

OTHB9410 STUDIES IN BIBLICAL LAW

Dr. Archie W. England

Fall 2018-19

Tuesday, 8:30-11:00 am

Mission Statement:

The Mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Purpose:

Understanding covenant law is critical for discerning the message of both Old and New Testaments. Correctly relating OT laws (codes) to the development of the Old Testament covenant impacts how one interprets the OT message, history, and theology. This course, then, investigates the emergence of biblical laws in the Pentateuch, looking for the ANE context, historical motivations, and correlation to the literary development of biblical law, as it was transmitted from its origin to its final form as the Old Testament canon. To accomplish this task, the students will investigate the history and background of biblical law codes and analyze both unique and parallel laws contained primarily in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Each text addressed will be examined thoroughly in Hebrew, first, for grammatical and syntactical insights; second, for assessing the Masoretic traditions and critical apparatus; third, for understanding how scholarship has interacted with the text; and fourth, what the text means for Christianity. This course also seeks to correlate the intertextual (or inner textual) aspect of biblical law to the remainder of the Old Testament books, as well as to direct students to contemplate how OT biblical law impacted the New Testament and the contemporary church.

Core Values:

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically in by preparing the student to grow in the understanding and interpreting of the Word of God. Characteristic Excellence is also addressed in that the student should be as prepared as possible to be ministers for Christ. Mission Focus is emphasized in that interpreting the Bible is a key element in presenting the Good News of the Gospel to the world. Proper interpretation is vital in fulfilling the Great Commission. This year, the focus is upon Doctrinal Integrity.

Key Competency:

The Seminary has seven key competencies in its academic program. They are: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The key competency addressed in this course is Biblical Exposition.

Description of the Seminar

The focus of the study is biblical law, particularly on the Pentateuch and the recognized law codes within it. The foundation for the study will be the consideration of the significant literature on the subject and an exposure to and evaluation of the basic issues related to biblical law. This will include a study of the nature of law in general, its social context in the Ancient Near East, the role of Moses as lawgiver, the origin and development of individual laws, and the significance of Old Testament law for modern Christians. The core of this study will be intensive

textual work, consisting of textual criticism, grammatical and syntactical analysis, and thorough exegetical work employing both traditional historical and modern literary methodologies. Exposition of the text will lead to an application of the principles to modern living from a Christian perspective.

Objectives of the Seminar

KNOWLEDGE (Students successfully completing this course should...)

- 1) Become aware of the various critical methods that are utilized in the study of biblical law.
- 2) Develop an understanding of the theories that address the historical timeline of the growth of the Pentateuch and biblical laws within it.
- 3) Become familiar with significant contributors (and their works) and aspects of their methodological contributions to this field.

ATTITUDE (Students successfully completing this course should...)

- 1) Appreciate the complexities of understanding biblical law codes in the Old Testament and its ANE context.
- 2) Recognize the importance of sound exegesis in the understanding biblical law.
- 3) Be more confident in interpreting biblical law and relating it to the contemporary church.

SKILLS (Students successfully completing this course should...)

- 1) Be able to exegete biblical law and accurately reflect its meaning in the ANE and biblical world.
- 2) Be able to argue critically for the origin of biblical law codes in the Old Testament and for the impact of biblical law on the rest of the Old Testament literature.
- 3) Be able to apply Old Testament biblical laws to contemporary issues that the Church faces.

Methodology of the Seminar

1. Lecture
2. Critical reading from primary source materials and anthologies
3. Extensive use of Hebrew in assessing the law code texts of the selected passages assigned
4. Informal presentations on formal versus dynamic renderings of the biblical law texts
5. Formal research papers in which a unique text has been thoroughly examined or in which a comparative analysis is completed on a law issue in more than one law code.
6. Reading of intertextual and other methodological approaches

Required Textbooks for the Seminar

Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, editors. *Dictionary of the Old Testament:*

Pentateuch. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. **MDiv: Choose half.**

Doorly, William J. *The Laws of Yahweh: A Handbook of Biblical Law*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.

- Levinson, Bernard M. *A More Perfect Torah: At the Intersection of Philology and Hermeneutics in Deuteronomy and the Temple Scroll*. In *Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible*, no. 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013. **Ph.D. only**
- Morrow, William S. *An Introduction to Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017.
- Westbrook, Raymond, and Bruce Wells. *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel: An Introduction*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- Whybray, R. N., *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*. In *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, no. 53. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987. **Ph.D. only**

Articles (in Books) Required

- Alt, Albrecht. "The Origins of Old Testament Law," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*. Translated by R. A. Wilson. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967 [reprint of 1934, pp. 101-71]. **Ph.D. only; extra-credit for MDiv**
- Crüseman, Frank. "The Book of the Covenant: The Supporting Foundation," in *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*. Translated by Allan W. Mahnke. Minneapolis: Fortress, Press, 1996, [pp. 109-200]. **Ph.D. only; extra-credit for MDiv**
- Hayes, Christine. *What's Divine about Divine Law? Early Perspectives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015. **(All: Choose one chapter for Week 9 review)**
- Knight, Douglas A. *Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient Israel*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. **(PHD ONLY: Choose one chapter for Week 16.)**
- Olson, Dennis T. *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*. In *Overtures to Biblical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994. **(All: Choose one chapter for Week 7 review)**

Articles in IVP Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch (Required)

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| Abortion | Alien |
| Atonement | Authorship of the Pentateuch |
| Blood | Book of the Covenant |
| Cities of Refuge | Covenant |
| Decalogue | Deuteronomy, Book of |
| Divination, Magic | Ethics |
| Exodus, Book of | Festivals and Feasts |
| Firstfruits | Foods, Clean and Unclean |
| Form Criticism | God, Names of |
| Herem | Hermeneutics |
| Historical Criticism | Holy and Holiness, Clean and Unclean |
| Honor and Shame | Idols, Idolatry, Teraphim, Household Gods |
| Land, Fertility, Famine | Law |
| Leadership, Elders | Levi, Levites |
| Leviticus, Book of | Life, Disease and Death |
| Literary/Narrative Criticism | Literary Structure of the Pentateuch |
| Moses | Orphan |
| Pentateuchal Criticism, History of | Priest, Priesthood |
| Priestly Clothing | Religion |
| Repentance | Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, Jubilee |

Sacrifice and Offerings	Sexuality, Sexual Ethics
Sin, Guilt	Slave, Slavery
Social Structure	Social-Scientific Approaches
Source Criticism	Tabernacle
Textual Criticism	Theft and Deprivation of Property
Theology of the Pentateuch (optional)	Traditio-Historical Criticism
Wealth and Poverty	Weights and Measures
Widow	Women

Optional Textbooks

Brin, Gershon. *Studies in Biblical Law: From the Hebrew Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Translated by Jonathan Chipman. In *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series*, 176. Sheffield, England: Sheffield University Press, 1994.

Jackson, Bernard S. *Studies in the Semiotics of Biblical Law*. In *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, 314. Sheffield, England: Sheffield University Press, 2000.

Mann, Thomas W. *The Book of the Torah: The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988.

McEvenue, Sean. *Interpreting the Pentateuch*. Vol. 4, *Old Testament Studies*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press: 1990.

Watts, James W. *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical School*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992.

Requirements of the Seminar

1. **Translation and Analysis**: Students will translate roughly 75 verses of biblical law during the first eight weeks of the seminar. Students will also perform thorough analyses of selected grammatical/syntactical issues of the Hebrew text. Each pair of weeks, every member of the seminar will present (first week) copies of both their rough and smoothed translations of the selected 25 verses. PhD students will submit an additional 210 verses of rough & smooth translations from their selected sections by the end of the seminar. Masters students will submit an additional 100 verses. Verses used in papers do not count toward the total required.

2. **Research Papers**: The last six weeks of the seminar will be devoted to student research paper presentations. Students may choose to write one long, comprehensive research paper on their selected text or multiple shorter papers. The requirements are as follows:

Masters students will choose:

- A. A single 15-20 page, single-spaced research paper that addresses all aspects of a biblical law text.
- B. Two 8-10 page, single-spaced research papers that address small but significant issues from a selected biblical law pericope, to be delivered once every three weeks.

PhD students will choose:

- A. A single 30-45 page, single-spaced macro, topical, comparative analysis of a theme/topic, examined in all three codes plus in its ANE context.
- B. Three 10-15 page, single-spaced micro, textually-derived studies over a self-contained pericope, to be presented every other week.

Evaluation of the Seminar

Each student is expected to adhere to the policies regarding absences, grading, etc., outlined in the current seminary catalog. Also, each student is expected to use biblical and theological languages whenever possible, especially in research for lecture and paper presentations.

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Class participation & Hebrew Oral Reading	20%
Translation and Textual Analysis	25%
Reading Reports on assigned chapters.....	20%
Research Paper(s).....	35%
.....	100%

Course Schedule

Old Testament Theology

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments due</u>
8/21	Dr. England's Presentation: "Current Field of Studies in Biblical Law"	Discussion of all pre-reading in IVP Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch; Alt
8/28	Dr. England's Theory of the Composition of Biblical Law	Discussion of Morrow and Levinson texts
9/04	Biblical Law in Exodus	Rough and Smooth Translation of selected passages from the Book of Exodus
9/11	Biblical Law in Exodus	Grammatical/Syntactical Analyses of selected passages from the Book of Exodus
9/18	Biblical Law in Leviticus	Rough and Smooth Translation of selected passages from the Book of Leviticus
9/25	Biblical Law in Leviticus	Grammatical/Syntactical Analyses of selected passages from the Book of Leviticus
10/02	Biblical Law in Deuteronomy	Rough and Smooth Translations of selected passages from the Book of Deuteronomy; Joint reports on Olson, <i>Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses</i>
10/09	Biblical Law in Deuteronomy	Grammatical/Syntactical Analyses of selected passages from the Book of Deuteronomy
10/16	FALL BREAK	

10/23	"Divorce in Light of Deuteronomy 24:1-4"; What is the "indecent" issue in Deut 24:1?	Review and discussion of <i>What's Divine about Divine Law?</i>
10/30	Paper Presentations	
11/06	Paper Presentations	
11/13	Paper Presentations	
11/20	THANSGIVING BREAK	
11/27	Paper Presentations	
12/04	Paper Presentations	
12/11	Final Exam: How does one's view of the Documentary Hypothesis impact understanding the role of biblical law? Be sure to address the history of the JEDP higher critical movement.	Review and discussion of <i>Law, Power, and Justice in Ancient Israel</i> (PhD students only)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

To be provided on the first day the seminar meets.