

OT500 Old Testament Survey
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Charlotte
Spring 2012 Term 1
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Contact Information:

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Course Description

OT 500 is a survey of the primary content, figures, and themes of the Old Testament. This course introduces students to: 1) the history and culture of the Ancient Near East that provide the backdrop to biblical events, 2) methods for interpreting the biblical text, and 3) modern lenses for applying the wisdom of the Old Testament to contemporary life and society.

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 the first course in the online MAR program and as such has no pre-requisites. Students are expected to have read the entire Old Testament before beginning this course.

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 to 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.

Module Topics

The following are a listing of the module 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)
4. The Mission of the People of God (Part 2): Covenant Living Celebrated...and Questioned (Poetic and Wisdom Books: Job-Lamentations)
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

Arnold, Bill and Bryan Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, 2008. ISBN# 978-0801031700

Fee, Gordon and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. ISBN# 978-0310246046

NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Duane Garrett, eds. ISBN# 978-0310926054

Youngblood, Ronald. *The Heart of the Old Testament: A Survey of Key Theological Themes*, 1998. ISBN# 978-0801021725

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 approximately 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and out of class. The following chart indicates an estimation of how these hours may be distributed across the various course assignments. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.

Course Assignment	% of Grade	Expected Time Commitment
Content Mastery	40%	70 hours
Content Construction	40%	40 hours
Participation	20%	25 hours
Total	100%	135 hours

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. Students are expected to have read it prior to beginning the first module. The modules 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. Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* pays particular attention to reading and interpreting different genres. The connection between background and big picture is reinforced through your reading of Youngblood's *Heart of the Old Testament*.

Multimedia Presentations

Video and narrated PowerPoint presentations will reinforce your reading and support your comprehension of the OT. In each module there will be video introductions by the professor; for each lesson students will view presentations on the books of the OT offered in various formats: video, audio, PowerPoint, and written transcript. These presentations will explore the historical-cultural context with ancient parallel texts and images of relevant artifacts and provide commentary on the books themselves. Most important of all, we incrementally build a "big picture" of the Old Testament, what unifies it, and how it anticipates the New Testament.

Module Activities

In most modules, 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 the events depicted in the OT. In these activities, students will construct maps and timelines, create lists of key concepts and themes, and compare biblical texts with parallel texts in ancient Near East culture and literature.

Module Exams

Old Testament Survey requires students to build a base of knowledge that you will progressively organize throughout the term. The base knowledge (people, places, dates, etc.) will be tested in three objective (multiple choice) exams that cover the material for two or three modules. These exams will be proctored in the student's local community. Students must identify a qualified proctor and location in advance of the exam (see Proctored Exam policy in the Course Policies section). Students will have the opportunity to check their understanding of the OT content through quizzes in each module that are ungraded.

II. Content Construction

Students will not only master the content of the Old Testament, but will also construct their own understanding of the larger meaning of the OT. This objective will be accomplished through the following activities.

Guiding Questions: Throughout the course, students will address five guiding questions in their journey through the Old Testament:

1. What is the nature of biblical revelation in light of its ancient Near Eastern literary and cultural contexts?
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.)?
4. How does the Old Testament anticipate the New Testament?
5. In what ways has God spoken to **you** in your journey through the Old Testament?

Students will reflect on these questions in each module and will produce a final integrative essay that synthesizes their understanding of the Old Testament and their personal reflection on the questions.

Reflective Writing

At the end of each module, students will compose a reflective piece based on the guiding questions. Assessment of these writings will be based on the quality of engagement with the OT and supplementary resources, and evidence of original thinking.

Integrative Essay

There is no cumulative exam on the basic content of the OT. Rather, a summary project will provide students with the opportunity to *synthesize* their understanding of the OT and its most important themes. Students will construct a 5,000 word paper that integrates their answers to the guiding questions.

Residency Week

The residency week for this course occurs during the final week. Students will come to the Charlotte campus and meet Monday-Wednesday. Our time during the residency week will be devoted to summarizing and synthesizing your responses to the guiding questions. Those students who do not come for the residency week will have additional assignments to complete that will make up for the 24 hours of class time they will miss.

III. Participation

Discussion in OT Survey serves two purposes. Students will have the opportunity to seek clarity about the content they are reading by posting questions on the forums. The second purpose is to consider together the implications of this content in contemporary life and ministry. This purpose is *reflective* in nature. Students will post on the forums personal ideas that invite feedback from their peers on this journey of reading and reflecting. Forum postings should contain genuine thought and reflection and make substantive contributions to class discussion. Students are expected to post personal reflections at least once a week with an average of 100 words or more. Students will receive points for the quality of their posts.

Grading Policy

The final course grade reflects the following components:

Assignment	Maximum Points Possible Per Assignment	% of Total Grade
Exams (3)	100	30%
Module Activities (10)	10	10%
Reflective Writing (7)	100	10%
Integrative Essay	100	30%
Discussion Forum Postings	10	20%

Grading Scale

A+ = 98-100	A = 93-97	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = below 60		

Course Policies

Proctored Exams

All exams in this course will be proctored. The student will need to identify a suitable proctor and location and submit a Proctor Form by the end of the first week of the course.

Instructor Feedback

I will attempt to questions or messages within 24-48 hours, excluding Sundays. I will provide feedback on assignments within one week of submission. I 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 Integrative Paper. Format the paper with 1" margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and footnotes (rather than endnotes).

File naming convention for assignments:

Papers should be labeled with last name and first initial followed by the course and semester. Example: jsmithOTSp12.

Late Work

Writing assignments will be penalized 5 points per day after the due date. Postings and module activities will be penalized 2 points per day after the due date.

Netiquette

I will not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in this 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](#).