Syllabus: OT501

Semlink at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary   **OT501: Theology of the Pentateuch with Dr. Gordon Hugenberger**

Table of Contents

Snapshot of Course Requirements

OT501 requires timely completion of the following **six** course requirements:

1. Reading Assignments (including two reading reports with reading notes) – 10% of your grade
2. Mid-Term Examination – 40% of your grade
3. Final Examination – 50% of your grade
4. Extra Credit Reading Assignment
5. Interactivity (required for course grade to be submitted to registration office)
6. Course Checkout (after you have finished all course requirements above)

General Comments

The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to the theology of the Pentateuch, stressing its foundational relevance for a proper understanding of the whole of biblical revelation. While attention will be given to the historical context, literary structure, and contents of each book, the emphasis of this course is biblical theology. Topics to be covered will include the relation of Genesis 1–11 to ancient Near Eastern mythology and modern science; the covenant of creation, the foundational importance of the Abrahamic covenant for the unfolding of redemptive history; the determinative typology of the Exodus recreation and Moses' role as deliverer and covenant mediator; the nature of the canon as a covenant document; the inner logic of Israel's sacrificial system; the relevance of Old Testament law for Christians; etc.

This course is an English Bible course, which, as an alternative to OT 502, "Introduction to the Old Testament," is designed to meet the Old Testament core requirement for the M.Div. program.

[TOP]

Specific Learning Objectives

Background for the Pentateuch:

1. Geography: You will learn to identify on a map of the Ancient Near East the major geographical features (land formations, bodies of water, cities, and political boundaries) which are required for an intelligent reading of the Pentateuch. *See the two maps and the diagrams of the tabernacle (not the diagram of the camp) found in T. Desmond Alexander,* From Paradise to the Promised Land, 2nd ed., *between p. xxi and p. 3.* **You will have to reproduce these on the midterm examination.**
2. History: You will read a modern scholarly survey of the history of the ancient Near East and Bible up to the period of the exodus. You will also learn a simple approximate time line, to enable you to place in proper chronological order the major persons and events mentioned within the Pentateuch and to set these within their proper ancient Near Eastern historical

context.
3. Ancient Near Eastern Literature: You will read an English translation of the most important extra-biblical documents (i.e. primary sources) for a proper understanding of the Pentateuch within its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural context.

Modern Scholarly Study of the Pentateuch

You will become acquainted with certain characteristic assumptions, methods, and representative conclusions of the modern critical study of the Pentateuch. This will enable you to benefit from the vast resources of modern critical scholarship, to appreciate the genuine strengths, as well as the profound limitations and weaknesses of this scholarship.

Content and Biblical Theology of the Pentateuch:

1. You will read through the Pentateuch in a modern English translation. This will require you to read about 20 chapters for each lecture.
2. You will master a general outline of the contents of each of the books of the Pentateuch.
3. You will be helped to integrate the main theological concepts of the Pentateuch by class lectures, supplemented by a careful study especially of the work of the following evangelical scholars: T.D. Alexander, M.G. Kline, J.J. Niehaus, V.S. Poythress, and J.H. Sailhamer..

[TOP]

Reading Assignments

This course includes reading assignments from the Pentateuch, various Ancient Near Eastern primary sources, and textbooks. You are required to complete two electronic reading reports (see Modules, left menu), one at the time you take your Midterm Exam and another when you take your Final Exam.

Reading notes are required for each source read (see instructions below). You will submit your reading notes online, as file attachments, with your reading reports. Note that your notes will need to be broken up by category, and will need to be submitted as separate files but on one report.

Review the information below carefully.

Textbooks and Primary Sources

The textbooks listed below are recommended for possible purchase, since most of them are relatively inexpensive and are books from which students will be required to read at least 100 pages. You will not need to own all of these, however, since in some cases you are given an option to read from one or another of them.

EITHER

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958, 1975, 2010. ISBN: 0691147264

Abbreviated "ANEAnth," this set provides a selection of texts from ANET and pictures from ANEP (see bibliography). Although some important texts are omitted or abbreviated, ANEAnth is reasonably priced and will be serviceable for most students.

Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer. Readings from the Ancient Near East. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2002. Abbreviated as "Arnold and Beyer" ISBN-13: 978-0801022920

AND

Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd edition. Carlisle: Paternoster Press and Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0801039980

**Garrett, Duane. *Rethinking Genesis: the Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1991; reprinted by Christian Focus Publications, 2000 13-87. ISBN-13: 978-0801038372

Hoerth, Alfred J. *Archaeology and the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1998. 13-222. ISBN-13: 978-0801011290

Kline, Meredith G. *The Structure of Biblical Authority, Revised Edition.* Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997. 7-203. ISBN-13: 978-1579100698

Kline, Meredith G. *Kingdom Prologue*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006. 1–232. ISBN-13: 978-1597525640

Niehaus, Jeffrey J. *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995. ISBN-13: 978-0310494713

Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. Brentwood, Tennessee: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1991. ISBN-13: 978-0875523750

Sailhamer, John H. *The Pentateuch as Narrative. A Biblical Theological Commentary, Library of Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992. ISBN-13: 978-0310574217

**This text is out of print. If you are unable to obtain it, your professor recommends you read from T. Desmond Alexander's From Paradise to the Promised Land (pp. 1-110).

[TOP]

Completing Your Reading Reports

This course requires you to complete two separate reading reports, submitted with your Midterm and Final exams respectively. You also have the option of submitting an extra-credit reading report with your Final Exam. For information on submitting your two reports, see the Reading Report module left menu).

With each reading report, you are required to submit reading notes. The following criteria should be followed as you develop reading notes:

- Ancient Near Eastern Primary Sources: Write about **one page of personal study notes** for each source read. In these notes: 1) write a brief synopsis of what the text is about, including the names of the central characters; 2) indicate the potential relevance of this text for a better understanding of some portion of the Pentateuch; and 3) list a few points of similarity and a few points of difference between this text and any comparable account or passage in the Pentateuch. These notes may be handwritten, and are intended for the benefit of your own personal study; additionally, they function as evidence that you have read the material thoughtfully.
- Books/Portions of Books: As you read each of the books or portions listed below, **write about two pages of personal study notes**. These should include 1) a summary of major points; 2) a list of exceptional insights and their page locations; and 3) a list of difficulties and weaknesses and their page locations. These notes may be handwritten, and are intended for the benefit of your own personal study; additionally, they function as evidence that you have read the material thoughtfully.

Typed notes must be saved in .doc, .docx, or PDF format. Handwritten notes must be scanned and uploaded using an appropriately sized file format. Note that you are to upload/attach your typed reading notes (Word or PDF format only). Reading notes files should be divided by category, i.e. you will have one file of notes for Ancient Near Eastern readings, one file for Cultural Background readings, etc. Please include your name and ID# as a heading for each file.

To complete and submit you readings reports, access both under "Modules" and "Resources" (left menu). Both reports are online and will be automatically routed to the Semlink office for grading.

[TOP]

Midterm Examination

Covers lectures and reading assigned up to and including Lecture 5. **Value: 40 points**.

During this examination, you will also be tested on your ability to identify correctly any of the places or bodies of water that are labeled on the first map, titled "Ancient Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.," printed in T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*. You will also be tested on your ability to identify the places that are printed in BOLD face in the second map in Alexander, titled "Route of the Israelite's Journey from Egypt to Canaan." Finally, you will be tested on your ability to identify any of the objects or places marked on the two diagrams printed in Alexander titled "Schematic floor plan of the Tabernacle," and "Cut-away diagram of the Tabernacle."

In the 2nd ed. of Alexander's book, maps and diagrams are between p. xxi and p. 3; in the 3rd edition, these illustrations can be located on the following pages:

- Ancient Near East in the Second Millennium B.C., p 115

- Route of the Israelite's Journey from Egypt to Canaan, p. 189
- Cut-away diagram of the Tabernacle, p. 227

[TOP]

Final Examination

Covers all lectures, but especially the lectures and reading since the midterm examination. During this examination, you will also need to reproduce a simple approximate timeline of events in the Ancient Near East. The timeline is available for download below (also posted under "Resources" on the left menu). On the final exam, students will be asked to place in proper chronological sequence a random list of the persons or events which are printed in boldface. No specific dates as such will be tested. **Value: 50 points**

- Exam Timeline

[TOP]

Extra Credit Reading

Extra credit will be given for a significant degree of outside reading (excluding the Bible) from books or articles mentioned in the Extra Credit Reading Report (see "Resources" menu). 1/2 point will be awarded for each 100 pages read. Your Extra Credit Reading Report must be accompanied by typed reading notes for each souce/book read. Follow the instructions above for developing your reading notes, by source/category.

Inadequate quality in these reports will result in an appropriate deduction from the points awarded for this reading assignment. **Value: up to 1.5 points** . You can access and submit the extra credit reading report in "Modules" or "Resources" (left menu). Like the other two reading reports, the extra credit reading report is online and will be automatically routed to the Semlink office for grading.

See the 'Reading Reports' Module (select 'Modules' in the left menu and then 'Reading Reports') to view helpful charts and detailed information about the reading required for the extra credit reading report. A place to submit your extra credit reading report can also be found in the 'Reading Reports' module.

[TOP]

Submitting Assignments

Assignments can be submitted electronically through the Drop Box tool in Sakai. On the left menu, under "Project Tools," select "Drop Box." To add a file, click "Add" and upload from there.

Some guidelines for this process:

- Paper submissions should be in either .doc, .docx or .pdf format.
- Submitting your work through drop box is considered a formal (and final) submission. Nothing further will be needed on your part.
- All submissions are time/date stamped and will be retrieved by the Semlink office and routed to your professor for grading.
- Assignments may be returned to you electronically, in most cases through your Sakai drop box or via email. If your assignment was graded by hand, it will be scanned and delivered to you as a PDF file.
- Remember to use a full heading, including your name, professor, course, and date.

Please let the Semlink office know if you have any further questions about electronic submission. semlink@gordonconwell.edu or 978-646-4144.

[TOP]

Grading

You will be graded on a 100-point scale, distributed as follows:

Reading Assignment	10 Points
Mid-Term Examination	40 Points
Final Examination	50 Points

| Extra Credit | up to 1.5 Points |
| Interactivity | Completion Required |

Interactivity

As a member of the Association of Theological Schools, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary recognizes the value of interactivity in distance learning and complies with the standards for accreditation set by ATS which include interactivity as a compulsory component of any distance learning program that wishes to continue granting credit for its courses. The purpose of Semlink interactivity is to enhance learning by providing an online environment for students to engage meaningfully and substantively with professors, teaching fellows, and other students in order to achieve an enriching and academically challenging distance learning experience.

There are two interactivity requirements for this course:

1. **An online discussion forum:** converse with other students and with instructors on the Semlink forum. You are required to participate four (4) times in the discussions relating to your area of study. To ensure successful completion of this requirement, please complete your participation in the discussion forums at least one week prior to your course due date. This will allow sufficient time for you to resubmit any responses if necessary.
2. **Email-based conversation** with your Semlink teaching fellow. You are required to email a total of three (3) times, including your original response to the conversation starter. Please allow a minimum of one month to complete this conversation to allow time for the teaching fellow to respond. Allow five business days for a response to each of your submissions.

To begin your interactivity (and for more details about this requirement), see the Interactivity section under Modules. This section will explain in more detail what is expected for this requirement.

If you fail to complete the interactivity requirements, you will fail your course.