

OT 100-4 SCRIPTURE I
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Fall 2014
Wednesdays & Fridays 9:00-11:00am
Schlegel Hall 122

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Office Hours: gladly by appointment

Course Description:

Who are the ancient Israelites? What types of literature did they write? How did they think about God, themselves, the world? How are all of these critical questions relevant for the world and religious communities today?

Scripture I, a 4-credit course, introduces the student to the historical, literary, and theological worlds of what is known variously as the Old Testament, Tanakh, or Hebrew Bible. The Old Testament is a library of books that emerged out of historical situations and also purports to describe historical events so we engage the *historical perspective*. The Old Testament, however, is also a work of literature that can be studied for its literary form and function so we engage the *literary perspective*. Finally, the Old Testament has the status of Scripture for a variety of religious communities so we engage the *theological perspective*. From all three perspectives, we will look particularly at how the Hebrew Bible intersects with issues of *identity, power, and Deity*.

Course Objectives:

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Describe the general content and organization of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament including historical events behind these texts and literary features within texts.
2. Analyze and differentiate the varied theological/ideological perspectives within and among these biblical books as well as identify theological themes that create continuity across the OT/HB.
3. Examine a text from the Old Testament from at least three perspectives: historical, literary, and theological.
4. Show how the Hebrew Bible both portrays, and is itself used in, various strategies of identity and power.
5. Analyze critically the forms and functions of individual texts from the Hebrew Bible and of narratives such as the exodus story.

Assignments & Evaluation:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, to have completed the readings and assignments for each class period, and to participate in discussions in class. Please note the attendance policy below. Bring your Bible and textbook to every class.

Assignments are listed here as *summaries* of the work required along with their due dates. Students will be given a separate, more *detailed handout* for each essay assignment below.

1. Quizzes (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #1, 4, 5]

There will be a total of 14 short quizzes given at the very beginning of certain class sessions (see course schedule for details). These quizzes will be based *solely* on the readings from your introductory textbook. They are designed to motivate you to keep up with the material and to provide a knowledge base for the class discussion and exercises. Missed quizzes due to unexcused absences cannot be made up. See me for permission to write a make-up quiz if you miss a quiz due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g., medical reasons, family emergency). I will drop your lowest score of the 14 and average the remaining 13 grades.

2. "H-L-T Reference Sheet" on Biblical Passage. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, September 21**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #3, also #1 and #5]

Students will create a 2-page reference sheet that addresses 1 historical, 1 literary, and 1 theological issue within a given biblical passage.

3. Identity Essay on Genesis 34. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, October 19th**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #4 and #5]

Students will write a 5-6 page paper interpreting the narrative of Genesis 34 through the lens of family, gender, body, ethnicity, and class.

4. Ideology Essay on Second Isaiah. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, November 16th**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #2, #4 and #5]

Students will write a 5-6 page paper on conflicting ideologies in Second Isaiah.

5. Biblical Theological Essay. Due **in class Friday, December 5th** (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #2, #3, and #5]

This 6-7 page essay answers the ambitious question "Who is God?" at the level of a single biblical book. Students will select one biblical book and produce an essay that portrays the image of God in that particular book.

6. Final Exam. Exact time TBD **December 10 or 11**. (25% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #1, #2, #4]

Grading Scale

94-100	A	77-79	C+
90-93	A-	73-76	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	67-69	D+
80-82	B-	60-66	D
		0-59	F

Course Books & Materials:

1) *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Walter Harrelson. Nashville: Abingdon. ISBN: 0687278325.

This study bible includes a standard, scholarly translation (NRSV) and excellent study notes. Please do not use another translation or Bible for this class. If you are more familiar with another translation, then the NRSV will provide a fresh reading for you. Hopefully, you can use this Bible in other biblical studies courses here at seminary.

2) *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach*. By Sandra L. Gravett, Karla G. Bohmbach, F. V. Greifenhagen, Donald C. Polaski. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780664230302.

This primary textbook provides a thematic introduction that does not follow the canonical order of the Bible (i.e., Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus); instead, we will look at themes within the whole collection of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In addition to these two books, there will be numerous required readings (articles, book chapters) placed on CAMS and recommended readings on library reserve.

Optional Use of Twitter (a 140-character microblog)

During the semester I will be using the twitter handle, OTProfLPTS. If you so choose, you can “follow” me in order to receive announcements, reflections on readings, ponderings about class discussions, follow-up questions, etc. Your participation is totally optional as I will not be providing information via Twitter that will be necessary to performing well in this class. We will also not be tweeting in class. So, if you have the desire to start (or continue) to engage in social media, then try this small step!

Tweet as you Read

I hope many of you will tweet your responses—questions, highlights, quotes, ponderings—to the required readings using the hashtag #LPTSScripture. I might even display some of our twitter conversations in class to get the discussion started!

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides: Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Use of Inclusive Language: Our use of language, personally and as a community, is a powerful tool of both healing and oppression. In order to establish a more egalitarian environment and in accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information see:

<http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885> Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. Avoid language for people that excludes part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes (e.g., use humanity instead of mankind). Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown.

When referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. The God of the Hebrew Bible is envisioned in both personal and non-personal ways, as well as masculine and feminine terms. Referring to God repeatedly as “He” does not capture this splendid diversity.

Policy on late work: All written assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

Use of electronic devices in class: Many of us are becoming increasingly addicted to our electronics such that we are unable to focus on other (more important) matters for a period of time. Thus, I ask that we create a time and space to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be silenced and/or turned off and put away. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask me for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will negatively affect the course grade.

Course Schedule

Sept 5: WHAT ARE WE STUDYING?

Topics:

Old Testament vs. TaNaK vs. Hebrew Bible: Why does it matter?

Differing Canons—Jewish vs. Catholic vs. Protestant vs. Orthodox

Why different canons? The Protestant Old Testament canon has the same books as the Jewish TaNaK but in different order.

Jewish divisions: Torah, Prophets, Writings

Christian Divisions: Law/Pentateuch, History, Poetry, Prophecy

Apocrypha: Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Westminster Confession of Faith reads: "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings."

Take some time to compare/contrast the Jewish canon and the Protestant canon. Look at the different places within the canon for books such as Ruth, Lamentations, Daniel, Ezra & Nehemiah.

Sept 10: READING/INTERPRETING THE HEBREW BIBLE

Quiz on Chapter 2

Topics:

Text of Hebrew Bible; MT vs. LXX vs. Vulgate vs. Dead Sea Scrolls

What is Exegesis? Hermeneutics?

3 Chairs and a Couch

Using Genesis 28, Isaiah 7-8, and Song of Songs as examples.

HLT Exercise

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, Chapter 2.

Recommended Readings:

New Interpreters Bible, pages 2261-65, "Guidelines for Reading and Interpretation" by John R. Donahue, S.J. & pages 2268-72, "Varieties of Readings and Interpretations of the Biblical Text," by Edgar McKnight.

Sept 12: READING THEOLOGICALLY

Topics:

What makes a reading theological?

How Not to Be A Marcionite: Supersessionism and Anti-Judaism

Relationship between the Two Testaments

Required Readings:

Ronald Allen and John Holbert, *Holy Root Holy Branches* chapter 1, pages 15-31 [CAMS]

“Reflections on the relationship of the Two Testaments” by Erich Zenger [CAMS]

Matthew Myer Boulton, *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2011), 96-111. [CAMS]

Recommended Additional Reading:

Walter Brueggemann, *The Book that Breathes New Life: Scriptural Authority and Biblical Theology*, chapter 1, pages 3-19. [Library Reserve]

Presbyterians would do well to find the following two denominational documents: "Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture," and "Biblical Authority and Interpretation."

As you read and prepare...

What understanding of the authority of the Bible do you bring to seminary from your childhood or local church?

How does your local religious community use the Old Testament? How often is it read/studied/referenced?

How might we, as religious leaders, use the Old Testament in our theological and pastoral duties?

Sept 17: THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ISRAELITE/JUDEAN HISTORY

Quiz on Chapter 1

Topics:

ANE Peoples and Places; Major Events and Time Periods

Israelite and Judean History including major Events

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 1.

Recommended Readings:

“Chapter 1: The History of Ancient Israel,” in *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us* by Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine [Library Reserve]

For those students with a strong interest in history, the next resource to read is Victor Matthews’s *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox, 2002)

As you read...

Construct your own chart or timeline for the MAJOR historical events related to the OT/HB (empires, rulers, kings, conquests, wars, important leaders, etc.). Which handful of dates seem the most important to you? The recommended reading (in *The Meaning of the Bible*) contains a helpful chart on page 8.

Sept 19: IDENTITY AND THE MOSES STORY

Quiz on Chapter 3

Topics:

Identity Markers

Introduction to Exodus and Moses

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 3.

Exodus 1:1-4:31

Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Sept 24: FAMILY

Quiz on Chapter 4

Topics:

Bet Av—patrilineal, patrilocal, patriarchal

Marriage and Children; Mishpahah and Shevet

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 4.

Gen 11:27-12:20; 16; 20-21; 23-31; 35; 37-50. Skim to create an Abraham and Jacob family tree.

Recommended Readings:

King and Stager *Life in Biblical Israel* chapter 2 [Library Reserve]

Sept 26: GENDER

Quiz on Chapter 5

Topics:

Masculinity and Femininity in the Hebrew Bible

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 5. (skim pg 155-158 on God)

Judges 4-5, 13-16, Gen 1-3

Oct 1: BODY

Quiz on chapter 6

Topics:

Ancient Israelite Anatomy and Physiology

How to Have Sex Like an Ancient Israelite

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 6

Song of Songs 4-7

Oct 3: ETHNICITY

Quiz on Chapter 7

Topics:

Approaches to Ethnicity

Ethnic Others

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 7.

Oct 8: CLASS

Quiz on Chapter 8

Topics:

The Small Landholding Class

The Elite Class

The Poor

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 8

Exodus 21:1-23:19

Oct 10: CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY

Topics:

In-class exercises on Identity

Required Readings:

Review Chapters 4-8

Oct 22: POWER & THE DAVID STORY

Quiz on Chapter 9

Topics:

Power Web

Introduction to David

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 9

1 Samuel 16-17

2 Samuel 1-7

Oct 24: STATE

Quiz on Chapter 10

Topics:

Monarchy: Pro-Monarchic Traditions and Anti-Monarchic Traditions

End of Monarchy

Yehud as Colony; Role of Empires

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 10

1 Samuel 8-13; 1 Kings 11-14; 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 9

Oct 29: PROPHECY

Topics:

Introduction to Prophecy

Required Readings:

Carolyn Sharp, *Old Testament Prophets for Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 1-18. [CAMS]

Recommended Readings:

David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 1-44. [Library Reserve]

October 31: IDEOLOGY, Part 1

Quiz on chapter 11, selected pages below

Topics:

King-Zion Complex

Sage-Order Complex

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 11, pages 323-336, 347-353.

Genesis 1:1-2:4, Proverbs 1, 8-9

1 Kings 5, 8

Isaiah 9

Nov 5: IDEOLOGY, Part 2

Quiz on chapter 11, selected pages below

Topics:

Sinai-Nation Complex

Empire-Colony Complex

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 11, pages 336-347, 353-359.

Exodus 19-24; 32-34

Esther; Daniel 1-7

Nov 7: MEDIA

Quiz on Chapter 12

Topics:

Temple

Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 12.

Nov 12: DEITY

Quiz on Chapter 13

Topics:

Names of ANE gods
Names of biblical god

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapter 13

Exodus 3:1-15; Hosea 1-3

Nov 14: MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

Topics:

Monotheism and Polytheism in Ancient Israel

Required Readings:

Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp 145-174. [entitled "Appendix: Monotheism and Polytheism in Ancient Israel"] [CAMS]

Nov 19: THE GOD OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

Required Readings:

Ruth 1-4

Nov 21: TORAH INTRODUCTION

Topics:

What is the Torah/Pentateuch? A scroll, but also 5 books

Basic content of 5 books, outline, general story

Who wrote Torah?

Moses, Documentary Hypothesis, Newer Models

Readings:

Johanna Bos, *Making Wise The Simple*, 3-14, 58-62 [CAMS]

As you Prepare...

Practice telling the general story of the Torah in 3-5 minutes. How would you sum up succinctly the narrative of the Torah?

In addition to understanding the basics of scholarly discussions surrounding the composition of the Torah (i.e., who wrote it), think about the theological implications of the latest scholarly understandings. In what ways can these models not only make us more intellectually honest but also enrich our understanding of Scripture?

Nov 26: PROPHETS INTRODUCTION

Topics:

Former Prophets and Latter Prophets

Deuteronomistic History: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Book of the Twelve

Required Readings:

Marvin Sweeney, *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible*, pp. 171-78; 265-268. [CAMS]

December 3: WRITINGS INTRODUCTION

Topics:

What is Writings?

Megillot

Psalms

Required Readings:

Marvin Sweeney, *Tanakh: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible* pp. 371-373; 425-447. [CAMS]

December 5: CONCLUSION