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

Besides the text of the Old Testament, three primary textbooks and two additional books (a bibliographic guide and another book for review) are required. The main books will be read according to the class schedule (see IV. below):


Other highly recommended books are Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests: A

Each week the student must turn in a documented list of the amount read in the textbooks, the biblical text and occasional outside assignments. Use the special reading slips obtainable from the seminary. A "pop" quiz may be given at any time over the assigned reading.

B. Two Exams

The nature of these 2 major tests (see below) 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. However, 12 to 13 pages should probably be an absolute minimum limit for certain subjects more difficult to research. Normally a minimum of 10 resources including two peer-reviewed journal articles is required (see below).

The term paper should resemble the 6th or 7th edition of Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Themes, and Dissertations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996 or 2007.). Regular footnotes (not the alternate parenthetical style) are required. 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.³ [See handouts + Moodle: 1) How to Do A Research Paper 2) Tentative Term Paper [or Term Topic] Rubric for OT511-512.]

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. 6 _____________); (10) Date of the Exodus and/or the Route of the Exodus (Oct. 6 _____________); (11) Priests & Levites in the Old Testament (Oct. 6 _____________); (12) The Tithe in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East (Nov. 3 _____________); (13) The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament (Nov. 17 _____________); (14) War in the Old Testament & the ancient Near East (including concept of Holy War) Nov. 10 _____________.

³The student's grade will be penalized for failure to turn in a finished report or for going beyond the time framework without prior permission.
(15) Monogamy and Polygamy in the Old Testament and in the ancient Near East (Nov. 17)  

(16) An Analysis (or Critique) of Roman Catholic Views concerning Canonicity (Nov. 10??)  

(17) A Comparison of ancient Near Eastern Law Codes with Old Testament Laws (especially Exod. 20-24 and Deuteronomy)--i.e. similarities and differences and implications (Nov. 3)  

(18) A Character Study of the Kings of Israel and Judah (a comparative study summarizing strengths and weaknesses) Dec. 1  

(19) OT feasts of Israel and possible Messianic significance Oct. 13  

(20) Problem of OT God as allegedly “angry, sexist, and/or racist,” etc.” (could include possible book review of Lamb and/or Copan--with last half of report a study of one key issue: see book with similar subtitle by David T. Lamb, God Behaving Badly and/or Paul Copan, Is God a Moral Monster?) due Nov. 10  

(21) Gen. 1-11: Issues of history and genre including Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood (due Oct. 27)  

(22): David: Historical or Legendary Hero and King (due Nov. 24)  

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 detailed summary of these sections and interaction with Kaiser’s suggested method, particularly for preaching from OT narrative and OT Torah (Law). The length should be at least 5 and preferably 6 pages (single-spaced). Each paragraph needs to include page numbers from Kaiser in parentheses. Do not use footnotes on this review unless you borrow someone else’s ideas in reviewing the book. The due date is Nov. 3. This needs to be about 75% summary and 25% critical interaction.

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 (2015)


Assignment: read LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 6-14, 598-614 Hill & Walton, 487(b)-498; also read Archer, 1994 revision; 18, 20; 75-88; [2007: ed. 17, 19, 61-70].


Oct. 6  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 [1974 ed.=243-44]; LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, review 52-54 plus 55-62, 76-79 [1st ed.=review 117-18 then read 119-27, 147-48]; Hill & Walton, 105-107, 120, 124, 186-190; Walton, 19, 62, 85. **For extra credit:** Longman & Dillard, 66-69, 77-80 [?1st ed. 68b-71+];

Oct. 13  Study of Leviticus. **Assignment:** read all of Leviticus; read LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 80-98 [1st ed.=149-62]; Kaiser, 146-152; Hill & Walton, 124-140; Walton, 20, 22-23; **For extra credit:** read R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* 599-613 **Brief review for exam.**

Oct. 20  **MID-TERM EXAM**

Oct. 27  Study of Numbers. **Assignment:** read all of Numbers; read LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 99-110 [1st ed.=163-74]; Hill & Walton, 142-160; Walton, p. 37. **For extra credit:** read R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the O.T.* 622-34.

*Nov. 3  *Due date for book review on Kaiser.** Study of Deuteronomy. **Assignment:** read all of Deuteronomy; read LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 111-127 [1st ed.=175-89]; Hill & Walton, 162-177 + 362; Walton, 24, 86-87

Nov. 17  Study of Judges and (possibly) 1 Sam. chaps. 1-7. Assignment: Read all of Judges & 1 Sam. 1-7; Fill out structural outline for Judges (handout). Also LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 153-64; 168-171 [1st ed.=213-25, 229-34]; Hill & Walton, 234-247; Walton, 26, 39, 104, 111. For extra credit, Longman & Dillard, 133-143 [1st ed. 119-127].

Nov. 24  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). Assignment: read all of 1 and 2 Samuel & 1 Chron. 10-29; read LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, 165-192; 672-76 [1st ed.=227-252]; Hill & Walton, 256-275. For extra credit, read Merrill, 189-232, 234-76, 281-82.


Dec. 8  FINAL EXAM

V. Bibliography for Old Testament Studies

The highly recommended (required) bibliographic guide by John Glynn (see above p.1, book #4) will help introduce the student to the vast material written concerning the Old Testament.


VI. Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):
Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary supports the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with physical or learning disabilities desiring additional assistance must consult with the Dean’s office prior to enrollment or as early as possible after the disability is diagnosed. Procedures
for assisting students will require a physician’s written verification of the disability and probable benefit(s) of specific assistance for student learning, a student’s specific written request(s) for assistance from the seminary, and the informing of the seminary faculty. Reasonable accommodations will be given in accordance with the federal and state laws though the Dean’s Office. Contact the Dean’s Office in the main administration building in person or:

- by mail: Post Office Box 670 (1530 East Pine Street) Jacksonville, TX 75766-5407
- by phone: 800/259-5673
- by email: bmatsem@bmats.edu

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