SYLLABUS

OT512—OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY
B.M.A. Theological Seminary   Spring Semester 2015
Professor—Dr. Greg W. Parsons

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, four resources are required--four basic textbooks and a helpful bibliographic guide for research in biblical & theological studies.


[Please note also the four or five supplemental textbooks, below on p. 2.]

III. Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course the student should:

1) Be conversant with 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) Be familiar with the basic contents of the 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) Be aware of key resources and demonstrate basic competency in doing research in Old Testament studies, particularly the poetic and prophetic books.

4) Be able to state hermeneutical and homiletical guidelines (especially for the poetic books) and to begin to apply them in making valid application in teaching and preaching.

IV. Requirements for Grading

1. Reading

Besides the assigned reading in the biblical text and the required textbooks, additional reading may be required from other sources (see class schedule below). The four main

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*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*] some of which are uploaded on Moodle? [OT512] and/or as a library master photocopy to save wear-and-tear on the bound journals. See EBSCO for others.*

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 (different requirements for Filipino students due to limited resources--at least 15 to 20 pages double space (separate appendix below). Each student must 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 primary criteria will be the quality of the paper and the thoroughness of the research. The paper should resemble preferably the 6th or 7th edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (footnotes, **not** parenthetical style). 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 paper to the professor before the oral report.]

4. Annotated bibliography.
Each student who desires to qualify for an A or a B grade must read a **minimum of three (3)** scholarly **peer-reviewed** articles on the Old Testament (at least 50 pages total). These articles must be read from at least two different periodicals or journals. The preferred journals are marked with an asterisk [*] in Barker-Waltke-Zuck* plus *Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Westminster...*
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. This needs to be about 75% summary and 25% critical interaction. [Due date=April 6/7-see class schedule] Ideas for articles may be gleaned from introductory textbooks (e.g., bibliography for each chapter in LaSor, Hubbard/Bush; Hill & Walton, or Longman’s book) or from EBSCO searches. 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 research paper may be utilized in the annotated bibliography. [see slightly different details for the 3 options for long-distance Filipino students below]

5. Grading guidelines (for students on USA campus)
   The probable criteria for grading are as follows: Exams 22.5% each; research paper-25% (plus 2% for oral report); 10%--weekly reading documented on reading slips + summaries [or any quizzes]; daily grade 8% (divided equally between class participation and class attendance); & annotated bibliographic research project--10%.

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). Use page #s in parenthesis to cite locations within each article. For examples, see 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 research paper topics
1. The problem of how to understand and utilize the imprecatory Psalms ________________________________ . [Due about Apr. 6/7??] *cf. Filipino addendum #3 option for possible orientation but USA campus students must use more resources
2. The use of the Psalms in worship _______________________ [March 30/31]
3. Research project: Annotated bibliography on preaching and teaching from prophetic Major prophets (or Minor prophets) __________________________.
4. Concept of Day of the Lord in the Prophets (summarize & explain + ANE context) ~March 30/31?? __________
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 13/14] __________________________.
6. Ezekiel's temple (including whether literal sacrifices in Ezekiel chapters 40-48) __________________________. [April 13/14]
7. Dead Sea Scrolls with special emphasis on the Book of Isaiah ________________ . [possibly March 23/24]
8. Daniel's "70 weeks" (summary & analysis of views) _____________ [April 13/14]
9. Problem of canonicity of Book of Esther __________________________ [April 27/28]
10. Prophecy in the Old Testament (or The O.T. Prophet) and the Ancient Near East __________________________. [Due Feb. 23/24]
11. **Study of a particular Book of the Old Testament.** [Contrast Filipino
requirements in addendum [3 options; Wisdom, Prophetic or Imprecatory Psalms]

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 _______________; Micah _______________
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 1-10 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 13/14 (see class schedule below)

VI. Class Schedule (for 2015)

Jan. 19/20 Brief review of syllabus; How to Do A Research Paper. Introduction to Poetic Books
and Hebrew poetry. Study of the Psalms. **Assignment:** Read at least four Psalms from
each of the 6 types described in LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 431-40 [1982 ed.=513-23];
LaSor, 231-242; 425-446 [1982 ed. 307-318, 507-532]; ?? Hill & Walton, 375-379a,
383-389a, 419-438; and Walton, 47-51. **Also read Greg W. Parsons, "Guidelines
for Understanding and Proclaiming the Psalms," Bibliotheca Sacra 147 (April-June,
1990):169-187—need 1-page single-spaced summary/reaction.**

For extra credit: read J. Carl Laney, "A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms,"

Jan. 26/27 Introduction to Wisdom Literature. Study of Proverbs. **Assignment:** Read as much
of Proverbs as possible (preferably in a single sitting in a modern version such as
NIV, NASB, or NKJV)—at least chaps. 1-15, 22-26, 30-31); read LaSor, 447-470 [1982 ed.
533-59]; Hill/Walton 379b-383a, 389-396, 440-451. and **Greg W. Parsons,
"Guidelines for Understanding and Proclaiming the Book of Proverbs," Bibliotheca Sacra


Feb. 2/3 Study of Job. **Assignment:** read as much of Job as possible (preferably in a single sitting
in a modern version)—at least chaps. 1-19, 25-42); read LaSor, 471-96 [1982 ed.
560-85]; Hill & Walton, 401-417 and Greg(ory) W. Parsons, "The Structure and Purpose of
the Book of Job," Bibliotheca Sacra 138 (1981):139-157 [or the reprinted version of
the same article in Roy Zuck, ed., Sitting with Job: Selected Studies on the Book of Job
(Baker Book House, 1992), 17-33]; and also **Parsons, "Guidelines for Understanding


[For extra credit read Longman/Dillard, 278-288 [1st ed. 247-255].]


March 9/10 NO CLASS. 1st Spring Break.

March 16/17 MID-TERM EXAM


March 30/31 Study of Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Assignment: read all three Bible books; LaSor, 313-27 [1982 ed. 431-38, 445-54]; Hill & Walton, 651-674; Walton, 64: Greg W Parsons, HCSB Study Bible (2010), Introduction & study notes: 1535-1542; 1553-1560. need 1/2 -page single-spaced summary/reaction. [For extra credit Longman/Dillard, 456-476 (=403-420)]


April 20/21  NO CLASS. BMAA meeting. Spring Break # 2.


May 11/12  FINAL EXAM

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).

Addendum  For Filipino students only [3 more basic options for both term paper and for annotated bibliography]

I. Term paper  ( Required book reviews 2 books for each option #1 and #2 & other details for option ## for term (research papers which will involve book reviews and interactions: (total of 15 to 20 pages). This should be about 2/3 summary and interaction + 1/3 comparison (similarities and contrasts with other materials).

Option #1:  2 books 1a) Richard Clifford, Wisdom Literature summary and review/analyze
(+compare & contrast with Hill & Walton, and LaSor, Hubbard, Bush+evaluate and analyze + own conclusions) this part 4 to 5 pages single or (8 to 10 pages double)

#1b) Donald K. Berry An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament [Kindle Edition] sale $0.99 + contrast and compare with Clifford and Hill/Walton and LaSor/Hubbard/Bush this part 4 to 5 pages single or (8 to 10 pages double)

Term paper option #2 also 2 books David L. Petersen Prophetic Literature: an Introduction (274 pp) Westminster John Knox Press (2002) compare and contrast with Hill/Walton & LaSor Hubbard Bush.?? + cite similarities and differences and your evaluation of each aspect. this part ~4 to 5 pages single or (8 to 10 pages double)

Also contrast/compare with Willem VanGemeren, Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament [Kindle Edition] $4.29 Kindle book review + (summary & analysis) this part 4 to 5 pages single (=8 to 10 pages double)


*In paper option #3, be sure to define the problem of the imprecatory psalms. try to identify a list of Psalms in this category; and list and summarize the basic views and your evaluation of each 1) Read, summarize and interact with required book by Nehrbass; this part 4 pages to 5 pages single (=8 to 10 pages double)

2) Study material in textbooks and other available resources including Bullock, Encountering the Psalms (see possible attachment)

3) Choose at least 3 journal articles on imprecatory psalms (see GWP selected bibliography) to read from EBSCO: summarize and annotate (evaluate and analyze)==minimum 1 page single space each (or 2 pages double spaced for each). Compare and contrast to Nehrbass (grand total of all 3 parts 7.5 to 10 pages single spaced (or 15 to 20 pages double).

II. Annotated bibliography assignment (modification) for Filipino students choose one of 3 options below (also see #4 in main syllabus above for basic guidelines of length and basic regulations). = Length: minimum 1 page single space each (or 2 pages double spaced for each)=at least 3 single space pages or 6 double space for total assignment

Annotated bib. option #1 :Need to have at least 3 journal articles totaling 50 pages or more on wisdom literature (or Job, Proverbs or Ecclesiastes). Use EBSCO (or choose from suggested articles in GWP bibliography) to summarize and analyze

Annotated bib. option #2: Need at least 3 journal articles on Prophets (or one of Prophetic books--) totaling 50 pages or more to read from EBSCO: (or choose from suggested articles in GWP bibliography) to summarize and annotate (evaluate and analyze)=

Annotated bib. option #3: Choose at least 3 articles on the Poetic Books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, or Song of Songs) totaling 50 pages or more to read from EBSCO. Only one article may be included on imprecatory Psalms (but not required). to summarize and annotate (evaluate and analyze).