

Old Testament History and Religion

BIB101 Section 7

Point Loma Nazarene University
Fall 2017
Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:25
Professor Matt Wilson
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Office Hours: By Appointment

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.

Note: This course is one of the components of the General Education Program at Point Loma Nazarene University, under the category of "Responding to the Sacred." By including this course in a common educational experience for undergraduates, the faculty supports the study of

Scripture and Christian heritage as foundational in the pursuit of knowledge and the development of personal values.

Course Texts

1. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press. 2003. ISBN# 978-0687278329
2. *Struggling with Scripture*. Walter Brueggemann, William Placher, and Brian Blount. Westminster John Knox Press. 2002. ISBN# 978-0664224851

Course Requirements

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

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 tests over the assigned reading material (see below).

3. Exams: There will be two exams (dates of the exams are listed in the Tentative Schedule). These exams will cover lectures and assigned reading and will consist of multiple choices, matching, and other questions. Neither of these exams will be comprehensive and the material included in the exam will be outlined by the professor before the exam.

4. Struggling with Scripture Reading Response Paper: In this 5-6 page reading response paper, each student will respond to these three questions: 1. How does Brueggemann, Placher, and Blount compare and contrast with the Church of the Nazarene's Article of Faith on Holy Scripture? 2. What was one insight or argument that caught your attention and why did it resonate with you? 3. How might the arguments and insights of *Struggling with Scripture* be applied to your reading of scripture?

5. **“Books of the Old Testament”:** Group Presentation on an OT Book: 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 OT (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 Power Point presentation must be emailed to the professor by noon on the day before your presentation.*

6. Final Exam: The final, comprehensive exam will take place on the day and time scheduled for this class according to the university’s final exam schedule (on PLNU’s website under “Academics”). The final will consist of multiple choice, matching, and other questions. There will be a final essay question which will be prepared before the final exam and a hard, paper copy of the essay will be turned in at the commencement of the final. The prompt of the final essay will be given on the last day of class.

Course Policies

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

Possible Points: 700pts

***Class Attendance and Participation:* 75pts**

***Exams:* 200pts (100pts each)**

***Reading Response Paper:* 100pts**

***Group Presentation:* 75pts**

***Final Exam:* 200pts**

*Grading Scale: 94-100 A 90-93 A- 87-89 B+

84-86 B 80-83 B- 77-79 C+

74-76 C 70-73 C- 67-69 D+

2. Attendance: In this abbreviated journey through the story of the OT, 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. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to obtain notes, etc. from other students for any missed classes.

3. Laptops, iPads, etc.: The use of laptops and tablets in class is ***not permitted***. If you have a documented reason to use a laptop or iPad from the Disability Resource Center or other extenuating circumstances, please discuss with the professor.)

4. Late Work Policy: In order not to be considered "late," all assignments must be submitted in person, in hard copy, in class on the day listed as the due date. NO assignment may be submitted electronically (by email, etc.) for full credit. This is with the exception of the Group Presentation hand-out which is due on the below dates. If the student "forgets" an assignment, he or she may submit it after class (either electronically or in hard copy) for no more than half credit. Any assignment submitted electronically (whether late or on-time) will receive 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 turned in on or before the due date and will not be accepted late for any credit.*

5. Inclusivity: The School of Theology and Christian Ministry is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, the school urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussion, and in their writings. This course will strive to practice sensitivity toward and foster respect for issues of inclusivity in matters of language and conduct. Each student should seek to enrich this inclusive atmosphere in both their class contributions and personal interactions.

6. Academic Honesty: 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.

7. Academic Accommodations: If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

Tentative Course Schedule

8/29 – Introduction

Buy Assigned Textbooks

9/30 – What Is the Old Testament and Why Study It?

Reading: *New Interpreter's Study Bible (NISB)* – pg. xv-xvi (“Introduction”) and pg. xvii-xx (“To the Reader”)

9/6 – Inspiration and Function of the Old Testament

Reading: 1. *NISB* – pg. 2255-2260 (“Inspiration of Scripture”)
2. *Struggling With Scripture (SWS)* – Introduction and Ch. 1

9/11 – Background, Geography, and Culture of the Old Testament

Reading: 1. *NISB* – pg. 2274-2279 (“Culture and Religion among the Ancient Israelites”)
2. *SWS* – Ch. 2

9/13 – Methods of Interpretation of the Old Testament

Reading: 1. *NISB* pg. 2261-2267 (“Guidelines for Reading and Interpretation”) and pg. 2268-2273 (“Varieties of Readings”)
2. *SWS* – Ch. 3

9/18 – **NO CLASS**

DUE: *Struggling With Scripture* Reading Response Paper

9/20 – Introduction to the Pentateuch and Genesis

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Genesis*
2. *Genesis 1-2*

9/25 – Creation Becomes a Hot Mess

- Reading: *Genesis 3-11*
- 9/27 – Abraham and Isaac
- Reading: *Genesis 12-25*
- 10/2 – Jacob/Israel
- Reading: *Genesis 26-50*
- 10/4 – Moses and Pharaoh
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Exodus*
2. *Exodus 1-15*
- 10/9 – The Formation of a People
- Reading: *Exodus 16-23, 25, 31:12-18, and 32*
- 10/11 – Leviticus
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Leviticus*
2. *Leviticus 1, 4, 6, 16-20, 26*
- 10/16 – Deuteronomy
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Deuteronomy*
2. *Deuteronomy 1-6, 12-15, 28-30*
- 10/18 – **Exam #1**
- 10/23 – Joshua
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Joshua*
2. *Joshua 1-10, 23-24*
- 10/25 – Judges
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Judges*
2. *Judges 1-5, 9-10, 21*
- 10/30 – Rise of the Monarchy
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to 1 Samuel*
2. *1 Samuel 8-10, 15-18,*
3. *NISB Intro to 2 Samuel*
4. *2 Samuel 5-7, 11-12, 24*
- 11/1 – Monarchy Division
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to 1 Kings*
2. *1 Kings 3, 11-16*
- 11/6 – Monarchy Collapse into Exile
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to 2 Kings*
2. *2 Kings 15-25*
- 11/8 – Job and Psalms
- Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Psalm*

2. *Psalms 1-3, 13, 22-23, 31-32, 88,*

11/13 – Prophetic Literature and Amos

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Amos*
2. *Amos*

11/15 – Isaiah

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Isaiah*
2. *Isaiah 1-7, 11, 35-37, 40-43, 56-59*

11/20 – **Exam #2**

11/27 – Hosea, Micah, and Nahum

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Hosea, Micah, and Nahum*
2. *Hosea 1-4*
3. *Micah 1-2, 6*

Due: Group Presentation on Hosea, Micah, and Nahum (email your 1-sheet handout & PowerPoint presentation to Prof. Wilson by noon on Monday, Nov. 27)

11/29 – Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Lamentations

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Lamentations*
2. *Jeremiah 1-3, 10, 21-22, 32, 38*
3. *Lamentation 1-3*

Due: Group Presentation on Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Lamentations (email your 1-sheet handout & PowerPoint presentation to Prof. Wilson by noon on, Wednesday Nov. 29)

12/4 – Esther, Daniel, and Job

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Esther, Daniel, and Job*
2. *Daniel 1-3, 12*
3. *Job 1-3, 38-43*

Due: Group Presentation on Esther, Daniel, and Job (email your 1-sheet handout & PowerPoint presentation to Prof. Wilson by noon on, Monday, Dec. 4)

12/6 – Ezra and Nehemiah

Reading: 1. *NISB Intro to Ezra and Nehemiah*
2. *Ezra – 1-4, 8-10*

Final Exam: The final, comprehensive exam will take place on the day and time scheduled for this class according to the university's final exam schedule (on PLNU's website under "Academics")

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT 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) 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.

2) SUBMIT (EMAIL) TO PROFESSOR BY NOON THE DAY BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION (mwilson4@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.

b) Your PowerPoint presentation

3) PRESENTATION: For your 10-minute presentation, you should include at least 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?)

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

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.)?

***NOTE: don't forget to try to be creative (even fun!) in your presentation—use PowerPoint, music or video clips, illustrations, whatever! But watch your 10-min. time limit.*