborative course of action you can take to promote progress in your communal living and/or in City Heights to meet the demands of the historical moment.

PLO #4: *Formulate* a concrete proposal for a course of action you could take to responsibly participate in, protect, and add to the value of your community and/or the community of City Heights.

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

1.) H., Wright Christopher J. **The Old Testament in Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic**. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of Intervarsity Press, 2019.

2.) McGhee, Heather. **The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together**. One World. 2022. ISBN: 0525509585

3.) The Holy Bible [Recommended Versions]

a.) NKJV Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World by St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology & Thomas Nelson. ISBN: 9780718003593

b.) ESV Holy Bible: Catholic Edition by Augustine Institute. ISBN: 9781950939350

c.) NRSV New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, College Edition, 5th edition by Coogan, M.; Brettler, M.; Newsom, C.; Perkins, P. ISBN: 9780190276089

Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Grading: The student's grade will be based on a combination of class participation, reading, assignments, and exams as follows:

Possible Points	Assignment
100	Community Dinners
200	7 Quizzes on <i>The Old Testament in 7 Sentences</i> (20%)
300	OT Book Presentation with Neighborhood Exegesis (30%)
200	Pentateuch Exam (20%)
200	Final Exam (20%)

*Total: 1000 (possible points)

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Late Assignments

In order not to be considered "late," all assignments must be submitted by the day and time listed as the due date. *Grace Period:* If the student "forgets" or otherwise misses an assignment, she or he may submit it up to one week after the due date for no more than half credit. *No assignment will be accepted for credit of any kind more than one week after the original due date.* (NOTE: Any extra-credit assignments must be submitted on or before the due date and will not be accepted late for credit of any kind). All assignments are to be submitted by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. If students have questions,

a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is not permitted, and use of these tools will be treated as plagiarism.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue an academic accommodation plan ("AP") to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Class attendance is a necessity for optimum academic achievement. *If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (more than THREE [3] classes), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (more than SIX [6] classes), the student may be de-enrolled without notice* until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. In addition, each student is expected to participate actively in class by contributing to the discussions on the basis of his or her reading of the assigned material.

**NOTE: Giving false information on the daily roll sheet (i.e. signing someone else in or having someone else sign you in) is an act of cheating that is equal to cheating on an exam. It will subject you to the academic dishonesty penalties of the university, including failure of this course and possible expulsion from the university.*

Course Requirements

- 1. Community Dinners:** *Community Classroom* offers two gatherings events for all Community Classroom courses, and these Community Dinners will feature: A Free Dinner, Drinks, and Fellowship for all Community Classroom students and a local presentation from local community members of San Diego or persons who are engaged in service to intercultural work in their respective areas. All students are required to attend. Each student is required to attend and participate in the gathering. If you are present and attend for the entire duration of the gathering, then you will receive 50 points for each community dinner for a total of 100 points.

Community Dinner #1: Thursday, February 15th 2024. 5PM - 6:30PM - Location: TBD

Community Dinner #2: Tuesday, April 9th 2024. 5PM - 6:30PM - Location: TBD

- 2. 7 Quizzes on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences:** Quizzes will be in-class and open book unless otherwise stated. Typically, the quizzes will be on a chapter of the class textbook, *The Old Testament in 7 Sentences*. These quizzes will be open textbook and open Bible quizzes (20% of total grade). Each Quiz will be around 20 questions in length and timed usually around 30 minutes on *Canvas*.

- 3. OT Book Presentation & Neighborhood Exegesis Project:** This project will be the integration of biblical exegesis and neighborhood exegesis. Students will investigate biblical data on one Old Testament book and interpret what this books means on its own terms. Then by interpreting the neighborhood of City Heights, the student will connect how their respective book speaks into the world of City Heights. How would they preach and teach this book to this place? What are biblical and theological connections between the Scripture and the world? We will dedicate 1 class session of assigning groups and choosing which book to research and present as well as be instructed on the expectations of this assignment. The in-class presentation should be about 10-15 minutes in length and following the instruction sheet attached at the end of this syllabus. (30% of total grade)

- 4. Pentateuch Exam:** The Mid-Term Exam will draw from the lectures only and from the professor's powerpoint slides. Take good notes! All of the answers to the Mid-Term Exam have been given to you through the class lectures. The Mid-Term Exam will be composed of ~75 questions that will include multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill in the blank types of questions. The Mid-Term Exam will only examine your understanding of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and & Deuteronomy). A study guide will be provide one week before the date of the Mid-Term Exam. (20% of total grade)

- 5. Final Exam:** As an extension to the Mid-Term Exam, the Final Exam will cover the remainder of the Old Testament (Joshua - Malachi), excluding the Books of the Pentateuch. The Final Exam will be formatted in the same way as the Mid-Term Exam and will be about 100 questions. The Final Exam will take place in the classroom on the scheduled day and time. A study guide will be provided one week before the date of the Final. (20% of total grade)

Extra Credit: You may earn up to and attempt for (and no more than) a total of **50 extra credit points**:

- a) **(Extra Credit) The Promise of the Pentateuch Project:** The first five books of the Old Testament are united together by **the promise of God to Abram in Genesis 12**. In this project, you will read through relevant passages from Genesis to Deuteronomy to trace this connection in the Pentateuch. At the end of the project, you will have a chance to reflect on this theme and its presence in the Pentateuch. If you are interested in this extra credit assignment, ask the Professor for the worksheet of this project. This worksheet will guide you through this project by giving instruction and questions that you must do and respond to. Once you've completed the worksheet, print it and submit it to the professor. **(Up to 50 extra credit points; 5% of total grade). Due on the Date of the Mid-Term Exam.**
- b) **(Extra Credit) The Theology of the Historical Books Project:** Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings have been recognized to be greatly influenced by the Book of Deuteronomy. In this project, you will investigate this influence by focusing on the speeches scattered throughout these books. The goal of this project is to see how the Historical Books (Joshua-Kings) are to be received as Scripture. If you are interested in this extra credit assignment, ask the Professor for the worksheet of this project. This worksheet will guide you through this project by giving instruction and questions that you must do and respond to. Once you've completed the worksheet, print it and submit it to the professor. **(Up to 50 extra credit points; 5% of total grade). Due on the Date of the Final Exam.**

Course Schedule and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to the Course & Why study the Old Testament?

1. Thursday, January 11

Introduction to the Course: Syllabus, Theological Drama, The Old Testament, & Canonical Interpretation
Readings: *None*

Week 2: Introduction to the Pentateuch & Genesis

2. Thursday, January 18

Introduction to the Pentateuch & Genesis (Act 1): Communion with God & Fragmentation with God
Who is God? Who are we? What has gone wrong? What is the solution?

Readings: "Introduction", & Chapter 1: Creation (7 Sentences) OT Reading: Genesis 1-11

***Quiz #1: 7 Sentences: "Introduction" & "Chapter 1: Creation"**

Week 3: Abraham & The End of Genesis

3. Thursday, January 25

Genesis: Act 2 + Genesis 3—11: The Increasing of Sin and Death in the Creation

Act 3 + God's Promise for Re-Communion: The Family of Abraham and Sarah

Readings: "Chapter 2: Abraham" ; OT Reading: Genesis 12—13; 15—17; 20—22; 50.

***Quiz #2 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, "Chapter 2: Abraham"**

Week 4: The Exodus from Egypt

4. Thursday, February 1

Exodus: Act 4 + The Salvation of a People: The Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 1—15)

Exodus: Act 5 + The Creation and Formation of a People: Wilderness, Laws, and The Tabernacle

***Organize groups for "OT Book Group Presentations"**

Readings: "Chapter 3: Exodus"; OT Reading: Exodus 1-26

***Quiz #3 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, "Chapter 3: Exodus"**

Week 5: Leviticus & Numbers

5. Thursday, February 8

Leviticus: Act 5 + On Being the Priest of the LORD & Sacrificial System, How to Read Leviticus in Christ?
Numbers: Stories in the Wilderness: The First Generation & the Second Generation of Israelites

Readings: OT Reading: Leviticus 1-7, 19-22; Numbers 1, 11-12, 26, 32-33, 35-36

Week 6: Deuteronomy

6. Thursday, February 15

Deuteronomy: The Final Sermon of Moses

Deuteronomy: The Final Hope of Moses and The End of the Pentateuch

Readings: OT Reading: Deuteronomy 1—6; 12—15; 28-34

**Pentateuch Study Guide*

****Community Classroom Dinner #1: 5PM-6:30PM***

Week 7: Pentateuch Exam

7. Thursday, February 22

Pentateuch Exam (In-Class)

Study the Lectures on the Pentateuch!

Week 8: The Historical Books - Into the Promised Land & Fragmentation

8. Thursday, February 29

Joshua, Judges, & Ruth: Entrance into the Land and Life in Canaan

Samuel & Kings: Two Kingdoms in the Land (1-2 Samuel; 1—2 Kings) and Spiral of Sin & Death

Readings: OT Reading: Joshua 1—12; 24; 1 Samuel 1-3; 8-9; 16; 2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 2-3; 11-12; 2 Kings 17-19; 25

****Quiz #4 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, “Chapter 4: David”***

Week 9: Spring Break

9. Thursday, March 7

SPRING BREAK = NO CLASS!

Week 10: The OT Prophets

10. Thursday, March 14

Introduction to the OT Prophets

The Prophet Isaiah: The 5th Gospel & The Wrath & Love of God

****Quiz #5 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, “Chapter 5: Prophets”***

Week 11: OT Book Presentations

11. Thursday, March 21

Presentations on OT Book & Neighborhood Exegesis

Readings: None

****OT Book Presentations (email your 1-sheet handout & powerpoint presentation to Prof. Portillo by noon on the day before this date)***

OT Books: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, or Ecclesiastes

****Quiz #6 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, “Chapter 6: Gospel”***

Week 12: EASTER BREAK

12. Thursday, March 28

EASTER BREAK = NO CLASS!

Week 13: The Psalms & Post-Exile

13. Thursday, April 4

The Book of Psalms: The Ancient Book of Common Prayer & How to Pray the Psalms like Jesus?
Post-Exilic Prophets & Beginning Again: (Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah 56-66, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Readings: OT Reading #14: Psalm 6, 13, 28, 30, 31, 32, 88, 89

***Quiz #7 on The Old Testament in 7 Sentences, "Chapter 7: Psalms & Wisdom"**

***Community Classroom Dinner #2: 5PM-6:30PM on Tuesday, April 9th**

Week 14: The Intertestamental Period & The End of the Old Testament

14. Thursday, April 11

The Intertestamental Period & The Word Wrapped in Scripture is the Word Become Flesh
The End of the Old Testament

Icon: *Christ Pantocrator*

Readings: OT Readings: Ezra 1—4; 8—10; 2 Chronicles 36; Malachi

Week 15: The End of the Old Testament

15. Thursday, April 18

The End of the Old Testament

Christological Interpretation of the Scriptures

Study for Final Exam

Week 16: The End of the Old Testament

16. Thursday, April 25

The End of the Old Testament

Final Exam

Week 17: Final Exam Week (April 29 - May 3)

17. Final Exam

Old Testament Final

***FINAL EXAMS WEEK: The final, comprehensive Final Exam will take place in the classroom on the day and time scheduled for this class according to the university's final exam schedule (on school's website under "Academics").**

Biblical Exegesis: Instruction Sheet

GOAL: The goal of this presentation is to give a substantial but overall introduction to your assigned biblical book, informed by modern biblical scholarship's work on the book. Think of your group as answering the question, "What is the book of x, what is modern biblical scholarship saying about it, and how does it fit into the overall theo-drama of the OT?" You have only **10 minutes**, so you will want to plan your presentation carefully in advance, yet you should still give a thorough presentation and have creative elements (like powerpoint, illustrations, music or video clip, etc.).

1) PREPARATION: To research your presentation, you should draw from two sources:

- a) Read the "introduction" for your book in any Study Bible (some are recommended for this course in this syllabus). You may use your own study Bible. Ryan Library has hardcopies and eBooks on Study Bibles. You should also consult the study notes in the Bible for the specific biblical passage you choose to walk through in your presentation.
- b) Find the commentary on your book in the multi-volume commentary series entitled The New Interpreter's Bible (these volumes are located in the reference room or stacks of the library). Read carefully (and use!) the Introduction to your book given in the commentary.

**Please include which sources you utilized in your research at the end of your PowerPoint Presentation (Include it as a Works Cited or Bibliography slide).*

2) SUBMIT (EMAIL) TO PROFESSOR PORTILLO BY NOON THE DAY BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION
(kpportill@pointloma.edu).

a) Your Word document of **2-4 page handout** (one page of your Biblical Exegesis, and 1-2 pages of your neighborhood exegesis) that has the most important points you want the class to remember from each of the 5 areas of your presentation listed below. I will make copies to be distributed to the class on the day of your presentation.

****Failure to email this word document by noon the day before your presentation will result in 10% deduction from total grade.***

3) PRESENTATION: For your **10-15 minute presentation**, you should include the following elements:

- a. An introduction/survey of the major content, themes, structure, and distinctive elements of your book (*i.e., what is this book and what is in it?*)
- b. A survey of the major critical interpretive issues that have been and are discussed in modern biblical scholarship (these might include the date, setting, genre, etc.). Give the class a rundown on the various views on the major issues and provide what you take to be the best options on these issues (*i.e., who wrote it, where did this book come from, how did we get it, what issues do scholars discuss about it?*)
- c. Walk the class through one (maybe two, but watch your time!) passage(s) from your book that, in your mind, illustrates the main content and themes for your book.
- d. How does your book fit into the overall the theological drama (theo-drama) of the OT as we have presented it in this course?
- e. Then, you will conclude your presentation by offering theological, biblical, and cultural connections between your OT book and the neighborhood of City Heights. What is City Heights? And, how does your OT book speak into this cultural context? How would you preach and teach this book to this people and this place? Share what you learned about City Heights and how your OT book preaches to City Heights.

Neighborhood Exegesis: Instruction Sheet

WHAT IS IT?

Exegesis is a careful reading and interpretation of a text with the goal that the text will speak for itself. In many academic disciplines, we perform exegesis, engaging with texts to examine the historical context as well as what meaning we can make of them in light of our world today. To perform an exegesis is to explore and get to know a text on its own terms, knowing that our engagement is part of the process.

If we think of a city as a text, we can approach where we live with the same spirit of exploration and discovery, tempered with the respect for the city's rich history before our time. As when performing a textual exegesis, we are honest about our biases, and we will try to see the city for what it is beyond our own conceptions. To this end, we will learn about our local communities, the history of the space, and the institutions that form the life of the city.

An exegesis of a place has three characteristics:

It is specific.

It is personal.

It is relational.

It is specific

We are calling this assignment a “neighborhood” exegesis because the first part of knowing a city starts outside your front door. Many cities have neighborhoods with strong individual personalities that make up the character of the city as a whole. But to understand that character, you must understand the personalities. City Heights is not Point Loma though they both are the city of San Diego. Each has a specific nature that is unique to them. To perform the exegesis, you must go to the specific places, walk the streets, look at the businesses and residences, explore the geographic terrain.

It is personal

You cannot leave yourself behind in this practice; therefore, how you engage with your neighborhood and what you learn will be unique to you. Another student who may have the same neighborhood will not have the same exegesis experience. In performing your exegesis, consider how you relate to the environment around you. How are you feeling? Can you describe what each of your senses is experiencing? What excites you? What makes you uncertain? How can you connect what you are experiencing to what you are learning in Community Classroom?

It is relational

As you explore your neighborhood, you might find certain moments in its context that form connections to you personally, to what you are learning right now, or to other aspects of the city. Can you trace these ties? Further, you will meet people who live and work there. What is their relationship to this neighborhood? As you return to your neighborhood, do you see anyone regularly? How do their personal stories connect to the neighborhood? Each other? To you? From learning about these individuals, what larger connections and relationships do you see?

As Pastor Bill Betts says, “Urban exegesis may begin with persistent observation of the individual lives of those who make up our cities but may it tenaciously continue to return afresh to discover new richness the more we appreciate their meaning embedded in all their contexts.” (SFexegesis.com)

[Links to an external site.](#)

We want to “see” with an open heart and mind; “hear” the sounds of the city and people which will hopefully provoke curiosity and a desire to know more; “place” themselves in the shoes of the people and places they encounter while using all senses to learn about and begin to understand the community of City Heights (or your local neighborhood) and the people who call this neighborhood home. The purpose of the exegesis is to help you analyze the built, natural, and social environments of a community.

After you have explored and interpreted the neighborhood of City Heights, write a 1-2 page reflection on what you discovered of City Heights and conclude that reflection on how your specific OT Book speaks into this cultural context. At the end of this assignment, you will have 2-4 pages of biblical exegesis information and a City Height Neighborhood exegesis to present and share with our class. You may include pictures that you took with your phone or other creative elements into your handout or presentation.