

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Degree Completion Program
Springfield, Missouri

OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION
June 9-July 7, 2004
(4 Credits)

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COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a survey of the Old Testament, its literature, history, geography, and culture as well as introducing the students to the critical issues and methodologies pertaining to the study of the Old Testament.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to introduce the student to the Old Testament text and world. Attention is given to the historical, literary, geographical, and cultural settings and aspects of the Old Testament. Students are introduced to modern critical theories and issues relating to the study and interpretation of the Old Testament. The introductory nature of the course will focus particularly on the historical and literary structure of the Old Testament. The first week of the course will expose the student to the importance and challenge of archaeology for the study of the Old Testament as well as the process of canonization that led to the production of the Old Testament cannon. The second week the discussion will shift to discussing the Torah (five books of Moses) where the student will analyze the Creation and Flood stories within their Ancient Near Eastern context. The central historical events within Israelite history are examined, the covenant with Abraham and the Exodus from Egypt. The student will discuss and evaluate the historical and archaeological issues and challenges related to the story of the patriarchs and the Exodus story as well as the theological significance of these event within Israelite thought and history. The third week outlines and explains the development of the nation of Israel from a tribal confederation into a united monarchy. The student will evaluate the differing scholarly theories and biblical presentations of the conquest of the land of Canaan as recorded in the books of Joshua and Judges. Moreover, the student will examine and assess the development of the monarchy and the careers of Israel's first three kings. The fourth week will examine the history of the divided monarchy and the downfall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the subsequent Babylonian exile and the return to Jerusalem. The student will explain the role of the prophets and their theological significance within ancient Israelite society. The final week of the course will

discuss the literary genres of poetry and wisdom literature. The student will compare and assess these genres with their counterparts within the Ancient Near East. At the completion of this course the student will:

1. Trace and assess the history of the Israel and its literary product, the Old Testament, within the context of the Ancient Near East, its history and literature.
2. Assess the Old Testament as a literary work of Israelite culture and understand the interaction between story and history as related in the biblical text.
3. Integrate the importance of geographical setting for a contextual understanding of the Old Testament texts.
4. Explain the literary genres of the Old Testament (narrative, prophetic, poetry, and wisdom literature) within their ancient contextual setting with the intent of summarizing them within the modern world.
5. Analyze the importance and challenges of archaeological discovery for interpreting the history of Israel and the biblical narratives.
6. Explain and assess various modern scholarly theories and methods for studying the Old Testament.

III. TEXTBOOKS

REQUIRED TEXTS

V. H. Matthews and J. C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) [OT:TC]

Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (2d. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979) [ALB]

V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (2d. ed.; New York: Paulist Press, 1997) [OTP]

James M. Monson, *Regions on the Run: Introductory Map Studies in the Land of the Bible* (Rockford, Illinois: Biblical Backgrounds Inc., 1998) [MRR]

Steven P. Lancaster and James M. Monson, *Regional Study Guide: Introductory Map Studies in the Land of the Bible* (version 2.6; Rockford, Illinois: Biblical Backgrounds Inc., 1999-2003) [RSG: available at www.bibback.com or http://bibback.com/PDF/Guide_current.pdf]

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES

- Lectures over scheduled course topics
- Class discussions over specific topics derived from the course schedule
- Individual reading and research

- Weekly research projects

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation:

Students should plan to attend each class session. The attendance policy of the seminary will be followed in this class. Due to the nature of this course, it is essential for students to attend class having completed the assignments **beforehand**. Students should come to class prepared to ask questions and make comments contributing to the positive learning environment of the class. Failure to complete assignments prior to class will affect the learning environment of the class. Know that lectures and discussion topics will assume the completion of the assigned work. Finally, the learning experience of this class is a shared experience. You are here to learn, so feel free at anytime to ask questions of the instructor.

Timely completion of scheduled readings:

This course is designed to cover a lot of material in a brief amount of time; therefore, it is essential that reading assignments be completed prior to their assigned class. Your reading of the material beforehand will enable class times to develop into group discussions and critical assessments built upon our shared knowledge gained through foundational readings. **Important: readings assigned for the first week are to be completed before coming to the first class.**

Weekly Papers:

Every week each student will write a five-page paper upon an assigned topic. These papers will be short research papers on the selected topic. The papers are to be five pages in length. Students will be penalized for papers shorter or longer than five pages. The papers should follow Turabian style for papers (see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (6th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)). Footnotes are to be used instead of endnotes. Each paper should include a minimum of five sources: two sources must be journal articles and three are to be books (Bible Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, or Commentaries **do not** count toward the three book sources—they may be used for the papers after the three book requirement has been met). Papers should be double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font. Each paper should have 1” to 1.25” margins on the sides with 1” top margins. A cover sheet should include the student’s name, course number, title, etc. Every paper should simply be stapled in the upper left hand corner—*please do not put papers in folders or plastic slipcovers*. There is no paper assigned for the first week of class

Map Materials:

One of the principle goals of this course is to help the student place the Old Testament within its historical and physical context. In order to facilitate the student’s

understanding of how the geography of the Bible directly bears upon our understanding of its history and message, the materials developed by Jim Monson, *Regions on the Run* and the *Regional Study Guide*, will be used. The *Regional Study Guide* provides the instructions for marking the maps that are in the packet with the *Regions on the Run*. All maps are to be completed and turned in by the end of the course. Completion of the maps is worth 125 points. In the schedule, the student will notice map assignments in weeks one, three and four. While the maps are not technically due at the class times, the lectures and discussions will assume the completion of the assigned map materials for that particular week. **All map materials are due on the final class period (7-07-05)—NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Final Project:

For the final project, the student will prepare a five-week curriculum either for a sermon series or to be taught in an adult Sunday school setting that integrates the geography and history of the Old Testament world with the biblical text. The student will select five biblical passages (narratives, prophecies, or poetry—you can mix them up over the five-week course) that he or she will prepare for preaching or teaching. Assignments are to be submitted in a three-ring binder notebook and should include: outlines of each week’s lesson (including biblical text, geographical and historical setting, and exegesis), visual aides (transparencies, PowerPoint presentations, pictures, etc.), and a brief (three to four page) description of each lesson integrating historical and physical setting with exegetical understanding and theological application. This curriculum needs to be coherent and develop in a logical progression. This final project is worth 200 points. Any questions should be directed to the instructor.

VI. GRADING

The student’s grade will be determined based upon the following:

Class Participation	50 points
Weekly Papers (4)	400 points
Map Assignment	125 points
<u>Final Project</u>	<u>200 points</u>
TOTAL	775 points

VII. COURSE OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES		
WEEK	ASSINGNMENTS	OBJECTIVES

<p style="text-align: center;">WEEK 1</p> <p>Geography, Archaeology, Canon, and Canonization</p>	<p>Read: <i>OT:TC</i>: 1-42; <i>ALB</i>: 3-104; <i>MRR</i> 5-11; and <i>RSG</i> 3-19 (maps)</p>	<p>At the conclusion of this week, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the major geographical regions of the land of Israel. 2. Explain the geographical (and theological) role of Israel within the physical setting of the Ancient Near East (the Land Between). 3. Discuss the issues and challenges relating to the study and use of archaeology and the Old Testament. 4. Analyze the process of canonization and assess how the Old Testament canon came into being. 5. Describe the principle modern theories for studying the Old Testament: Textual Criticism, Historical Criticism, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, and Redaction Criticism.
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<p style="text-align: center;">WEEK 2</p> <p>Creation, Covenant, Exodus, and Wilderness Wanderings</p>	<p>Read: <i>OT:TC</i>: 43-67; <i>ALB</i>: 133-209; and <i>OTP</i>: 3-51, 86-93, 101-113, 124-126, 129-133, and 137-140// Genesis 1-4, 6-9, 16-19, 21-34, and 37-45; Exodus 1-4, and 20-22; Numbers 13, 16, 20, and 22-24; and Deuteronomy 1-8, 21-22, and 34</p> <p>Paper Topics: (pick one)</p> <p>1. Compare the Genesis Creation account with the <i>Enuma Elish</i> Creation account. Evaluate the worldview of the ancient Israelites as compared to that preserved in the <i>Enuma Elish</i>; be sure to discuss the views of the God(s), humans, and their interactions.</p> <p>2. Compare the Genesis account of the Flood with the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> account of the Flood. Evaluate the</p>	<p>At the conclusion of this week, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the Genesis accounts of Creation and the Flood within the larger context of the Ancient Near East. 2. Discuss the historical and archaeological challenges of the Patriarchal narratives. 3. Summarize the theological significance of the life of Abraham and the Exodus and Sinai covenant for ancient Israelite society. 4. Describe the two theories regarding the “early” and “late” dates for the Exodus, and evaluate between these two theories. 5. Assess the significance of the Exodus narrative for later Israelite thought and self-understanding.
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	<p>did these events shape Israelite theology and define its relationship with God?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">WEEK 3</p> <p>Conquest, Judges, and United Monarchy</p>	<p>Read: <i>OT:TC</i>: 68-109; <i>ALB</i>: 209-320; <i>RSG</i> 50-98 (maps); and <i>OTP</i>: 91-93, 137-146, 155-161, and 323-330// Joshua 1-11; Judges; 1 Samuel 1-15; 2 Samuel 1-7, 9-21, and 24; and 1 Kings 1-5, and 8-11</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <p>1. Assess and explain the narrative accounts of the conquest of the land of Canaan in Joshua 2-10 from the standpoint of geography. In your paper, cite specific examples as to how a knowledge of biblical geography sheds light upon the biblical text and Joshua’s military strategy in conquering the land.</p>	<p>At the conclusion of this week, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the role of the geography in the narratives of the Conquest and settlement of the land of Canaan. 2. Evaluate the challenges of the archaeological record of the Conquest and settlement as well as the variant presentations in the books of Joshua and Judges. 3. Analyze the literary/theological structure of the book of Judges. 4. Summarize and assess the political careers of Israel’s first three kings. 5. Summarize the political and theological impact of the Davidic covenant upon

	<p>2. Summarize and judge the challenges presented by the archeological record to the stories in Joshua 2-10. Evaluate the value and methodological basis for archeology as a resource for studying the Bible.</p> <p>3. Summarize and assess the two primary modern theories regarding the conquest of Canaan and relate them to the differing presentations preserved in the books of Joshua and Judges of the Conquest. How do the literary agendas of the authors of Joshua and Judges impact one's understanding of the historical record of the Conquest?</p> <p>4. Explain the literary/theological structure of the book of Judges. Assess the author's intent in structuring his book in this manner. Support how this book is an apology for the monarchy.</p> <p>5. Compare, contrast, and evaluate the political reigns of Israel's first three kings (Saul, David, and Solomon). Explain how Saul's monarchy laid the foundation that David's and Solomon's built upon, and assess the indebtedness of David's and Solomon's reigns to Saul's.</p>	<p>Israelite politics and theology.</p>
<p>WEEK 4</p> <p>Divided Monarchy, Fall of Israel and Judah, Prophets, Exile and Return</p>	<p>Read: <i>OT:TC</i>: 110-176, and 195-224; <i>ALB</i>: 321-423; <i>RSG</i> 20-49 (maps) and <i>OTP</i>: 162-195, 231-237, and 318-322// 1 Kings 15; 2 Kings 10, 13-17, 18-25; 2 Chronicles 34-36; Amos; Hosea; Isaiah 5-11, 20, 36-37, 40-45, 49-53, and</p>	<p>At the conclusion of this week, you will:</p> <p>1. Explain the role of the prophets within Israelite society with specific reference to key prophetic figures in the history of both the northern</p>

	<p>58-60; Jeremiah 1, 5, 7, 13, 16, 18-19, 21, 26, 28-29, 32, and 36; Haggai; Ezra 1, 3-6; Nehemiah 1-2, 8-9, and 13; and Zechariah 1-4</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarize the reign of Hezekiah, specifically pertaining to the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. Integrate in your answer the biblical record as well as archaeology, geography, and non-biblical literature (e.g., the Annals of Sennacherib). 2. Analyze the prophetic careers and oracles of Isaiah and Micah as they relate to the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 B.C.E. Compare and contrast their prophetic messages to the kingdom of Judah in the turbulent days of the end of the eighth century B.C.E. 3. Assess the political and theological forces that brought about the decline and fall of the northern kingdom of Israel. Integrate narrative and prophetic biblical texts as well as any extra-biblical sources to help you assess the collapse of the kingdom of Israel. 4. Assess the book of Kings as a theological history. Explain the integration of the Deuteronomistic theology within the narrative of the book. 5. Compare and contrast the careers of Amos and Hosea. Examine their methods, origins, and messages, and evaluate them. 	<p>and southern kingdoms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Summarize and assess the political and theological forces and events that led to the collapse of both the kingdom of Israel and Judah. 3. Integrate the biblical text with the archaeology and extra-biblical record to describe and assess the reign of Hezekiah and the Assyrian invasion of Judah at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. 4. Summarize the history of Israel and Judah as it relates to Israel's strategic location within the Ancient Near East.
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	<p>6. Summarize and assess the ministry and life of Jeremiah. Analyze his call, enacted prophecies, and his relationship to the people and leaders of Judah. Explain Jeremiah’s ministry within the context of the final years of the southern kingdom of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.</p> <p>7. Explain the role of the prophet within Ancient Israelite society. What was the function of the prophet? What was the relationship between the prophet and the people, politicians, and religious leaders? Be sure to cite specific examples in your paper from the Bible.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">WEEK 5</p> <p>Poetry and Wisdom Literature</p>	<p>Read: <i>OT:TC</i>: 177-194; and <i>OTP</i>: 203-228, 244-261, and 265-294// Psalms 1, 2, 23, 51, 82, 95, 106, 110, 122, 125, 145, and 148; Proverbs 4-9, 22-24, and 31; Ecclesiastes 1-5; Job 1-12, 31, and 38-42; and Jonah</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <p>1. Analyze the role of geography within selected psalms. How did the psalmist draw upon the physical setting of the land to communicate his theological message?</p> <p>2. Explain the poetic style of parallelism within the psalms. Summarize the different kinds of parallelism and assess its function within Israelite poetry.</p> <p>3. Compare and contrast the theologies and messages of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.</p>	<p>At the conclusion of this week, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the literary features and types of Hebrew poetry. 2. Integrate the geography of Israel together with the literary and theological message of the psalms. 3. Evaluate the different views of wisdom presented by Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. 4. Assess Israelite wisdom literature within the context of Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature.

	<p>4. Compare and contrast the proverbial statements in the Bible (primarily Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) with other wisdom literature from the Ancient Near East. Define and assess the statement, “Wisdom literature is a reflection of the society that produces it” (be sure to cite examples).</p>	
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VII. FINAL THOUGHTS

Students should feel free to contact the instructor with questions, ideas, or concerns throughout the duration of this class. I am here to help you, so please let me know how I can help you make this experience an enriching time.