I. Course Description

This course consists of an examination of 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.

II. Objectives

1. To become conversant with general areas of Old Testament introduction (such as canonicity, textual criticism and higher criticism) so that one can defend the biblical text and possibly even discover some positive values for teaching and preaching.

2. To be able to discuss intelligently the historical and critical problems of Genesis through 2 Kings (plus 1 and 2 Chronicles) with the goal of defending the integrity of the biblical record.

3. To overview the basic contents of the Pentateuch and most Historical Books (namely, Genesis through Kings as well as Chronicles) in order to interpret each book properly in light of its historical/cultural background and its literary context--the purpose and structure (or natural outline).

4. Ideally to devote some time to valid application for preaching and teaching these books.

III. Requirements

A. Reading


1 Contact Information for Dr. Greg W. Parsons: E-mail: gwpbmats@juno.com or gparsons@bmats.edu. Office phone: 903-586-2501, ext. 224.


Each week the student must turn in a documented list of the amount read in the textbooks, the biblical text and occasional outside assignments. Please use the special reading slips which may be obtained from the seminary. Furthermore a "pop" quiz may be given at any time over the assigned reading for the day.

B. Exams

Two exams are scheduled (see below). The nature of these major tests will be described at a later time.

C. Research paper

Each student will write a research paper of 15 to 25 typewritten pages (double-spaced) using a compact font such as Times New Roman 10 or 12, not Courier New. However this length is only a suggested guideline. The quality of work and not the quantity (either long or short) is the main criterion. Twelve pages, however, should probably be an absolute minimum limit.

The term paper should resemble the 5th or 6th edition of Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Themes, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, or 1996.). Although footnotes are preferred, the notes may be placed at the back of the paper (or at the end of each chapter) if so desired. **Papers are normally due when the topic is scheduled for class lecture (see part IV below).** An oral presentation summarizing the paper will be required on that day (or some other day for topics not specifically scheduled for class study). The student should hand out at least an outline of his paper to each class member. He should refrain from reading every word unless he can maintain good eye contact and communicate well without going over the time limit.² [See handout *How to Do A Research Paper.*]

A few suggested paper topics are as follows. **Overview of a Bible book emphasizing structure, purpose, historical-cultural background and content (as well as certain critical matters such as authorship and dating if problematic):**

(1) Numbers ___________;
(2) Joshua _____________;
(3) Ruth _____________;
(4) Judges _____________;
(5) 1 Samuel ____________;
(6) 2 Samuel ____________;
(7) 1 Kings _____________;
(8) 2 Kings _____________.

Other topics include

(9) The Tabernacle (with possibly a slide presentation) (Oct. 8) _____________;
(10) Date of the Exodus and/or the Route of the Exodus (Oct. 8) _____________;
(11) Priests and Levites in the Old Testament (Oct. 8) _____________;
(12) The Tithe in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East (Nov. 5) _____________.

²The student's grade will be penalized for failure to turn in a finished report or for going beyond the time framework without prior permission.
D. Book review of Walter Kaiser, Preaching and Teaching from the O.T. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). This must be read in its entirety but with special attention to chapters 1-5, chapter 9, the conclusion and the two appendices. There should be a summary and interaction with Kaiser’s suggested method, particularly for preaching from OT narrative and OT Torah (Law). The length should be about 4 to 6 pages (single spaced). Each paragraph needs to include page numbers from Kaiser in parentheses. Do not use footnotes on this review. The due date is Nov. 19.

E. Grading guidelines

Mid-term exam (25%); final exam (25%); term paper (25%); reading reports & possible quizzes (12%); book review 10%; daily grade 2% (attendance & class participation); and oral report on paper 1%. Excessive absences will also affect the grade for class participation and for the weekly reading reports.

IV. Class Schedule (2009)


Assignment: read Archer, [1994 revision; 18, 20; 75-80]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 6-14, 598-614; Longman & Dillard, 13-18; 29-37 [1st ed. 17-21; 29b-36 ].


Assignment: read whole book of Genesis 1-50 and fill in the blanks of structural handout;
read Archer, 227-33 [1974 ed.=220-225]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 32-51 [1st ed= 88-116];
Longman & Dillard, 59-60 [1st ed. 53b-55a]; Kaiser, 139-145; Walton, 15-18, 76-78.
For extra credit, read Merrill, (1st ed.) 25-55.

Assignment: read biblical text; read Archer, 235-53 [1974 ed.=226-42]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush,
52-54, 61-75 [1st ed.=117-18, 128-46]; Longman & Dillard, 63-76 [1st ed. 57-68a]; Walton,
19, 62, 85; Merrill, 57-66.
For extra credit, read Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "Divine Hardening in the O.T," Bibliotheca Sacra

Oct.  8  Brief study of Exodus 25--40 (including brief study of the tabernacle).  The Date of
the Exodus.  ??Possible portion of DVD?? Rameses.
Assignment: read biblical text; read Archer, 254-55 & review 239-51 [1974 ed.=243-44 &
review 230-41]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, review 52-54 plus 55-62, 76-79 [1st ed.=review 117-18
then read 119-27, 147-48]; Longman & Dillard, 77-80 [1st ed. 68b-71]; Walton, 62, 99, 102-103;
Merrill, 67-75.

Oct. 15  Study of Leviticus.
Assignment: read all of Leviticus; read Archer, 257-63 [1974 ed.=245-50]; LaSor, Hubbard,
Bush, 80-98 [1st ed.=149-62]; Longman & Dillard, 81-91 [1st ed. 73-82]; Kaiser, 146-152;
Walton, 20, 22-23.  For extra credit: read R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament,
599-613.  Brief review for exam.

Oct. 22  MID-TERM EXAM

Oct. 29  Study of Numbers.
Assignment: read all of Numbers; read Archer, 264-70 [1974 ed.=249, 251-56]; LaSor, Hubbard,

Nov. 5  Study of Deuteronomy.
Assignment: read all of Deuteronomy; read Archer, 271-83 [1974 ed.=257-68]; LaSor, Hubbard,
also Harrison, 635-36, 653-62.

Nov. 12  Study of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.  Possibly briefly Date of Exodus and Conquest.
Assignment: read all of Joshua, Judges & Ruth; Archer, 285--309 [1974 ed.=269-287];
LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 131-37,138-164; 520-25; 664-666, 670-671 [1st ed.=190-93; 197-212;
611-616]; Longman & Dillard, 120-150 [1st ed. 107-134]; Walton, pp.26, 38-39, 104,111 (plus
review 102-103).  Fill out structural outline for Judges (handout).  For extra credit, Merrill, 122-140
*Nov. 19* Introduction to 1 and 2 Samuel. Brief study of 1 Samuel 1-31 and 2 Samuel 1-24 (with reference to 1 Chron. 10-29). Due date for book review on Kaiser.

**Assignment**: read all of 1 and 2 Samuel & 1 Chron. 10-29; read Archer, 311-15 [1974 ed.=288-93]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 165-192; 672-76 [1st ed.=227-252]; Longman & Dillard, 151-166 [1st ed. 135-147]; for extra credit, read Merrill, 189-232, 234-76, 281-82.

Nov. 26 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING DAY

Dec. 3 Introduction to Kings and Chronicles. Brief overview of 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-25 and 2 Chron. 10-36. Then brief review for exam. Fill out evaluation forms (if applicable).


Dec. 10 **FINAL EXAM**

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V. Bibliography for Old Testament Studies