

## Old Testament History and Religion BIB 101

Point Loma Nazarene University  
Fall 2015  
Mon & Wed 11:00-11:55am

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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.”<sup>1</sup>

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

### 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Fox promo for 2002 World Series.

<sup>2</sup> Opening of the Showtime series, “The Tudors.”

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*(NRSV). Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
2. Michael Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation: The Hermeneutical and Theological Implications of the Article on the Holy Scriptures in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*. PLNU Monograph Series 4. San Diego: Point Loma Press, 2004.

**\*NOTE: this book must be acquired through a FREE DOWNLOAD**—go to the website: <http://www.pointloma.edu/experience/academics/centers-institutes/wesleyan-center/point-loma-press/point-loma-press-publications>

--Find the title entry for Lodahl, *All Things Necessary* and click the download link

## Course Requirements

1. Class Participation and Attendance: In this abbreviated journey through the story of the OT, class attendance is a necessity and frequent absences will have a direct effect on the student’s grade. *SIX (6) absences will result in de-enrollment from the class.* 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.*

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. The dates of the quizzes are listed on the course schedule and study guides will be provided.

4. “The Tribes of Israel”: 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.

5. Final Comprehensive “Celebration of Learning” (final exam): As the culmination to the semester, there will be a final, comprehensive “Celebration of Learning” (final exam). It will cover all the material from the previous celebrations of learning. A study guide will be provided in class. The final celebration will take place on the scheduled day and time for the class’s final exam according to the university’s final exam schedule.

### 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/Lecture Quizzes)
100	Group Presentation
75	Final Celebration of Learning (final exam)
<b>*Total: 415 (possible points)</b>	

<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: Attendance is a necessity. Excessive absences will have a direct effect on the final grade. Late work will only be accepted under the terms of the Late Work Policy (see below). All attendance policies of the institution apply. *SIX (6) unexcused absences will result in de-enrollment from the class.* Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to obtain notes, etc. from other students for any missed classes.

*\*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 **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.* 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.

4. 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.

5. Academic Honesty: 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. Such acts include plagiarism, copying of class assignments, and copying or other fraudulent behavior on examinations. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course.

6. Academic Accommodations: While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. This policy assists the university in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

### **1. Tues. Sept. 1 (\*special Monday schedule on Tuesday)**

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

Readings: None

### **2. Wed. Sept. 2**

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")

**\*MON. SEPT. 7: NO CLASS (Labor Day)**

**3. Wed. Sept. 9**

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: The books of the OT (be able to write in order of Protestant canon)**

**4. Mon. Sept. 14**

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")

**5. Wed. Sept. 16**

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...")

**6. Mon. Sept. 21**

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

Readings: none

**\*CELEBRATION (Quiz) #2 over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* articles, "Inspiration," "Culture and Religion," "Guidelines for Reading," and "Varieties of Readings"**

**7. Wed. Sept. 23**

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. Mon. Sept. 28**

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

Readings: 1. Genesis 3—9

**9. Wed. Sept. 30**

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

Readings: 1. Genesis 10—11

**\*CELEBRATION (Quiz) #3 over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* Introduction to Genesis and the main characters and events in Gen 1-11**

**\*Organize groups for small group presentations**

**10. Mon. Oct. 5**

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

**11. Wed. Oct. 7**

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. Mon. Oct. 12**

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. Begin Reading Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation*

**\*WED. OCT. 14: Special Wiley Lecture Series Class Session**

**We will attend the Wiley Lecture together as a class during our regular class time. Meet in Crill Performance Hall at 11am (look for attendance sign-in sheet on the table in the Crill foyer)**

**13. Mon. Oct. 19**

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. Continue Reading Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation*

**14. Wed. Oct. 21**

A Soteriological Reading of Scripture: M. Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation*

Readings: 1. M. Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation* (book completed)

**\*CELEBRATION (Quiz) #4 over the main characters in Gen 12—50 and New Interpreter's Study Bible introductions to Exodus and Leviticus**

**15. Mon. Oct. 26**

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

**16. Wed. Oct. 28**

Entrance into the Land: Joshua and Judges

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Joshua and Judges  
2. Joshua 1—12; 24

**17. Mon. Nov. 2**

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

**18. Wed. Nov. 4**

The Divine Voice to the People: Understanding the Prophets

Readings: None

**19. Mon. Nov. 9**

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**

**20. Wed. Nov. 11**

Group Presentations Jeremiah and Habakkuk

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

**\*Group Presentations on Jeremiah and Habakkuk**

**21. Mon. Nov. 16**

Speaking to the South: Isaiah

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Isaiah  
2. Isaiah 1—7; 11

**22. Wed. Nov. 18**

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**

**23. Mon. Nov. 23 (Guest Presenter)**

Speaking to the North: Amos

Readings: 1. *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introduction to Amos  
2. Amos 1—9

**\*CELEBRATION (Quiz) #5 over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Deuteronomy, Joshua, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings**

**\*WED. NOV. 25: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)**

**24. Mon. Nov. 30**

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

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

**\*CELEBRATION (Quiz) #6 over *New Interpreter's Study Bible* introductions to Psalms, Isaiah, and Amos**

**\*Group Presentations on Job & Lamentations**

**25. Wed. Dec. 2**

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. Mon. Dec. 7**

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

**27. Wed. Dec. 9**

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

Readings: none

**\*FINAL EXAMS WEEK:** *The final, comprehensive celebration of learning will take place on the day and time scheduled for this class according to the university's final exam schedule.*



**The Tribes of Israel:  
GROUP PRESENTATION ON AN OT 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.).

**PREPARATION:** To research the material for your presentation, you should draw from three 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 of the library). Read carefully (and use!) the Introduction to your book given in the commentary.
  - \*\*optional additional resource as needed: Look up the article that covers your book in the multi-volume reference work entitled, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (these volumes are held in the reference room of the library)

**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*

### Starter Bibliography for an Introduction to the Old Testament

- Arnold, B. and Beyer, B. *Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Barton, J. and J. Bowden. *The Original Story: God, Israel, and the World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Birch, B., et. al. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Brueggemann, W. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Burnette-Bletsch, Rhonda. *Studying the Old Testament: A Companion*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
- Collins, John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- Coogan, Michael D. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Coogan, Michael D., ed. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Fee, G. and Stuart, D. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1982.
- Finkelstein, I. and Silberman, N. *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. New York: The Free Press, 2001.
- Gaventa, Beverly R. and David L. Petersen, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible One -Volume Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010.
- Gillingham, S. *One Bible, Many Voices: Different Approaches to Biblical Studies*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Gorman, M. J. *An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005.
- King, P. and Stager, L. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

McKenzie, S. and P. Graham., eds. *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.

McKenzie, S. and S. Haynes. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*. 2d ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999.

Moore, Megan Bishop and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Miller, J.M. and Hayes, J.H., *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

*The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abgindon, 2006-2010.

Newsom, C. and Ringe, S., eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992.

Scholz, Susanne. *Biblical Studies Alternatively: An Introductory Reader*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2003.