SYLLABUS

OT512—OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY
B.M.A. Theological Seminary   Spring Semester 2016
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--three 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,

*Also see 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 uploaded on Moodle--OT512 Resources) 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). Extra credit assignments include a summary/interaction of selected journal articles or other readings (see below).

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 *how to do a research paper.* See rubrics (handouts & on Moodle resources?).

   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 journals. The preferred journals are marked with an

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3The 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.\(^5\) 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 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.

5. Grading guidelines
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%.


\(^5\)Be 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. 7]
2. The use of the Psalms in worship _______________ [March 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 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 14] _______________.
6. Ezekiel's temple (including whether literal sacrifices in Ezekiel chapters 40-48) _______________. [April 14]
7. Dead Sea Scrolls with special emphasis on the Book of Isaiah _______________. [possibly March 24]
8. Daniel's "70 weeks" (summary & analysis of views) _______________ [April 14]
9. Problem of canonicity of Book of Esther _______________ [April 21]
10. Prophecy in the Old Testament (or The O.T. Prophet) and the Ancient Near East _______________. [Due March 3]

[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 ___________
- 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 14 (see class schedule below)

VI. Class Schedule (for 2016)


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


**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); LaSor, 276-312, 688-694 [1982 ed. 365-402]; Longman/Dillard, 301-320 [267-283]; Hill & Walton, 518-530; and Kaiser, 103, 113-118. Also Archer, 363-369, 374, 381-388 [2007 ed.=308-312, 317, 323-329].

[For extra credit Harrison, *Introduction to O.T.*, 780-793.]

**March 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 28 NO CLASS. BMAA meeting. Spring Break.


May 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.

VIII: 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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