



OTEN5351 INTERPRETING THE OT 1 GENESIS TO ESTHER

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Biblical Studies Division

Fall 2022

Tuesday/Thursday: 8:00 - 9:20 am

LSC ____

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course introduces the content and major interpretive issues of Genesis–Esther. The course covers literary, historical, and theological contexts as well hermeneutical principles related to reading the OT genres of law and historical narratives. This course complements OTEN5352 OT Interpretation II: Job–Malachi.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the semester, the student will:

Recognize the key issues in the critical study of the OT books of Genesis–Esther.

Recognize the purpose and message of the OT books of Genesis–Esther.

Understand the significance of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

Utilize key hermeneutical principles to interpret OT genres of narrative, law, and history.

Develop an appreciation for and enjoyment of the Old Testament.

Embedded Assignment

Worksheet 1 includes the following question and must be answered in fulfillment as the embedded assignment in the course:

Identify how the ten commandments relate to the succession of covenants throughout the Pentateuch and Former Prophets. Draw from your assessment how this covenant idea should impact the body of Christ, including individual believers.

1. Students should understand thoroughly Old Testament history, background, and selected themes of the Old Testament.
2. Students should adequately apply Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to contemporary church needs.
3. Students should communicate clearly Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to a contemporary audience.

Textbooks

Required Course Texts

1. **One** of the following translations of the Bible: Christian Standard Bible, English Standard Version, New International Version, New Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible.
2. Fee, Gordon D. and Douglass Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
3. Hess, Richard S. *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
4. Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Zondervan Publishing, 1994. (CBOT)
5. Arnold, Bill T., and Brent A. Strawn. *The World Around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
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Course Teaching Methodologies

The course will involve the following methodologies:

The primary method of instruction for this course will be lecture and guided analysis of the Old Testament. Students will also learn through reading, discussion, and research assignments which they will complete as required components of the course.

Class discussions concerning the relevance of various ways of studying the Bible upon the life of the church will help frame and integrate this knowledge. Bible reading and textbook reading will give students a base of textual knowledge from which to explore various ways of studying the Old Testament in depth. Students will gain facility in research through intense focus on the text of the Old Testament, reflective assessment of its impact on contemporary ethical conversations, analysis of critical approaches to the history of Israel, and engagement with hermeneutical theory and its positioning of the practice of historiography. Students will also collaborate towards understanding the world of the Old Testament.

Course Requirements

1. Students are responsible for reading the assigned material for each class meeting (see course schedule for reading assignments), including reading through the Old Testament in any recent, modern English translation, by following the weekly assignments. All students are expected to have read the texts

according to the course schedule and to come to class on time and prepared to participate in discussion on the topic of the day.

2. Students will demonstrate biblical literacy and hermeneutical skills development of Genesis to Esther by submitting four worksheets during the semester (9/6; 10/11; 11/10; and final exam). Each worksheet requires biblical and academic research. All documentation must use Turabian (or equivalent) styles. While informal, submissions should be typed, preferably in single-spaced, 12 pt, Times New Roman font. Rigorously document the use of sources.

Evaluation of Grade

Preparation, Participation, Reading (Bible, Hess, and Arnold/Strawn):	15%
Worksheet 1: Biblical Narrative Analysis	21%
Worksheet 2: Biblical Ethics Analysis	21%
Worksheet 3, Part 1: Hermeneutical Analysis	22%
Worksheet 3, Part 2: History Assessment of Arnold & Strawn	21%
Extra-Credit impact (one letter grade possible boost)	

Attendance & Lateness policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Please notify the professor and/or teaching assistant as soon as possible if you, your family, or your church suffer emergencies that require your absence or might otherwise delay your completion of the work.

Unpreparedness through lack of reading, missed attendance, and consistent late arrival will significantly impact your participation grade. **All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

Late assignment submissions will be accepted, but will have a maximum score of 60%. No submissions will be accepted once the semester ends according to the posted time of the final exam.

In case of school closure due to hurricanes, the professor may modify the course schedule or revise the course requirements. The first and second worksheets are designed so that they can be accomplished without access to research resources if weather emergencies require. If hurricane activity causes excessive closures, lecture material will be supplemented via Canvas and/or BlueJeans.

Extra credit is available through early submission of part or all of the final project and/or through submission of a book review, as detailed in the instructions for the final project.

Technical Assistance: For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas.NOBTS.com Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas@nobts.edu.

3. ITCsupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.

4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at: https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

The England/Michalski rubric for evaluating papers

	Substance (40%)	Research (30%)	Composition (20%)	Presentation (10%)
A	<p>Presentation of original concepts with subtlety and depth in conversation with major sources</p> <p>Strong, complete arguments with clear connection to data</p> <p>Research question relevant to the nature of the text, the needs of the church, and the norms of the academy</p> <p>Discovery, use, and presentation of significant quantity of high-quality data</p>	<p>Thorough representation of the field</p> <p>Meaningful use of sources</p> <p>Responsible interaction with sources</p> <p>Transparent acknowledgment of sources</p>	<p>Compelling, readable prose</p> <p>Unique, confident authorial voice establishing rapport with reader</p> <p>Serious style but not stuffy</p> <p>Very well-ordered thinking and wording</p>	<p>Clean text without distractions</p>
B	<p>Promising but inconsistent/incomplete arguments</p> <p>Competent conceptual development</p>	<p>Serviceable representation of the field</p> <p>Ambiguous acknowledgment of sources</p>	<p>Serviceable presentation of research</p>	<p>Minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or formatting</p>

C	Failure to connect arguments with data Ambiguous concepts Inaccurate data Relevance is obscure	Shallow representation of the field, or reliant on small subset of sources Ambiguous acknowledgment of sources	Inconsistent language sometimes obscuring content or degrading research credibility	Frequent errors obscuring content
D	Derivative arguments Obscure concepts Grossly inaccurate data Research is off-topic or irrelevant	Inaccurate representation of the field Irresponsible or insignificant handling of sources	Damaged language obscuring content and degrading research credibility	Pervasive errors obscuring content
F	No effort evident	No effort evident	No effort evident	No effort evident

Assignment instructions

Worksheets

The assignments in this class will take the form of worksheets that build on the textbook readings but require extensive reading and research beyond the textbooks.

Each worksheet consists of several questions, of which a specific number per worksheet must be chosen and answered. The first two worksheets should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words (single-spaced preferred) and using 12 pt Times New Roman.

Extra credit opportunity

Submit a substantive, critical review of one of the following in 1,500-2,000 words:

- John Walton, *The Lost World of the Torah*
- Brent Strawn, *The Old Testament Is Dying*

Course Schedule

Wk	Date	Topic(s)	Reading Due	Assignment Due
1	8/16	Syllabus Day; 4Fold Ovr & Translations	Have all of Fee & Stuart read by 8/25	
	8/18	OT Canon: Order &	Hess 1-21	F/S 1-73

		development; Jewish Models of Interp		
2	8/23	Basic Hermeneutics for OT		Completed all of F/S
	8/25	Library Ref Room	Good resources and guides to background, word study, & exegesis	
3	8/30	Narrative Genre		F/S 93-111
	9/1	Law Genre		F/S 168-86
4	9/6	Genesis	Hess 23-54	Worksheet 1
	9/8			
5	9/13	Exodus	Hess 55-78	
	9/15			

Course Schedule

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
6	9/20	Leviticus	Hess 79-101	
	9/22			
7	9/27	Numbers	Hess 102-22	
	9/29			
	10/4			
	10/6			
8	10/11	Deuteronomy	Hess 123-53	Worksheet 2
	10/13			
9	10/18	Joshua	Hess 155-93	
	10/20			
10	10/25	Judges	Hess 194-219	
	10/27	Ruth	Hess 220-235	
11	11/1	1 Samuel	Hess 236-74	
	11/3	2 Samuel		
12	11/8	1 Kings	Hess 275-316	
	11/10	2 Kings		Worksheet 3
13	11/15	1,2 Chronicles	Hess 317-47	
	11/17	Ezra, Nehemiah	Hess 348-69	
	11/22	Thanksgiving Break (no class)		

	11/24			
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14	11/29	Esther	Hess 370-91	
	12/1		Exams Begin	Worksheet 4

Worksheet 1 (three areas)

Worksheet 1 is a biblical analysis requiring close reading of the Bible without reference to scholarship. This is your own analysis of narrative elements of the Old Testament.

Choose two of the following questions to answer in 1,500 to 2,000 words for each question..

1. Read Genesis 12-25 closely. Account for every test Abraham faces and analyze whether he succeeded or failed in each one. Signify whether and how he honored God in each scenario.
2. Compare the life of David in the Former Prophets, the Psalter, and later references in the Old Testament. Follow this pattern for your research:
 - a. Compose a presentation of the life of David from the Former Prophets.
 - b. Gather and arrange material on his life from the Psalms.
 - c. Identify and arrange data from the remainder of the Old Testament.
 - d. Compare and contrast the picture of David composed by these sources, both in their total impression of him and in their accounts of the details of his life.
3. Investigate the social function of the sacrificial system. Specifically, address the observance of the sabbath in light of narrative portrayals of festival observance. Where in the Old Testament is sabbath actually portrayed as being observed?

Answer the following: Identify how the ten commandments relate to the succession of covenants throughout the Pentateuch and Former Prophets. Draw from your assessment how this covenant idea should impact the body of Christ, including individual believers.

This embedded assignment addresses the program learning objectives, focusing on how:

Students should understand thoroughly Old Testament history, background, and selected themes of the Old Testament.

Students should adequately apply Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to contemporary church needs.

Students should communicate clearly Old Testament history, background, and selected Old Testament themes to a contemporary audience.

Worksheet 2

Answer both of the following questions in 1,500 to 2,000 words EACH. Much of your research should be done within the Bible, but some scholarly research beyond the Bible is necessary to frame your answers adequately and to orient your thinking.

1. How is the Old Testament oriented towards questions of justice? Think through all dimensions of the word “justice.” Tabulate every location in the Pentateuch (whether law, narrative, or poetry) that addresses in some way the problem of verbally, relationally, economically, sexually, or physically abusive behavior.
2. How does the Pentateuch present the role of women in society? Discuss the different social roles for girls, women, wives, servants, etc., mentioned in the Pentateuch. How do the law codes in the Pentateuch speak to present-day questions about the roles of men and women in the church? Develop a biblical-theological rationale for how you relate these passages to the Christian community. Discuss also how they relate to the New Testament.

Worksheet 3

1. Complete the historical background study (2,000-2,500 words) for **one** of the following passages.

<i>Easier</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Harder</i>
Faith, Gen 15:1-6	Divorce, Deut 24:1-4	Curse of Eve (Headship), Gen 3:16
Exodus, Passover vs Firstborn son, Exo 12:1-13	Mixed Marriages, Ezra 9-10	Corp vs. individual responsibility for sin, Josh 7:16-26
Atonement & Sacrifice, Lev 16:1-19	Did God reject the ten northern tribes (causes of Judgment), 2 Kgs 17:7-23	Value of life, compare Lev 27:1-8 with Exo 21:22-25
Confession, Neh 9	Morality of Samson, Judges 13-16	Did David “assault” Bathsheba? 2 Sam 121-13
Ethical wisdom, 1 Kings 3:16-28	Slavery, Exo 21:1-11	Jephthah’s vow, Judges 11
God’s vs. Man’s sovereignty, Exodus 4-14 (Pharaoh)	Penal Justice, Gen 4:1-15	Biblical welfare, Deut 14:28-15:11

2. Complete a word study for 1-3 words, selected from the same chosen passage above. (1,000-1,250 words).
3. Provide short answers to the following questions about the text selected from above:
- a. What is the big idea of this passage?
 - b. How does the literary layout of this passage support (or not) your answer for question 1?
 - c. What are the major/minor themes embedded in the passage selected above?
 - d. How does the background information (context) of the selected passage impact its meaning/interpretation?
 - e. What rhetorical devices exist in the selected passage?
 - f. How might the selected passage apply to the contemporary church? Is this explicit or implicit? Please explain how you view this.

Worksheet 4

2,000-3,500 words total

- Arnold, Bill T., and Brent A. Strawn, eds. *The World Around the Old Testament: The Peoples and Places of the Ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2016.

Answer the following questions, drawing from the chapters of the Arnold/Strawn text.

1. Identify and rank the three cultures that most impacted the Israelites. Explain how each culture impacted the Israelites and what evidence convinced you of this.
2. How did the Israelites compare in their use of technology compared to other ANE cultures? Provide examples.
3. Compare and contrast the sociological development of the Israelites in the light of their milieu.
4. Which ANE culture intrigued you the most? Explain why.
5. Compare and contrast the religions of the ANE cultures to that of the Israelites: divide this answer into two parts:
 - a. Pre-temple period
 - b. Temple period
6. Reflect on how different ancient Israel was compared to the surrounding cultures. List and explain 3-5 similarities and/or differences.