I. Course Description

This is an historical and interpretative survey of the poetic and prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Special emphasis is given to the historical background, [literary] structure and [suggested] purpose of these books.

II. Textbooks

Besides the primary text of the Old Testament itself, five resources are required--four basic textbooks and a helpful bibliographic guide for research in biblical & theological studies.


[Please note also the three supplemental textbooks, including especially Merrill and Kaiser--below on p. 2.]

III. Course Objectives

1) To help the student become familiar with certain historical and critical problems of the poetic and prophetic books of the Old Testament (as well as Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther) as a foundation for defending the integrity of the biblical record.

2) To survey selected key sections of these poetic and prophetic books (plus Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther) with emphasis on the historical-cultural background, suggested purpose, and literary structure (or natural outline) of each Book.

3) To assist the student in doing research in the area of Old Testament studies.

4) To a limited extent, to propose hermeneutical and homiletical guidelines (especially for the poetic books) and to seek to model the proper procedure for making valid application in teaching and preaching.

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IV. Requirements for Grading

1. Reading
   Besides the assigned reading in the biblical text and the aforementioned textbooks, frequently additional reading will be required from other sources (see class schedule below). The two main supplemental books are Walter Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the O.T.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) and Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987). Also see R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*.
   
   Also several required articles on Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes? and Song of Songs by your current professor Greg W. Parsons [published in the theological journal *Bibliotheca Sacra*] are available for purchase through the bookstore and/or as a library master photocopy to save wear-and-tear on the bound journals.
   
   Reports on required reading assignments (including the portions read from the various Bible Books) must be recorded and turned in weekly on standardized reading slips. Students may be responsible for a quiz at any time (although not every week).

2. Exams
   The two exams (see class schedule for dates) will be similar to those given last semester. The precise nature of these tests will be explained later.

3. Research paper and report
   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. Primary criteria will be the quality of the paper and the thoroughness of the research. The paper should resemble the 5th or the 6th edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (except endnotes may be substituted for footnotes if so desired). See handout, “How to Do a Research Paper.”
   
   For most research paper topics (listed below) the due date is the same day that topic is scheduled for class discussion. An oral report of about 30 minutes (or less) must be presented at that time. [Be sure to turn in a finished copy of the research paper to the professor before the oral report is given.]²

4. Annotated bibliography.
   Each student who desires to qualify for an A or a B grade must read a minimum of three (3) scholarly articles on the Old Testament (at least 50 pages total). These articles must be read from at least two different periodicals or journals. [For a list of some important Old Testament journals, see Barker-Waltke-Zuck, below, pp. 72-73.] The preferred journals are marked with an asterisk [*] in Barker-Waltke-Zuck³ plus *Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Westminster Theological Journal, Biblical Theology*.²

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²The student's grade will be penalized for failure to turn in a finished report on time or for going beyond the time framework without prior permission.

An annotated bibliography (bibliographic data plus a summary and critical interaction showing positive contributions and/or negative aspects of each article) must be written on these three (or more) articles. The total length should be at least three (3) single-spaced typewritten pages. [For due date, see class schedule below.] Ideas for articles may be gleaned from introductory textbooks (for example, bibliography for each chapter in LaSor, Hubbard/Bush or from Longman’s book) or from consulting periodical indexes. One may choose to research a topic from the term paper list other than the one selected for one’s own term paper; however, one is not restricted to that list. Only one journal article cited in the term paper may be utilized in the annotated bibliography.

5. Grading guidelines
   The probable criteria for grading are as follows:
   Exams 25% each; research paper--30% (plus 1% for the oral report); 9% for weekly reading documented on reading slips [as well as any quizzes]; daily grade 2% (divided equally between class participation and class attendance); and annotated bibliographic research project--8%. 4

4Be sure to include the precise pages read in each article as a part of the bibliographic data (see Turabian) as well as the grand total for the whole paper (minimum of 50 pages).

For examples, cf. the periodical reviews in Bibliotheca Sacra, Southwestern Journal of Theology, or Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. Be sure to give credit if any help is derived from these reviews for your specific article(s) (i.e. not plagiarize their comments).

V. Possible term paper topics

1. The problem of how to understand and utilize the imprecatory Psalms [Due about Apr. 7]

2. The use of the Psalms in worship [March 31]

3. Research project: Annotated bibliography on preaching and teaching from prophetic literature (perhaps restrict to Major prophets or Minor prophets)

4. Geographical setting for the Book of Job (i.e. location of the land of Uz)

5. Temple in the Old Testament (e.g., trace the history of Solomon's temple to its fall and its being rebuilt as 2nd temple) [Due April 28]

6. Ezekiel's temple (including whether literal sacrifices in Ezekiel chapters 40-48)

7. Dead Sea Scrolls with special emphasis on the Book of Isaiah

8. Problem of the dating of Ezra and Nehemiah

9. Prophecy in the Old Testament (or The O.T. Prophet) and the Ancient Near East

    [This should include a study of the basic structure, possible purpose, historical background (or archaeological insights) and/or problems of interpretation and/or date/authorship. If possible one may seek to suggest resources or other tips for preaching and teaching from the Book.]
The following books would especially lend themselves to such a treatment:
Song of Solomon _______________; Ecclesiastes _______________; Daniel _______________; Hosea ________________; Amos _______________; Esther _______________; Zechariah _____________; Habakkuk _______________; Lamentations _______________; Ezra ____________; Nehemiah _______________; and Malachi ___________.

Studies which include or emphasize structure, purpose and other introductory matters (as basically done in this course by the professor) are normally due the date that book of the Bible is discussed in class. Also topics 1-9 will normally be due at the logical connection with class discussion. The latest due date for a paper topic not directly linked to a specific class session is April 28 (see class schedule below).

VI. Class Schedule (for 2009)


[For extra credit Archer, 525-536 [483-496] and Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 291-300, 310-313]


[For extra credit Merrill, 378-383, 387-389.]

[For extra credit read Kaiser, 161-166; Merrill, 383-86, 421-23, 429-30]

March 17  **MID-TERM EXAM**

March 24  Study of Isaiah.  **Assignment:** read as much of Isaiah as possible (at least chaps. 1-14, 28-55, 61-66); Archer, 363-390 [1974 ed.=333-59]; LaSor, 276-312, 688-694 [1982 ed. 365-402]; & Longman/Dillard, 301-320 [267-283]; Kaiser, 103, 113-118.  
[For extra credit read Merrill, 423-29; Harrison, *Introduction to O.T.*, 780-793.]

March 31  Study of Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.  **Assignment:** read all three Bible books; Archer, 391-97 [1974 ed.=360-66]; LaSor, 313-27 [1982 ed. 431-38, 445-54];


Review for final exam. Fill out evaluation forms (if applicable).

VII. Bibliography for Old Testament Studies

The required (and highly recommended) bibliographic guide by John Glynn, Commentary and Reference Survey (see above p. 1) will help orient the student to the vast information available on the Old Testament. Don’t forget to check sources mentioned in your other textbooks. Consult the class handout, “How to Do a Research Paper,” for further suggestions for finding resources (including some on the Internet).