

Old Testament History and Religion BIB 1001

Point Loma Nazarene University

Spring 2025

Wed. & Fri. 11:00-11:55am

Final Exam: **Monday May 5th @ 10:30am**

Professor:

The Rev. Dr. Brad E. Kelle, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: See schedule on door

“Tell me a fact, and I will learn; tell me the truth, and I will believe; but tell me a *story*, and it will live in my heart forever.”¹

“You think you know a story, but you only know how it ends.”²

Course Description and Purpose

This course is designed to open a conversation (that will hopefully last a lifetime) about the Old Testament (also known as the Hebrew Bible). The class provides an introduction to (1) the literature/content of the Old Testament in its social, historical, literary, and theological contexts; and (2) the critical study of the Old Testament. Along these lines, this course is designed as a *journey*, which serves to introduce the student to the basic content of the divine-human drama that unfolds within the pages of the Bible and to equip the student with the foundational tools and skills to continue the dialogue with that drama throughout his or her life.

Cognitive development will be encouraged through textbook readings, classroom discussions/lectures, and periodic examinations. Social development will be encouraged through small group discussions and exercises as well as through the relating of biblical concepts to contemporary social issues. Spiritual development will be encouraged through a dialogue with the dynamic faith of the Christian Scripture, a faith that grew out of the community of believers and continues to challenge and shape that community in contemporary settings.

Course Learning Outcomes (School of Theology and Christian Ministry)

The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- 1) Identify the historical contexts of the Old Testament.
- 2) Articulate the unity of the Old Testament in its canonical context within the diverse literature of the Christian canon.
- 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 discipleship, faith and practice; and,
- 4) Articulate the basic content of the books of the Old Testament and the methods appropriate to the interpretation of those books.

¹ Fox promo for 2002 World Series.

² Opening of the Showtime series, “The Tudors.”

Course Texts (Required)

1. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* (NRSV). Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
2. Brad E. Kelle, *Telling the Old Testament Story: God's Mission and God's People*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2017.

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.

General Education 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.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation and Attendance: In this abbreviated journey through the story of the Old Testament, 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.*

**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.*

2. Readings: The OT is the primary text for this course. All readings are required. *Please bring your Bible to class.* It is important to keep up with the readings on a session-by-session basis or the information will quickly become overwhelming. *A significant part of the student's grade comes from quizzes over the assigned reading material (see below).*

3. Celebrations of Learning (a.k.a. Reading Quizzes): There will be *six* such celebrations (often called, erroneously, "quizzes") that cover various reading assignments and associated class lectures. Students will complete these Celebrations of Learning on Canvas. The dates of the quizzes are listed on the course schedule and study guides ("party favors"! 😊) will be provided.

4. In-class Midterm Celebration of Learning (Midterm Exam): There will be one mid-term Celebration of Learning (exam). See the date on the course schedule. Further instructions will be provided in class.

5. “The Tribes of Israel”: Group Presentation on an Old Testament Book (Signature Assignment): In addition to more traditional methods of presentation by the professor, our course will have a significant element of small group work and discussion during various class sessions. Rather than a course in which the professor simply imparts a massive amount of information for students to regurgitate, students will work together to read closely, think collaboratively, and formulate thoughtful responses to texts and issues (an additional, hoped-for benefit of such assignments is to invite the students into the practices of true liberal arts education, namely, academic reading, thinking, collaborating, and writing, rather than outcome-based standardized test taking). The major instance of such work will be that *each student will participate in an assigned small group and make a class presentation on an assigned book from the Old Testament* (groups and books will be assigned in class). The presentation should be **10 minutes in length** and **follow the instruction sheet attached to this syllabus**. Each group member will receive the same grade for the presentation. Due dates are listed on the course schedule

(NOTE: a one-page handout and powerpoint presentation must be emailed to the professor by noon on the day before your presentation). Both of these will be made available to the entire class.

6. In-class Final Celebration of Learning (Final Exam): There will be a final Celebration of Learning (final exam) at the end of the course. Details and a study guide will be provided in class. The final celebration will take place *in the classroom* on the day and time given on the university’s final exam schedule: **Monday May 5, 2025 @ 10:30am**. *Note: the final exam will NOT be open-book or open-notes. It will be a traditional exam.*

Course Policies

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

<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
240 (40 pts each)	Celebrations of Learning (6 Reading Quizzes)
100	Mid-term Celebration of Learning
100	Group Presentation
100	Final Celebration of Learning (final exam)

***Total: 540 (possible points)**

<u>*Grading Scale:</u>	94-100 A	84-86 B	74-76 C	64-66 D
	90-93 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C-	60-63 D-
	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	50s F

2. Attendance: Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. *If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (3 class sessions), the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.*

**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.

3. Late Work Policy: 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).

4. 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.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

5. Use of Technology: In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information on Canvas for this course. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

6. 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. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

7. PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy: PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). 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 work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request. 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. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes. 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. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

8. 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.]

9. 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 [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam 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.

10. 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.

11. PLNU Recording Notification: In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

Tentative Course Schedule

1. Wed. Jan. 15

Starting Points (Pt. 1): Introduction to the Course

Readings: None

2. Fri. Jan. 17

Starting Points (Pt.2): What Is the OT and Why Study It?

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* pp. xv-xvi ("Introduction") and pp. xvii-xx ("To the Reader")

2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. xv-xviii

3. Wed. Jan. 22

What Is the OT and From Where Did It Come (Pt. 1)? Inspiration and Function

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* pp. 2255-2260 ("Inspiration of Scripture")

CELEBRATION (Quiz) #1 *take in class, not on Canvas: The books of the OT (be able to write in order of Protestant canon)

4. Fri. Jan. 24

What Is the OT and From Where Did It Come (Pt. 2)? Origins and Backgrounds

- a. Origins, Composition, and Canonization
- b. Geography, Culture, and History

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* pp. 2274-2279 ("Culture and Religion among the Ancient Israelites")

2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, just SKIM ch. 1.

5. Wed. Jan. 29

How Then Should We Read the OT? Methods for Biblical Interpretation

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* pp. 2261-2267 ("Guidelines for Reading and Interpretation") & pp. 2268-2273 ("Varieties of Readings...")

***FRI. JAN. 31: NO CLASS**

6. Wed. Feb. 5

Introducing the "OT Story": To Form a People and Find an Instrument

Readings: 1. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, ch. 2

CELEBRATION (Quiz) #2 *on Canvas over New Interpreter's Study Bible articles, "Inspiration," "Culture and Religion," "Guidelines for Reading," and "Varieties of Readings"—Complete this quiz, on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight.

7. Fri. Feb. 7

A. Introduction to the Pentateuch

B. Genesis 1—11: The Primeval History (Pt. 1): The Creation Stories

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Genesis
2. Genesis 1—2

8. Wed. Feb. 12

Genesis 1—11: The Primeval History (Pt. 2): Creation Goes Haywire

- Readings: 1. Genesis 3—9
2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 29-47

9. Fri. Feb. 14

Genesis 1—11: The Primeval History (Pt. 3): Creation Goes Haywire

- Readings: 1. Genesis 10—11
2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 48-54

CELEBRATION (Quiz) #3 on Canvas over *New Interpreter's Study Bible

Introduction to Genesis and the main characters and events in Gen 1-11-- Complete this quiz on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight

***Organize groups for small group presentations**

10. Wed. Feb. 19

Promise to Restore Creation & the Calling of a People: The Ancestral Narratives (Genesis 12—50)

- Readings: 1. Genesis 12—13; 15—17; 20—22; 50
2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 55-70

11. Fri. Feb. 21

The Creation of a People (Pt.1): The Exodus from Egypt (Exod 1—15)

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Exodus
2. Exod 1—12

12. Wed. Feb. 26

The Creation of a People (Pt.2): The Exodus from Egypt (Exod 1—15) & Into the Wilderness (Exod 16—18)

- Readings: 1. Exod 13—18
2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 70-79

13. Fri. Feb. 28

The Formation of a People (Pt. 1): Covenant and Law in the Wilderness

- Readings: 1. Exod 19—23 and *New Interpreter's Study Bible* intro to Leviticus
2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 81-95

14. Wed. Mar. 5

The Formation of a People (Pt. 2): Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomistic History, and the New Generation

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Deuteronomy
2. Deuteronomy 1—6; 12—15; 28—30
3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 102-109

***CELEBRATION (Quiz) #4 on Canvas over the main characters in Gen 12—50 and *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Exodus and Leviticus-- Complete this quiz on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight**

15. Fri. Mar. 7

Entrance into the Land: Joshua and Judges

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Joshua and Judges
2. Joshua 1—12; 24
3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 111-123

***WED. MARCH 12 & FRI. MARCH 14: NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

***WED. MAR. 19: We will NOT meet in the classroom today. But we will attend together as a class the Wiley Lecture in Crill Performance Hall from 11:00-11:50am**

****Look for the class sign-in sheet on the table in the foyer of Crill Performance Hall and be sure to sign in. Be there on time at 11am!**

16. Fri. Mar. 21

Midterm Celebration of Learning (a.k.a. Midterm Exam) in class

17. Wed. Mar. 26

Two Kingdoms in the Land (1—2 Kings) and Descent into Exile

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to 1 Kings & 2 Kings
 2. 1 Kings 11—12; 2 Kings 15—25
 3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 123-134

18. Fri. Mar. 28

The Divine Voice to the People: Understanding the Prophets

- Readings: 1. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 163-165

19. Wed. Apr. 2

Speaking to the North: Amos

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Amos
 2. Amos 1—9
 3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 165-171

CELEBRATION (Quiz) #5 on Canvas over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings-- *Complete this quiz on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight

20. Fri. Apr. 4

Group Presentations on OT Books: Hosea, Micah, and Nahum

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Hosea, Micah, and Nahum

***Group Presentations on Hosea, Micah, and Nahum (email your 1-sheet handout & powerpoint presentation to Dr. Kelle *by noon on Thurs. Apr. 3*)**

21. Wed. Apr. 9

Speaking to the South: Isaiah

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Isaiah
 2. Isaiah 1—7; 11
 3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 171-175

22. Fri. Apr. 11

Group Presentations Jeremiah and Habakkuk

- Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Jeremiah and Habakkuk

***Group Presentations on Jeremiah and Habakkuk (email your 1-sheet handout & powerpoint presentation to Dr. Kelle *by noon on Thurs. Apr. 10*)**

23. Wed. Apr. 16

Life in Exile: Rethinking the Story (Group Presentations on Psalms, Esther, Daniel 1—6)

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Psalms, Esther, Daniel

***Group Presentations on Psalms, Esther, and Daniel 1—6 (email your 1-sheet handout & powerpoint presentation to Dr. Kelle by noon on Tues. Apr. 15)**

***FRI. APRIL 18: NO CLASS (Easter Break)**

24. Wed. Apr. 23

Responses to the Exile (Pt. 1): Group Presentations on Job and Lamentations

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Job and Lamentations

2. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 151-157

***Group Presentations on Job & Lamentations (email your 1-sheet handout & powerpoint presentation to Dr. Kelle by noon on Tues. Apr. 22)**

***CELEBRATION (Quiz) #6 over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Psalms, Isaiah, and Amos-- Complete this quiz on Canvas by 11:59pm tonight**

25. Fri. Apr. 25

Responses to the Exile (Pt. 2): Honest Expressions of Grief and Prophetic Voices of Hope (Lament Psalms, Isaiah 40—55; Jeremiah; Ezekiel)

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Ezekiel

2. Psalm 6, 13, 28, 30, 31, 32, 88, 89

3. Isaiah 40—43

26. Wed. Apr. 30

Beginning Again: The Post-Exile (Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah 56-66, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah

2. 2 Chronicles 36; Ezra 1—4; 8—10

3. Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp. 135-149

27. Fri. May 2

The End Is the Beginning: The Ending of the OT Story

Readings: Kelle, *Telling the OT Story*, pp.179-194

****FINAL CELEBRATION OF LEARNING (final exam) takes place in the classroom on the scheduled day according to the university's final exam schedule: **MONDAY May 5th at 10:30am** (note: according to university policy, you cannot reschedule your final exam unless you have three final exams scheduled for the same day [not even if your parents bought airline tickets for you before they knew your finals schedule!]). Note: the final exam will NOT be open-book or open-notes. It will be a traditional exam.**

**The Tribes of Israel:
GROUP PRESENTATION ON AN OLD TESTAMENT BOOK
*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 story 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 the *New Interpreter's Study Bible* (you should also consult the study notes in the Bible for some of the significant passages in the book)
- b) Go to the website www.bibleproject.com. Search for your assigned OT book. Draw from the various video and other resources they provide. NOTE: Do NOT just copy or repeat what they present. Draw from it and use it as a source, but do not just copy it!

2) SUBMIT (EMAIL) TO PROFESSOR BY NOON THE DAY BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION (bradkelle@pointloma.edu) Two Items:

- a) Word document of a **1-page handout** (**single sided only**) that has the most important points you want the class to remember from each of the 4 areas of your presentation listed below. I will make copies for you to distribute this to the class for your presentation and make them available to the class electronically.
- b) Your **powerpoint** presentation

****Failure to email these by noon the day before your presentation will result in 4 points subtracted from your presentation for EACH missing element (possible 8 total)***

3) PRESENTATION: For your **10-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., where did this book come from, how did we get it, what issues do scholars discuss about it?*). For most of these elements, see the introduction to the book in the *New Interpreter's Study Bible*.
- 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, themes, and interpretive issues for the book *and explain* how this passage(s) illustrates what you've said the book is about.
- d. How does your book fit into the overall story of God in the OT as we have presented it in this course (effort to restore creation, form a people as an instrument, etc.)?