Course Number & Title:  OT511     Old Testament Introduction and Survey  
Instructor: Dr. Thom South

Student Access to Instructor:  The instructor invites and encourages students to contact him regarding their academic assignments or other life issues during the course. If some academic modification, instructional procedure adjustment, or course material alteration is needed for your success, please inform the instructor of the process required. The instructor’s hours are flexible to meet your scheduling requirements or individual needs.

Primary contact with the instructor will be through Moodle messages. Here’s how: Click the participants section of the course; choose the instructor’s name; scroll to the end of the biographical information; choose the tab of messages; type your message; click send message. The instructor will respond to your messages via Moodle.

If more immediate contact is necessary you may contact the instructor via phone, email or skype (phone: 501-328-5776; email: thom.south@bmats.edu or tsouth@cbc.edu; Skype: drtsouth). This phone number will NOT receive text messages. Phone and skype contact should be between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m Central Time.

Course Description:  
This course consists of an examination of the Old Testament introductory problems (including canonicity, textual criticism, and higher criticism) and an historical and interpretative study of the Pentateuch and other historical books. Special emphasis is placed on the structure and purpose of these books.

Required Textbooks:  

Course Objectives:  
Upon the completion of this course the student should:
1. Be able to defend the biblical text and enhance teaching and preaching with basic areas of Old Testament introduction (such as canonicity, textual criticism and higher criticism)
2. Be able to discuss intelligently the historical and critical problems (issues) of Genesis through 2 Chronicles and defend the integrity of the biblical record
3. Find in the Old Testament text a source for teaching and preaching
4. Be able to defend the integrity and inspiration of the biblical text
5. Provide an overview of the Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament and be able to summarize chronologically the events recorded in them.
6. Be able to interpret the Old Testament historical books in light of their historical, cultural, and literary background and structure. 
7. Know the purpose and structure of each of the historical books of the Old Testament and the natural outlines of the books.

Course Requirements:
1. Reading -
   Bible: The student should read through the Pentateuch and historical books of the Old Testament to become familiar with their content. Try to read as much as possible of each book in one sitting to help see the overall scope of the book. A modern translation might make this task easier.
   Required Texts - The sections of the required texts that deal with the historical books and the background material should be read according to the course schedule which lists the specific chapters and/or pages in the textbooks to be read each week. The student should peruse the charts in Walton’s book to be familiar with the content of those appropriate for this class.
   Supplemental Books and sources: In addition to the required texts the student will benefit from reading and consulting the following sources:


A good updated annotated bibliography for Old Testament study is available at http://www.bible.org. Click the “Pastor Helps” button and then select “Building a Library.”

For map studies several excellent sources are available:
- Crossway ESV Bible Atlas. Crossway, 2010

Reading Assignments from the supplemental texts or other sources may be made to correspond with the class content on a weekly basis. Reading these assignments will provide bonus points for the student’s grade. Any extra or supplemental reading should be reported on the weekly reading report.

Reading Reports on assigned reading should be submitted each week. Each report should include the
reading assignments as presented in the class schedule, scriptures read, text book pages read and extra reading related to the topic(s) for that session. Reports will be submitted in the completing the assignment form and include the name of book and author, and the pages read for that week.

2. Exams

Three exams will be given. The class schedule indicates for the approximate times for the exams. The nature and content for the exams will be explained later.

3. Term Paper

Each student is required to write a 15-20 page research paper (no fewer than 12 pages or more than 25). The paper should conform to the 5th, 6th or 7th edition of Kate L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Themes, and Dissertations (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973 or 1987). Quality of research and presentation of the topic is more important than the form of the paper. The criteria for grading the paper is as follows: organization (outline, arrangement of topics) 10%; bibliography (number and variety of sources, format) 15%; format (appearance, grammar, form) 10%; content (presentation of topic 15%, evidence of research 20%, accomplish purpose of paper 20%) 55%; Miscellaneous (promptness to deadline, general observations, oral report) 10%.

Research papers will be due November 23, 2012. Each student should submit a tentative topic for the term paper on the second week of class. Please submit first, second, and third choices as each subject will be assigned only to one student. Topic selections will be finalized by the start of the third week. Topics will be assigned on a “first come, first served” basis as much as possible.

A minimum of 10 resources should be referenced for each paper and included in the bibliographical listing. Resources for the research may come from the internet, but only 3 internet sources may be used in the paper. For each internet source used, there must be at least three other sources consulted (books and/or scholarly journal articles). [NOTE: Wikipedia and similar sites are not reliable research sources.] At least three scholarly journal articles on the topic should be referenced. All sources referenced for research should be included in the “Selected Bibliography.”

Suggested topics for the term paper are:

Overview of a book with emphasis on structure, purpose, historical-cultural background, critical issues (authorship, date, etc), and content: ______ Numbers, ______ Joshua, ______ Ruth, ______ Exodus, ______ Judges, ______ Deuteronomy; ______ 1 Samuel, ______ 2 Samuel, ______ 1 Kings, ______ 2 Kings,

Other topics include: ______ The Tabernacle; ______ The Date of the Exodus &/or The Route of the Exodus; ______ The Holy Spirit in Genesis; ______ Priests and Levites in the Old Testament; The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament; ______ War in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East; ______ Monogamy and Polygamy in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East; Development of the Old Testament Canon: an analysis of different views; ______ A Comparison of the Old Testament Law Codes with Ancient Near Eastern Law Codes; ______ The kings of Israel and Judah: a comparative study with emphasis on character strengths and weaknesses; ______ Theophanies in the Old Testament; ______ Languages of the Ancient near East and their impact on the Old Testament and Old Testament Studies; ______ Creation Stories from the Ancient Near East Compared to the Genesis Record, ______ A Character Study of the Kings of Israel and Judah (a comparative study summarizing strengths and weaknesses), ______ Old Testament Feasts of Israel and possible Messianic significance.
NOTE: Other topics may be approved by the professor if sufficient research material is available and the topic is significant to OT studies. The overview of a particular biblical book may be easier than the other topics for beginning students.

4. Book Review

Walter Kaiser’s book *Preaching and Teaching from the OT* must be read in its entirety with special attention given to chapters 1-5, chapter 9, the conclusion and the two appendices. The review should be a summary and interaction with Kaiser’s suggested method for preaching from OT Narrative and OT Torah (Law). The review should be 8 - 10 pages double-spaced. References to Kaiser’s page numbers should be included with each paragraph in parentheses. Footnotes should not be used for Kaiser’s book. If ideas are borrowed for someone else’s review or comments, those references should be footnoted. The book review is due by the end of week 12 (November 18, 2012).

5. Discussion Forums

Throughout the semester the student will have opportunity to interact with other students by answering questions posted in the forum and responding to posts by other students. A minimum of eight forum posts is required of each student. When prompted to post in the forum click the “forums” tab in the left column and open the appropriate forum. Answer the question with a well thought out answer. Your first post should be approximately 100 words and indicate that you have read materials related to topic and analyzed the issue to develop a response. Some questions in the forum will not necessarily have right and wrong answers but are designed to stimulate thinking and analysis of issue in Old Testament studies and provide opportunity for the student to develop skills in presentation of ideas. An original response to the forum questions should be posted by Thursday in the weeks when forums are open. That will provide opportunity for other students to read and respond to posts by other students. At least one reply to another student must be made by each student by the end of the week.

All replies should be insightful and contribute to the discussion of the topic. Rude, indecent, or derogatory remarks will not be tolerated. If you disagree with another student’s post, you do not have to attack the student or be disrespectful. Disagree without being disagreeable.

All posts (original posts and responses) should be well thought out, organized and with proper grammar and spelling. Poorly written postings distract from the content of the writing. It is recommended that the posts and interactions be written off-line in a word processing program so that they can be edited and then pasted into the forum.

Grading:

Grades will be determined by three tests (15% each), research paper (25%), Book review (10%), and reading reports (10%); Forum Discussions (10%).

Class Schedule

Note that this is NOT a self-paced class. The student is required to submit weekly reading reports and other weekly assignments will be made. All work must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Sunday to receive credit for the week. Work submitted after Sunday will be considered late and will either have points deducted or not be accepted. Any work turned in late will be lowered a minimum of one letter grade. No work will be accepted more than one week late. All written reports and student assignments must be turned in by 11:59 p.m. December 2, 2012. No written work will be accepted after that date.
It is important for the student to keep up and not get behind. Discussion forums may remain open beyond the Sunday deadline, but only posts submitted by that deadline will be considered for grading.