



OTEN5300: Exploring the Old Testament

Biblical Studies Division
Spring, 2021

Classroom: HSC room 276 (second floor,

south side)

Meeting Times: Thursdays, 6–9 PM, Jan 21–May 13

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NOBTS Mission

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

Course Description:

In this class, students will become competent Old Testament teachers. Students are introduced to the historical, literary, and theological dimensions of each book of the OT, as well as key critical issues and key resources for future research. Students also gain a good perspective, good practices, and solid experience relating to the study and teaching of the OT.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the student will demonstrate:

1. a basic knowledge of the historical context, literary characteristics, and theological purpose of each OT book by writing a concise introduction to the OT
2. a basic knowledge of key resources used in the study of the OT by designing a personal library
3. a basic appreciation of the value of learning OT contexts by writing a short reflection paper
4. a basic ability to teach OT contexts by recording an introduction to an OT book
5. a basic ability to retain the material learned in this course by developing a system for organizing personal notes

Course Delivery:

- This course requires students to prepare for each session before coming to class (e.g. by reading the textbooks)
- The class will meet in-person to introduce new content and to reinforce all content
- The class will utilize Blackboard for preparation, in-class activities, and assignment submissions

Required Textbooks:

1. Hess, Richard S. *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
<https://www.amazon.com/Old-Testament-Historical-Theological-Introduction/dp/080103714X>
2. Hill, Andrew E. and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2009. <https://www.amazon.com/Survey-Old-Testament-Andrew-Hill/dp/0310280958>
3. A Bible that meets the following requirements:
 - Translation must be up-to-date (written or updated within the past 50 years)
 - Translation style must be dynamic-equivalent (thought-for-thought)
 - A Study Bible is recommended (with book introductions)
 - Example: <https://www.amazon.com/Zondervan-Study-Bonded-Leather-Indexed/dp/031043839X>

Course Requirements:

Old Testament Competency (65%): In this course, students will familiarize themselves with the contexts and content of each book of the OT. *This requirement is related to Student Learning Outcome #1.*

1. Reading: Old Testament (10% of total grade)

Before each class session, students will read the OT books that will be discussed in that session (see below). Students are welcome to skim these books (instead of reading them carefully), especially if the student is very familiar with the book or has read it recently.

(The goal is for students to get a feel for the book as a whole—themes, structure, purpose, etc.) Students will record the percentage of the required OT reading that they completed on the in-class quiz (see below).

2. Reading: Textbooks (20% of total grade)

Before each class session, students will read the portions of the textbooks that pertain to that session (see below). Students are welcome to skim these chapters, as long as they are gleaning the necessary information for completing their assignments. (The goal is for students to learn about the historical context, literary characteristics, theological purpose, and key critical issues for each OT book.) Students will record the percentage of the required textbook reading that they completed on the in-class quiz (see below).

3. Attendance & Quizzes (20% of total grade)

Students will attend all class sessions, will meaningfully engage in the class, and will not hinder the class in any way.

At the end of each class session, students will complete a quiz. The

quiz will cover the main points made in the reading and in class. (The quiz will also serve as a record of the student's Bible reading, textbook reading, and classroom attendance.) Students are not allowed to use any notes on the quiz.

4. Paper: Old Testament Introduction (15% of total grade)

At the end of the course, students will submit a **concise** introduction to the OT. (Note: this paper is just meant to be an overview, not a thorough introduction to each OT book.) The paper will have an Introduction paragraph, a paragraph on OT influences (from Week 1), a paragraph on each OT book (or one longer paragraph per group of books for books that naturally go together—see the example below), a paragraph on OT transmission (Week 15), and a Conclusion paragraph. (1 paragraph = 3+ sentences.) Paragraphs on OT books will cover at least one important piece of information on each of the following: the historical context, the literary characteristics, and the theological purpose of the book(s). The total length of the paper will be fifteen to twenty pages in length, double-spaced, typed. Here is an example paragraph that covers three NT books that naturally go together:

John wrote three letters (1 John; 2 John; 3 John) near the end of his life to Christians living in the Ephesian church network, a major first-century center for Christianity. These churches had recently suffered at the hands of fake Christians who rejected John's Gospel. John wanted these churches to know they were God's people (1 John), to reject the false brothers (2 John), and to embrace the true people of God (3 John). John utilized many contrasts (e.g. between Diotrephes and Demetrius in 3 John) in order to make his point. Two recurring themes in these letters are truth and the two ways (from Hebrew tradition).

This paper will be graded based on whether all of the required elements are present and whether these elements match the content taught in this course. Students are welcome to disagree with the course content as long as they cite their alternate source(s) for each point of disagreement. Students are not permitted to disagree merely based on personal opinion.

Preparation for Future Study (35%): In this course, students will complete several projects in preparation for their future study of the OT. *This requirement is related to Student Learning Outcomes #2–6.*

5. Recording: Organization System (5% of total grade)

Students will develop a system for organizing their personal notes on the OT. This system must allow the student to quickly locate their personal notes on any book of the OT, on any group of OT books, and on the OT as a whole. The system must allow the student to easily add information as they continue to learn new things. The system must have a place for each of the papers and recordings produced in this class.

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Students are welcome to use any system they desire (e.g. a folder system; a web page; a linked note app). However, students are not permitted to simply use a course folder as their system, since course folders contain other course materials, and course folders are (by definition) not mixed into one another.

Students must record and submit their system. The recording must clearly show that the student is able to quickly locate information on a specific book of the Bible and that the student is able to easily add new information on a specific book of the Bible. Students are welcome to record and submit their system in any format they desire (e.g. descriptive document; pictures; video). A descriptive document might be around two to four pages in length, double-spaced, typed.

6. Recording: Personal Library (5% of total grade)

Students will design a personal library for the study of the OT.

This library should include resources on methodology (e.g. a hermeneutics book), languages (e.g. a concordance), literary conventions (e.g. a book about Hebrew poetry), manuscripts (e.g. a canon formation book), historical context (e.g. an Introduction), general contents (e.g. a Survey), specific contents (e.g. a commentary), theology (e.g. an OT Theology), and application (e.g. a Life Application Bible). Students may use any reliable source for identifying these resources, such as BestCommentaries.com, the textbook, class sessions, and other course syllabi.

Students are not required to purchase anything for this project. Students are welcome to record this library in any format they desire (e.g. video; typed bibliography; Amazon wish list). The library will be graded based on whether resources from each of the required fields are present. A typed bibliography might be around two to four pages in length, double-spaced, typed.

7. Teaching: OT Book Introduction (20% of total grade)

At the end of the course, students will submit a short teaching on introductory materials related to a book of the OT.

Students will: (1) choose a book of the OT to introduce; (2) study the historical context, literary characteristics, and theological purpose of that book; (3) study the key critical issues pertaining to that book; (4) prepare a teaching that covers this material; (5) prepare a visual aid; and (6) deliver and record the teaching. The teaching should be around fifteen minutes in length.

This teaching will be graded based on whether all of the key elements are present (historical, literary, and theological dimensions; visual aid) and whether these elements match the content taught in this course. Students are welcome to disagree with the course content as long as they cite their alternate source(s) for each point of disagreement. Students are not permitted to disagree merely based on personal opinion.

8. Paper: Final Reflections (5% of total grade)

At the end of the course, students will submit a short reflection on the importance and value of learning about OT contexts. This paper should be one to two pages in length, double-spaced, typed.

A **good** paper will provide clear justification for why OT contexts are important to interpretation and specific examples of the value of learning OT contexts. A **bad** paper will say something like “this class was good I learned a lot I like the OT I plan to take more classes.”

Workload Breakdown:

Bible reading	2+ hours / week (on average)
Other reading (textbooks)	1.5+ hours
Writing (OT intro, reflection)	1 hours

Recordings (org, lib, book intro) 1.5+ hours
Total: 6–9 hours / week (on average)

Writing Estimate:

Paper: Old Testament Introduction, 15–20 pages (double-spaced, typed)
(Recording: Organization System, Option A 2–4 pages)
(Recording: Personal Library, Option A 2–4 pages)
Paper: Final Reflections 1–2 page
Total: 20–30 pages (double-spaced, typed)

Video Recording Estimate:

(Recording: Organization System, Option B 4 minutes)
(Recording: Personal Library, Option B 6 minutes)
Teaching: OT Book Introduction 15 minutes
Total: 15–25 minutes

Course Evaluation:

Competency:	
Reading: Old Testament	10 %
Reading: Textbooks	20 %
Attendance & Quizzes	20 %
Paper: Old Testament Introduction	15 %
Future Growth:	
Recording: Organization System	5 %
Recording: Personal Library	5 %
Teaching: OT Book Introduction	20 %
Paper: Final Reflections	<u>5 %</u>
	Total: 100 %

Grading Scale:

A = 93–100%
B = 85–92
C = 77–84
D = 70–76
F = 0–69%

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction (1/21/21)
 Topics: Course Introduction
 Recording Videos
 OT Influences
 Prework: --
 Due: --

Week 2: Torah, Part 1 (1/28/21)
 Topics: Ancient History and Chronology

Genesis

Exodus

Prework: Read Gen, Exod

Read Hill & Walton chapters 1–2, 4–5, 9, 19

Read Hess chapters 1–2

Due: (optional: submit a test video)

Week 3: Torah, Part 2 (2/4/21)

Topics: Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Pentateuch, Torah, and Law

Prework: Read Lev, Num, Deut

Read Hill & Walton chapters 3, 6–8

Read Hess chapters 3–5

Due: Recording: Organization System

Week 4: Israel in the Land (2/11/21)

Topics: Joshua

Judges

Prework: Read Josh, Judg

Read Hill & Walton chapters 10–12

Read Hess chapters 6–7

Due: --

Week 5: The Kings of Israel (2/18/21)

Topics: 1–2 Samuel

1–2 Kings

Prework: Read 1–2 Sam, 1–2 Kgs

Read Hill & Walton chapters 14–15

Read Hess chapters 9–10

Due: --

Week 6: Early Prophets (2/25/21)

Topics: Elijah & Elisha

Jonah

Amos

Hosea

Obadiah

Joel

Micah

Prework: Read Jon, Amos, Hos, Obad, Joel, Mic

Read Hill & Walton chapters 27, 33–38

Read Hess chapters 24–29

Due: --

Week 7: Isaiah (3/4/21)

Topic: Isaiah

Prework: Read Isa

Read Hill & Walton chapter 28

Read Hess chapters 19

Due: --

Week 8: Prophets of the Neo-Babylonian Period (3/11/21)

Topics: Nahum

Zephaniah

Habakkuk

Jeremiah

Pework: Read Nah, Zeph, Hab, Jer

Read Hill & Walton chapters 29, 39–41

Read Hess chapters 20, 30–32

Due: --

Spring Break: March 15–19

Week 9: Prophets of the Babylonian Period (3/25/21)

Topics: Daniel

Ezekiel

Pework: Read Dan, Ezek

Read Hill & Walton chapters 31–32

Read Hess chapters 22–23

Due: Recording: Personal Library

Week 10: Prophets of the Persian Period (4/1/21)

Topics: Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Book of the Twelve

Pework: Read Hag, Zech, Mal

Read Hill & Walton chapters 42–44

Read Hess chapters 33–35

Due: --

Week 11: Psalms (4/8/21)

Topic: Psalms

Pework: Read Ps

Read Hill & Walton chapters 20, 22

Read Hess chapters 15

Due: --

Week 12: Wisdom (4/15/21)

Topics: Job

Proverbs

Pework: Read Job, Prov

Read Hill & Walton chapters 21, 23

Read Hess chapters 14, 16

Due: --

Week 13: Megilloth (4/22/21)

Topics: Ruth

Song of Songs

Ecclesiastes
Lamentations
Esther

Prework: Read Ruth, Song, Eccl, Lam, Esth
Read Hill & Walton chapters 13, 18, 24–25, 30
Read Hess chapters 8, 13, 17–18, 21

Due: --

Week 14: Post-Exilic Writings (4/29/21)

Topics: Ezra-Nehemiah
1–2 Chronicles

Prework: Read Ezra, Neh, 1–2 Chr
Read Hill & Walton chapters 16–17
Read Hess chapters 11–12

Due: --

Week 15: Conclusion (5/6/21)

Topics: OT Transmission
Course Completion (submissions, grades, etc.)

Prework: Read Hill & Walton chapters 26, 45–47

Due: Teaching: OT Book Introduction

Week 16: Presentations (5/13/21)

Topic: Presentations

Prework: Practice!

Due: Paper: Old Testament Introduction

Paper: Final Reflections

Course Policies

Academic Honesty Policy: All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies to every course requirement—from devotions and notes to final exam and papers.

Assignment Formatting: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments should conform to Turabian 9th ed. All written assignments should be double-spaced Word documents, written in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.

Assignment Submission: All pre-work is due by the start of the first class session of each unit. All other assignments are due by 11:59 PM on Saturday. Assignments should be submitted through Blackboard.

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be based on your total accumulation of points as indicated under the Course Evaluation section of this syllabus according to the grading scale in the NOBTS 2018-2019 catalog.

A 93-100 B 85-92 C 77-84 D 70-76 F 69 and below

Late Assignments: Assignments that are completed after the due date will be docked 20% of the total possible points (after and in addition to points docked during grading).

Netiquette (Appropriate Online Behavior): Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times in the online environment.

Plagiarism: A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all students. Copying another person's work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Students. These standards apply to all material submitted by the student in this course—from discussion questions and class notes to final exams and papers.

Recording Policy: Recordings of class, including any audio and/or video recordings, regardless of the media or format, and regardless of the intended or actual use, are not permitted without prior written permission of the professor. The class will be notified in advance should any such recording be approved. This policy is intended to protect the privacy of the students.

Revision of the Syllabus: The course syllabus is not a legal contract. The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the professor. Any syllabus revision will be preceded by a reasonable notice to students. Notice of such changes will be announced in class, through Blackboard, and by email.

Withdrawal from the Course: The administration has set deadlines for withdrawal. These dates and times are published in the academic calendar. Administration procedures must be followed. You are responsible to handle withdrawal requirements. A professor can't issue a withdrawal. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in the course if you choose not to attend once you are enrolled.

Additional Information

Blackboard and SelfServe: You are responsible for maintaining current information regarding your contact information on Blackboard and SelfServe. The professor will utilize both to communicate with the class. Blackboard and SelfServe do not share information so you must update each. Assignment grades will be posted to Blackboard. You will be need to enroll in the course on Blackboard.

Correspondence with the Grader: You should contact the grader via email. The grader is only expected to respond to email during normal business hours (8 AM to 5 PM weekdays). Please respect the grader's personal time. Remember, graders are students as well and have their own coursework and research to complete. Please be respectful in the language you use in your emails to the grader.

Correspondence with the Professor: Every effort is made to respond to emails and phone calls within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends. Please feel free to contact the professor(s) with any question you may have regarding this course.

Hurricane/Severe Weather Information: In the event of a hurricane or other emergency, go to the seminary web site for information: www.nobts.edu. See Blackboard for any announcements that may be posted. You should ensure your email address is updated on Blackboard. For up-to-date weather information stay tuned to:

- WBSN FM-89.1
- WWL Channel 4
- WWL AM-870
- www.nobts.edu

Mandatory Evacuation: Hurricane season lasts from June 1 to November 30. If the Mayor or the President of NOBTS recommends that you leave the city, then do so. If a mandatory evacuation is called everyone except emergency personnel must leave. Staying on campus is not an option. See the Student Handbook for further information regarding hurricane preparedness, evacuation, and shelter.

NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service: Once you have established a SelfServe account you may sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service by going to <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html>.

Office Hours: Monday–Friday 8:30–11:30.

Special Needs: If you need an accommodation for any type of disability, please set up a time to meet with the professor(s) to discuss any modifications you may need that are able to be provided.

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.

Technical Support: Need technical assistance? Contact the ITC today:

- Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
- BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
- ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
- 504.816.8180 - Call for any technical questions/support requests.
- www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Additional Library Resources: Check

- <http://www.nobts.edu/library/interlibrary-loan.html>
- GALILEO for Georgia students
- LALINC for Louisiana students
- Florida Virtual Library (<http://www.flelibrary.org/>) for Florida students

Additional NOBTS Student Services:

- Visit www.nobts.edu/student-services,
- Email studentservices@nobts.edu, or
- Call the Dean of Students office at 800-662-8701, ext. 3283.

Misc.:

This syllabus is subject to change. If I need to make changes, I will provide an updated syllabus to students at least one week in advance of putting the new requirements into effect.

Bibliography:

Students may use any reliable resources, such as those found in BestCommentaries.com, the textbook, class sessions, and other course syllabi.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY - Dr. England**Old Testament Introductions**

- Anderson, Bernhard. *Understanding the Old Testament*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Anderson, George Wishart. *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*. *Studies in Theology*. London: Duckworth, 1959.
- Archer, Gleason L., Jr. *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996.
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Abingdon, 1999.

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Specialized Introductions

Pentateuch

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- Schnittjer, Gary E. Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
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Prophets

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