

OT 100-4 SCRIPTURE I
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Fall 2012
Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30-11:20am
Schlegel Hall 122

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Office Hours: Wed 1-2pm or by appt.

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 the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible as a basis for biblical and other theological studies in the seminary's curriculum. Subjects for attention include: the composition and content of the OT/HB; the various, historical settings and events of the OT/HB; the literary features and genres of the biblical text; major theological concepts rooted in the Bible; and diverse methods of contemporary biblical scholarship.

Course Objectives:

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Describe the content of a majority of the books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament including 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. Understand and begin to apply a variety of different, contemporary methodological approaches so as to understand the historical contexts, literary artistry, and theological power of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.
4. Evaluate (also, compare and contrast) secondary literature on selected HB/OT texts with the aim of learning how to integrate these resources (e.g., commentaries) within their ministerial and/or academic lives.

Assignments & Evaluation:

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 assignment below.

1. Outline of Torah (Pentateuch) Contents. Due Friday, **September 21**.
(5% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #1, also #2]

Students will work outside of class time in “Torah Study Groups” to read and outline the entire Torah together. Be prepared to meet at least 3 times for several hours in order to complete this assignment.

2. “H-L-T Reference Sheet” on Torah Passage. Due Wednesday, **October 10**.
(15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #3, also #1]

Students will create a 2-page reference sheet for their colleagues that addresses 1 historical, 1 literary, and 1 theological issue within a given passage of Torah.

3. Theological Essay on “David.” Due Wednesday, **October 31**.
(15% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #2, also #1]

A 4-5 page exploration of 1 & 2 Samuel’s differing literary and theological presentations of David—his selection as king, rise to power, kingship.

4. Contextual Biblical Interpretation Essay on Hosea, Amos, or Jonah. Due **November 16**.
(20% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #4, also #1]

In a 5-6 page paper, compare and contrast two of the following commentaries as they treat one of the prophetic books listed above: *Women’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Newsom & Ringe); *Queer Bible Commentary* (ed. Guest, Goss, West, Bohache); *Global Bible Commentary* (ed. Patte); *Africa Bible Commentary* (ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo); *The International Bible Commentary* (ed. William R. Farmer); *The Africana Bible* (ed. Hugh R. Page Jr.)

5. Biblical Theology Essay on a book in the Writings. Due **December 5**.
(20% of final grade) [Course Objectives: primarily #2, also #1 and #3]

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

6. Final Exam. TBD December 12-13.
(25% of final grade) [Course Objectives: #1, #2, #3]

Students will generate the possible short answer and longer essay questions as the semester progresses via postings on CAMS or small group collaboration in class.

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) *The Jewish Study Bible featuring The Jewish Publication Society TANAKH Translation*. Edited by Berlin, Brettler, and Fishbane. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0195297547.

This study bible provides the Jewish Publication Society's TANAKH translation, which provides for many Christians a new reading of classic texts. In addition, a group of biblical scholars and rabbis from Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism provide the essays and commentaries.

3) *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2nd Edition. By Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, & Petersen. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005. ISBN: 068706676X. [*Theological Intro*]

We will read/discuss/debate virtually this entire book. It represents a critical, theological approach.

4) *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. By Michael D. Coogan. Oxford University, 2006. ISBN: 0195139119. [*Coogan*]

Please purchase the **FIRST edition** from 2005/2006 (artwork on front cover is one large painting of Moses receiving the commandments). You can find it USED easily online. **DO NOT** purchase the second edition which is more expensive. This textbook provides historical background.

5) *Making Wise The Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice*. By Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bob. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. ISBN: 0802809901. [*Making Wise*]

This book is written by our own professor, Johanna Bos, and provides an excellent introduction to the Torah.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty: All work turned in 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 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. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an *early* date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

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.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students requiring accommodation for a physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) within the first few days of the course and should speak with me 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 me.

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. 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. See http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

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 turned off. 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.