Old Testament Survey (OT500)
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Charlotte
Spring 2015
January 26 - May 9, 2015

Instructor: Dr. Tim Laniak

Teaching Assistant: Douglas W. Price Jr., M. Div.

Contact Information

Dr. Laniak can be reached via email at tlaniak@gordonconwell.edu and will also welcome dialog during virtual office hours and for special issues.

Doug can be reached at dprice1@gordonconwell.edu. Although communication and grading for this course is supervised by Dr. Laniak, Doug is your first point of contact for all questions.

A technical Help Desk is available if you run into any technical issues. They can be reached during normal business hours at helpdesk@gordonconwell.edu. If you run into any issues off hours, please email the T.A.

Course Description

OT500 is an introductory survey of the primary content, figures, and themes of the Old Testament. This course also introduces students to the historical-cultural context of the biblical world and the connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Gordon-Conwell Mission

This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives:

Demonstrate a strong understanding of both the content of the Bible and the overarching redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation.

Relation to Curriculum

OT500 is a foundational course for all degrees and programs and as such has no prerequisites.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Know the main figures, events, and themes in the Old Testament, their relationship to the New Testament, and their ongoing significance for our lives.
2. Understand the importance of background information and become familiar with resources that illuminate the geographical, historical, and cultural contexts of God’s revelation in the Old Testament.
3. Interpret the Old Testament with sensitivity to background, genre and literary context.
Lesson Topics

The following are a listing of the Lesson topics in this course.

1. Preparing for the Journey: Introduction to the Old Testament
2. The Formation of the People of God: From Eden to Canaan (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
3. The Mission of the People of God (Part 1): Covenant Living Attempted in the Promised Land (Historical Books: Joshua-1 Kings)

The mandatory residency occurs between Lessons 4 & 5 (March 23-25, 2015)

5. The Exile and Return of the People of God (Part 1): Covenant Breakdown under the Assyrians (2 Kings 1-20, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jonah, Nahum, Isaiah)
6. The Exile and Return of the People of God (Part 2): Covenant Breakdown under the Babylonians (2 Kings 21-25, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations, Joel, Obadiah)
7. The Exile and Return of the People of God (Part 3): Covenant Living Reengaged under the Persians (Daniel, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles)
8. The Bridge (Residency Week: “Pulling It All Together” in Preparation for the New Testament)

Required Materials


Course Requirements

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend a minimum of 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Mastery</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Construction</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>135 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Content Mastery

To meet the objectives of knowing and understanding the OT, students need to spend a great deal of time reading, viewing presentations, and interacting with the content. Content Mastery will be encouraged and measured through the following activities.

Readings

The core content and primary text for this course is the Old Testament (OT) itself. The Lessons will include other reading and viewing requirements that supplement your understanding of the vast and varied content of the OT. Reading Arnold and Beyer’s *Encountering the Old Testament* will help you understand each book of the Bible with attention to its structure, major themes and some historical background information. Carol Kaminski’s *CASKET READER* will help you to gain a sense of the overarching redemptive story from Genesis to Malachi, while Youngblood’s *The Heart of the Old Testament* will help you think thematically about the OT. On or before the Sunday of each week by 11:55 p.m., you should enter in Sakai the percentage of the required reading you have completed. Please enter a percentage only once. Incomplete work and/or late submissions will result in a grade penalty. NOTE: For the assigned Bible reading you may instead listen to all or part of it on CD, mp3, etc. Please use the NIV, ESV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, KJV or NKJV. Avoid paraphrases such as The Message and The Living Bible.

Multimedia Presentations

Video and narrated PowerPoint presentations will reinforce your reading and support your comprehension of the Old Testament. In each Lesson, there will be short video introductions by the professor; students will also view 15-30 minute instructional presentations on the books of the OT offered in video format. Students will also view narrated PowerPoint presentations that provide images and commentary on the historical background of the Old Testament. These presentations will explore the historical-cultural context with ancient parallel texts and images of relevant artifacts and provide commentary on the books themselves. Through these various multimedia presentations, we will incrementally build a “big picture” of the Old Testament, what unifies it, and how it anticipates the New Testament. Please note that all narrated PowerPoint and video presentations are copyright protected and cannot be copied from the web or distributed in any form. Please see the copyright notice at the end of the syllabus for more information.
Lesson Assignments

In most Lessons, students will complete assignments in which they interact with the content for that module. These assignments are designed to facilitate understanding of the content by helping students to visualize and mentally organize the events depicted in the OT using maps and timelines.

Tests

Old Testament Survey requires students to build a base of knowledge that is progressively organized throughout the term. The base knowledge (people, places, dates, etc.) will be tested in three objective (multiple choice) tests that cover the material for two or three modules. Test questions are drawn from the Old Testament, lectures and course reading.

While these tests are online, they must be proctored in the student’s local community. Students must identify a qualified proctor and location in advance of the exam. For more information, please review the documents pertaining to tests in the Resources tool in Sakai.

Students will have the opportunity to check their understanding of the OT content through self-check quizzes in each module that are ungraded. These short quizzes provide sample questions of the type that will be in each test, but they are not the actual questions.

II. Content Construction

Guiding Questions

Students will not only master the content of the Old Testament, but will also build their own understanding of the larger meaning of the OT. This objective will be accomplished through the construction of reflective answers to the following five “Guiding Questions”:

1. What is the nature of biblical revelation in light of its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural contexts? Take into account the genres of Scripture and extra-biblical parallels. (This question considers the human dimensions of God’s Word.)
2. What has each book, section of the Bible, and genre revealed about God? How is God progressively revealed over time (include metaphors, characteristics and mission of God)?
3. What has each book, section of the Bible, and genre revealed about God’s people, their relationship with God and each other, and their role and mission in the world (include metaphors, mission, ethics, worship, “living by faith,” etc.)?
5. In what ways has God spoken to you in your journey through the Old Testament?

Lesson Guiding Questions Reflections

In Lessons 1-5, students are required to post bi-weekly reflections of a minimum of 200 words on each of the five (5) Guiding Questions in their blog. The teaching assistant will occasionally provide feedback on these reflections as the students prepare to shape their thoughts toward the Guiding Questions Essays final assignment. The residency will provide more helpful input.
Guiding Questions Essays (Final Assignment)

For the final assignment, students will write five (5) separate 1,000 word Essays, **one essay for each Guiding Question**. Although students may use much of their content from their Lesson reflections, these should be newly crafted essays (not simply edited versions of Lesson submissions). **Each essay should include content and examples from the entirety of the Old Testament.**

See the **Guiding Questions Essays Rubric** for more detail about this assignment.

III. Participation

This course is designed to be highly interactive with a significant portion of the learning happening in interactions among students and between individual students and the professor and T.A. Participation in this course will be measured in several ways.

**Course Discussions Overview**

Discussion in OT Survey serves two purposes. First, students will have the opportunity to seek clarity about the content they are reading. The second purpose is to consider together the implications of this content in contemporary life and ministry. While this purpose is **reflective** in nature, students should always refer back to objective content provided in the lectures, readings and, especially, the Old Testament in all discussions.

**Forums**

Students will post on the Forums personal reflections that invite feedback from their peers on this journey of reading and reflecting. Forum postings should contain original thought and reflection and make substantive contributions to class discussion. Check out the **Participation Rubric** and the **Example Posts** document in the Resources tool in Sakai for further information.

**Residency**

The course concludes with a summative residency at the GCTS Charlotte campus March 23-25, 2015. **Attendance is mandatory for all three days.** Our time during the residency week will be devoted to discussing the course content to date as well as special topics. Students will receive a grade based on the quality of their participation in the residency.

More information will be available on the format and logistics of the residency as the date becomes closer. See the Course **Participation Rubric** in the Resources tool in Sakai for further detail.

**Grading Policies**

**Grading Schedule**

The final course grade reflects the following components:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Maximum Points Possible Per Assignment</th>
<th>Total Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments (10)</td>
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<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modules 1-5 Guiding Questions Reflections (5)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Forums (8)</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Questions Essays</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be used for all graded coursework and the final course grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Policies**

**Proctored Tests**

All tests in this course are online and will be proctored. The student will need to identify a suitable proctor and location and submit the Proctor Approval Form by the week before a test opens. To access the exam, a password will be sent directly to the Proctor.

**Instructor Feedback**

The TA will attempt to respond to email messages within 24-48 hours, excluding Sundays. He will provide feedback on assignments within two weeks of submission. We will post grades in the grade book within two weeks of submission.
Document Formatting and Submission

Formatting preferences and citation style:

Please use the latest version of Turabian as the style guide for the Guiding Questions Essays. Format the paper with 1” margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and footnotes (rather than endnotes).

File naming convention for assignments:

Assignments and papers should be labeled with first initial and last name followed by the course and semester. Example: jsmithL#_M#_SP15. Any assignment lacking the proper file naming convention may be subject to a grade deduction.

Late Work

Tests, module assignments, bi-weekly guiding questions reflections, and final guiding questions essays will be deducted one letter grade per day after the due date. In the forums, starter posts are worth a maximum of 6 points and are deducted 2 points per day late. Each reply post is worth a maximum of 3 points and is deducted 1 point per day late. The remaining 0.5 points can be earned by submitting all of your posts on time.

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Netiquette

Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

Additional Seminary Policies

For additional seminary policies that may pertain to this course, please refer to this Syllabus Addendum located in the Resources tool in Sakai.