

OT 100-4 SCRIPTURE I
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Fall 2017 | Wednesdays & Fridays | 9:30-11:20am
Schlegel Hall 122

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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, and 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 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 important historical events behind these texts and literary features within texts.
2. Analyze and differentiate the varied theological 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. 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 with grading rubric* for most of the assignments below.

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

There will be a total of 9 short quizzes given at the very beginning of certain class sessions (see course schedule below 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).

2. Bible Content Project. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, September 24**. (10% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #1]

Students will read 10 Old Testament books in their entirety and provide constructive, critical feedback to Bible Content information about those books.

3. "HLT Reference Sheet" on Biblical Passage. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, October 1**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #3, also #1 and #5]

Students will create a 3-page reference sheet that addresses 1 historical, 1 literary, and 1 theological issue within a given biblical passage.

4. Identity Essay on Exodus and *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, October 22**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #4 and #5]

Students will write a 6 page paper interpreting the story of Moses as portrayed in both Exodus and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* through the lens of family, gender, body, ethnicity, and class.

5. Ideology Essay on Second Isaiah. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, November 12**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #2, #4 and #5]

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

6. Biblical Theological Essay. Due via **email** by **midnight Sunday, December 3**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #2, #3, and #5]

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

7. Final Exam. Time TBD but either **December 13 or 14**. (15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #1, #2, #4]

Grading Scale

95-100	A	73-76	C
90-94	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-67	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	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 of the 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.

3) *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. By Zora Neale Hurston. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991. ISBN: 0060919949

In addition to these three books, there will be numerous required readings (articles, book chapters) placed on CAMS.

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 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

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. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

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 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: 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 (but have you seen [this study?](#)) and looking at CAMS readings. There is no need to 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. If you wish to reflect more on the role of technology in our conversations and ability to connect, perhaps start here:

<https://nyti.ms/2jAp81D>

Course Schedule

UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

Sept 8: 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

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 13: 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 15: 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: Christian Preaching from the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995): 15-31. [CAMS]

Philip A. Cunningham, *Sharing the Scriptures: The Word Set Free, Volume I* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist, 2003): 3-36. [CAMS]

Recommended Additional Reading:

Walter Brueggemann, *The Book that Breathes New Life: Scriptural Authority and Biblical Theology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005): 3-19. [CAMS]

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

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 20: READING HISTORICALLY:
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.

Douglas Knight and Amy-Jill Levine, *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 3-41. [CAMS]

Recommended Readings:

For those students with a strong interest in history, the next resource to read is Victor Matthews's *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: 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 reading in *The Meaning of the Bible* contains a helpful chart on page 8.

**Sept 22: READING HISTORICALLY:
METHODS**

Topics:

History of the Text

History in the Text

Required Readings:

William P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2017): 161-163. [CAMS]

John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2007): 53-71. [CAMS]

Sept 27: READING LITERARILY

Topics:

Stylistic Analysis of Poetry and Narrative

Structural Analysis and Genre

Literary Context

Historized Prose Fiction

Required Readings:

Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books, 1981): 23-46. [CAMS]

William P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2017): 63-72, 79-84, 95-99, 103-104, 145-151. [CAMS]

Recommended Readings:

Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994): 101-106. [CAMS]

William P. Brown, *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2017): 63-112, 145-155.

UNIT TWO: IDENTITY

Sept 29: IDENTITY AND THE MOSES STORY

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

Oct 4: 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 Reading:

Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 21-59.

October 6: GENDER & BODY

Quiz on Chapters 5&6

Topics:

Masculinity and Femininity in the Hebrew Bible

Ancient Israelite Anatomy and Physiology

How to Have Sex like an Ancient Israelite

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapters 5&6. (skim pg 155-158 on God)

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

Song of Songs 4-7

Oct 11: ETHNICITY & CLASS

Quiz on Chapter 7&8

Topics:

Approaches to Ethnicity

Ethnic Other

The Small Landholding Class

The Elite Class

The Poor

Required Readings:

An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach, chapters 7 and 8.

Oct 13: CONTEMPORARY IDENTITY

Topics:

Identity of the Reader

Required Readings:

Renita Weems, "Reading *Her Way* through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Cain Hope Felder; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991): 57-77. [CAMS]

Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2005): 69-88. [CAMS]

UNIT THREE: POWER

Oct 25: POWER & THE DAVID STORY

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 27: 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

November 1: 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 3: 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 8: MEDIA

Quiz on Chapter 12

Topics:

Temple

Readings:

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

Nov 10: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON POWER

Required Readings:

Paul Hanson, *Political Engagement as Biblical Mandate* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010): 12-41.
[CAMS]

UNIT FOUR: DEITY

Nov 15: DEITY NAMES

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 17: 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 22: GOD AS DIALOGICAL CHARACTER

Topics:

The God of Brueggemann

Required Readings:

Brueggemann, Walter, *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009): 1-17. [CAMS]

Nov 29: THE GOD OF THE TORAH

Required Readings:

Johanna W. H. van Wijk-Bos, *Making Wise The Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005): 233-262. [CAMS]

December 1: THE GOD OF THE PROPHETS

Required Reading:

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Perennial, 2001): 285-298. [chapter entitled “The Theology of Pathos”] [CAMS]

December 6: THE GOD OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

Required Readings:

Jeremy Schipper, *Ruth* (Anchor Yale Bible, 7D; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016): 29-35. [CAMS]

UNIT FIVE: CONCLUSION

December 8: CONCLUSION

Topics:

Final Thoughts