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
The five required resources are as follows: four basic textbooks (as well as the primary text of the Old Testament itself) and a helpful bibliographic guide.


[Please note also the three supplemental textbooks by Merrill, Harrison 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 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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1 This syllabus is tentative and may be changed as needed.
IV. Requirements for Grading

1. Reading


A report of the required reading assignments (including the portions read from the various Bible Books) must be recorded and turned in on a checklist obtainable from professor through the seminary office. This checklist (recording separately the reading for 13 of the 14 class sessions through Thursday’s course assignments -see below)\(^2\) should be turned in by the end of class on Monday Jan. 4, the due date for report of reading of Monday through Thursday assignments (see the assigned material on class schedule below). Material for Friday’s reading assignments are due by Friday morning (Jan. 8). Students should review the specific material for each session since they are responsible for a quiz at any time (perhaps every day).

Photocopies of several required articles on Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs published in the theological journal *Bibliotheca Sacra* [which were written by your professor, Greg W. Parsons] are being made available through the seminary offices (and should be enclosed with this syllabus for out-of-town students) and must be read before class begins on Jan. 15. Most of these are also available online through FirstSearch.

2. Exams

The two exams (see class schedule for approximate time) will be similar to those given in OT 511. The precise nature of these tests will be explained later.

3. Research paper and report

Each student is responsible for a 15-to-25-page (double-spaced) typewritten paper using a compact font such as Times New Roman 10 or 12, not Courier New. (However 12 pages is probably an absolute minimum but no maximum if a quality job) The primary criteria will be the quality of the paper and the thoroughness of the research. The paper should resemble the 5th or 6\(^{th}\) edition of Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* except endnotes may be substituted for footnotes if so desired. The due date for this paper is Thursday Feb. 18 (or if mailed--postmarked by Feb. 16).\(^3\)

4. Annotated bibliography.

Each student 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 important Old Testament journals, see Barker-Waltke-Zuck, \(^2\)This must including chapters read for each Bible book listed for each of the 14 separate class sessions.

\(^3\)If mailed, be sure to retain a backup copy (including a hard copy).

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. The due date for this bibliography is Thursday—January 28 (or if mailed—postmarked by Jan. 26).

Ideas for articles may be gleaned from introductory textbooks (for example, bibliography for each chapter in LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush or from Dillard/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.

Note: Only one journal article utilized in the term paper may also be used in the annotated bibliography. However the student is highly encouraged to incorporate other journal articles into the term paper.

5. Grading guidelines
The tentative criteria for grading are as follows: exams 20% each; research paper--30%; 20% for assigned reading as documented on reading slips [as well as possible daily quizzes]; other daily grade possibly 2% (divided equally between class participation and class attendance); and annotated bibliographic research project--8%.

V. Possible Research Paper Topics
Note: Each student should try to come to class with a tentative term topic written down to be handed in on the first day [by 10:00 a.m. or at least by 12:00 noon] --preferably with #1 and #2 choices since normally only one subject topic per student.

1. Problem of how to understand and utilize the imprecatory Psalms _______________.
2. The use of the Psalms in worship _______________.
3. Research project: Annotated bibliography on preaching and teaching from prophetic literature (perhaps restrict to Major prophets or Minor prophets) _______________. [should include both books and articles in journals or books, etc.]
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) _______________.
6. Ezekiel’s temple (including whether literal sacrifices in Ezekiel chapters 40-48) _______________.

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4You must 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).

5See important reminders in footnotes 3 and 4.
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 at least the basic structure, nature or possible purpose, historical background or archaeological insights) and any problems of interpretation and/or date/authorship.  
[If possible one may suggest resources or tips for preaching and teaching from the Book.  
] The following books would lend themselves to such a treatment: Song of Songs; Ecclesiastes; Daniel; Hosea; Amos; Esther; Zechariah; Habakkuk; Lamentations; Ezra; Nehemiah; and Malachi.  
*Note: Option #10 (studies of certain individual books which include or emphasize structure, purpose and other introductory matters) is normally easier for the beginning student than the other topics above.  
The latest due date for each research paper is approximately February 18.

VI. Class Schedule (for 2010)  
Introduction: The tentative daily schedule is from 8:30 a.m. to possibly 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. (with periodic breaks).  This is subject to slight change depending on the specific material covered and considerations of student and teacher comfort.

Monday Jan. 4  
8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Brief review of syllabus & introduction to course.  Brief lecture: How to Do a Research Paper.  Introduction to Poetic Books and Hebrew poetry.  
Assignment: (1) Read LaSor, pp. 231-242 [1982 ed. 307-18]; Archer, pp. 481-85 [1974 ed.=441-45]; Longman/ Dillard, 26-28(1st ed. 27-29).  (2) Turn in #1 and #2 choices of a term paper topic (by 10:00 or at least noon today—first come, first served).  (3) Turn in reading checklist of pages read in textbooks and Bible by end of today.—recording separate lists of specific pages read (and specific Bible chapters) for each of the 14 sessions listed.  You must have read all required material on Poetry & Wisdom [Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs] and most of the Prophets (through Thursday’s course assignments) including most all chapters of the Old Testament books assigned for the whole course [see below for assignments correlated to each class session].  
10:45 to 11:45 (or 12:00).  Study of the Psalms.  

It is important to read each Bible book in one sitting in a modern version as recommended in the class assignments in order to get the "big picture" of each book.  Then try to scan over (review quickly) the biblical passages and at least some of the reading from textbooks the day before (or perhaps the day of) each class session.
1:15 to 3:15 p.m. Introduction to Wisdom Literature. Study of Proverbs.

3:45 to 6:00 p.m. Study of Job.

6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Possible review for quiz.

Tuesday Jan. 5
8:30 a.m. Possible review and/or quiz (if not already given).
9:15 to 11:15 a.m. Study of Ecclesiastes (including guidelines).

12:15 to 2:15 p.m. Study of Song of Solomon (=Song of Songs) including guidelines.

2:45 to 4:45 p.m. Introduction to the Prophets. Study of Obadiah, Joel and Jonah.

5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Possible quiz and review for exam including library time if needed.
Wednesday Jan. 6
8:30 to 10:30 a.m. MID-TERM EXAM

10:45 to 12:30 p.m. Study of Hosea, Amos, Micah.
   Assignment: Read and review all three Bible books; LaSor, pp. 243-75 [1982 ed. 319-46, 356-64]; Longman/Dillard, 397-408; 420-433; 449-455 [353-362; 373-384; 397-402]; Walton, p. 56; Kaiser, 103-105, 109-112. [For extra credit, read Kaiser, 161-166; Merrill, 383-86, 421-23, 429-30.]

1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Study of Isaiah.

3:45 to 5:45 p.m. Study of Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.
   Assignment: Read and review all three Bible books; LaSor, pp. 313-27 [1982 ed. 431-38, 445-54]; Longman/Dillard, 456-476 [403-420]; Walton, p. 64; Merrill, 454-457.

5:45 to 6:15. Possible review for quiz (if not already given).

Thursday Jan. 7
8:30 to 9:15 a.m. Possible quiz (if not already given).
9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

11:45 a.m. Tentative class luncheon?? (details given later)

1:00 to 3:15 p.m. Study of Daniel and Ezekiel.

3:30 to 5:45 p.m. Study of Haggai, Zechariah, and Esther.

6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Possible review for quiz?.
Friday Jan. 8

8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Study of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi.


11:00 to 12:00 Brief review for final exam. Fill out evaluation forms (if applicable).

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Supervised study time and/or library work.

2:00 to 4:00 p.m. FINAL EXAM

4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Opportunity for unfinished work in library in preparation for bibliography or term paper, etc.

Note: Students are also encouraged to stay over until Saturday to use the library (until noon). *Final reading reports (on reading slips) are due Friday (at the latest).

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).

VIII. Important Miscellaneous Information

My e-mail address: gwpbmats@juno.com or gparsons@bmats.edu in case you need to contact me prior to Jan. class or especially after the class sessions are over. If very important, you might want to send to both addresses with subject line OT 512 class question. My office phone is 903-586-2501, ext. 224.

If you live very far from Jacksonville, please try to arrive over the weekend (by at least Sunday evening) so you will be rested and on time for the first class session on Monday morning at 8:30. You should receive information in the mail from BMATS about accommodations.

If you are a new student, please note that BMATS library should be open by 8:00 a.m. each day for you to begin to get oriented to its resources.