I. Course Description:

This course highlights the big picture of the Old Testament through the lens of relationship; namely, God’s relationship with his people. Book by book it plots God’s relentless pursuit of a people (with whom he might relate), a place (for the relationship to unfold), and a presence (God’s presence that reveals his character). Through this trifocal emphasis we will see how each book fits into the overarching story of the Old Testament and how they point forward to the N.T.

II. General Learning Goals:

- To understand the big picture of the Old Testament
- To observe the general themes and content of each of the Old Testament books from the primary source itself!
- To wrestle with the character of the God that unfolds in the Old Testament
- To apprehend the Old Testament’s relevance and application to our lives today

III. Required Texts:

The Old Testament. Use a good modern translation


IV. Recommended Items:

Kaminski, C. *God’s Story in the Old Testament through CASKET* (laminates)

These are helpful visuals.


V. Requirements and Evaluation:

1. READINGS:
   A. In the Bible
   The Bible will be the primary textbook and the student shall *read (not skim!)* the O.T. in order to discover each book's individual content for her/himself. Imagine that: reading a substantial portion of your Bible at seminary! Each O.T. book (with few exceptions TBA) must intelligently be read **two** times (this is not a typo)! Ideally, the readings should be done prior to the class dealing with those books. Please see the class schedule below for details. The readings should be uninterrupted (in one sitting) so that you can get a feel for the book's general content. If possible try to read out loud. More guidelines will be given in class. *See below for the specific percentage of the course grade attached to this requirement.*

   B. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth and CASKET

   *How to read the Bible for All Its Worth* should be read weekly with biblical books assigned. The text teaches proper interpretation as one reads the Bible. *CASKET* serves as a supplement to the Bible readings. It must be read in full before the end of the semester. It is best, however, to read it in conjunction with the Bible books assigned each week as indicated in the syllabus. *See below for the specific percentage of the course grade attached to this requirement.*

   C. Evaluation and the Readings:
   Reading the O.T. two times = (50% of course evaluation). The only way to receive full credit here is to do what is required. In other words, reading the O.T. just one time will not earn you 25% out of 50%. There are no other configurations possible. Thus, please understand that you will not be able to pass the course if you do not meet this requirement. Included in this 50% is *writing out the main idea for each book.* The other assigned readings are not assigned a percentage of the grade but are expected to be done as part of the normal course load.

2. EXAMS:

   A. One mid-term exam scheduled for **Nov 4th**: emphasis on biblical content that includes the Pentateuch through and including 8th century prophets (25%)
   B. One final exam in **Dec 16th**: emphasis on remaining biblical content (25%)
   This commences with 7th century prophets through and including HB II, Wisdom, and Poetical books.
PLEASE NOTE: If you are seeking to fulfill MA/MDiv degree requirements by taking OT 500, you are required to have a passing grade. A passing grade is 60% or higher.

COURSE SCHEDULE: The first purpose of this schedule is to familiarize you with the general content of each class period at a glance. Although I intend to follow this as much as possible, please note that, out of necessity, I may add or subtract from the proposed content in any given week. The second purpose is to provide you with a reading schedule that aligns itself with lecture material. Please be sure to read this carefully and intentionally.

NOTE: I reserve the right to modify course or test content should it be deemed necessary to meet the goals of this course.

Class #1: September 16

Course Introduction
Setting the Framework: The Relentless Pursuit of Yahweh!
Understanding a People, Place, and Presence (PPP)

Readings for next class: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Class #2: September 24

II. The Pentateuch
   The Big Picture
      The Historical Setting: dating and geography
      The Literary Setting: major events/themes/structure

   Its Individual Parts
      Genesis  "The Inviolable Relationship"
      Exodus  "Rescued for Relationship"
      Leviticus  "Living in Right Relationship"
      Numbers  "The Rocky Relationship"
      Deuteronomy  "The Renewed Relationship"

   2.3 The Pentateuch: People, Place, and Presence
   2.4 The Pentateuch: Overarching Concept of Covenant

Readings for next class: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel

Class #3: September 30

III. Historical Books PART I:
The Big Picture: Establishment Phase: Pre-Exilic
The Historical Setting: dating and geography
The Literary Setting: major events/themes/structure

Its Individual Parts
Joshua "A Relationship with Residents of the Land"
Judges "A Rebellious Relationship"
Ruth "A Refreshing Relationship"
I&II Samuel "A Relationship in Transition"
I&II Kings "A Rivaled Relationship"

The Historical Books Part I: People, Place, and Presence
The HB I: Overarching Concept of Covenant

Readings for next class: I & II Samuel, I & II Kings

Class #4: October 7
Finish Historical Books PART I
Prophetic Books Intro?

Class #5: October 14 (READING WEEK: October 10-14)
Read the prophets and preliminary handouts! Get a start by reading the 9th and 8th Century prophets or all of them hopefully! I will give more instructions on how to manage this in class.

Class #6: October 21
IV. Prophetic Books:
   Preliminary Points
   Their Focus: The overarching theme of covenant
   Their FANS (Foreigners, Anonymous, North, South)
   Their Fit (in Israelite history)
   Prophets: People, Place, and Presence

Continued readings in the prophets

Class #7: October 28
Prophets & Preparation for mid-term
9th Century
   The Big Picture
The Historical Setting: the international political situation
The Literary Setting: major events/themes

Its Individual Parts
Joel "The Devastated Relationship"
Obadiah "A Strained Relationship"

8th Century
The Big Picture
The Historical Setting: the international political situation
The Literary Setting: major events/themes

Its Individual Parts
Amos "A Relationship of Injustice"
Hosea "An Adulterous Relationship"
Micah "A Loving and Humble Relationship"
Jonah "A Merciful and Compassionate Relationship"
Isaiah "A Holy Restored Relationship"

For next class: prepare for mid-term and TRY to read 7th and 6th Century prophets

Class #8: November 4
Mid-term & Prophets
7th Century
The Big Picture
The Historical Setting: the international political situation
The Literary Setting: major events/themes

Its Individual Parts
Zephaniah "A Shameful Relationship"
Nahum "Nasty Nineveh Knocked Out"
Habakkuk "A Relationship of Questions"
Jeremiah/Lamentations "A Relationship taken for Granted"/
"Grieving over the Broken Relationship"

6th Century
The Big Picture: The Exile
The Historical Setting: the international political situation
The Literary Setting: major events/themes

Its Individual Parts
Ezekiel "A Relationship in Retreat"
Daniel "An Exemplary Relationship"
Class #9: November 11th (READING WEEK November 7-11)
For next class: If necessary finish all readings in the prophets and start on Ezra
Nehemiah, Esther, I & II Chronicles, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Class #10: November 18

V. The Historical Books Parts II:
The Big Picture: Rebuilding/Restoration Phase: Post-Exilic
   The Historical Setting: dating and geography
   The Literary Setting: major events/themes/structure

   Its Individual Parts
   Ezra "A Reformed Relationship"
   Nehemiah "A Revived/Restored Relationship"
   Esther "A Protected Relationship"
   I & II Chronicles "A Relationship in Review"
   Haggai "Rebuilding and Reflecting on an Apathetic Relationship"
   Zechariah "Rebuilding and Visualizing a New Relationship"
   Malachi "A Robbed Relationship"

The Historical Books Part II: People, Place, and Presence
HBII: Overarching Theme of Covenant

November 26 (Thanksgiving no class)

Readings for next class: finish HB II if necessary and start on Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Class #11: December 2

VI. The Wisdom Books:
The Big Picture
   The Historical Setting: dating and background
   The Literary Setting: major events/themes/structure

   Its Individual Parts
   Job "A Tested Relationship"
   Proverbs "The Contrast Between a Foolish and Wise Relationship"
   Ecclesiastes "A Vain Relationship"

Wisdom Literature and the Overarching Theme of Covenant

Readings for next class: Song of Songs, Psalms
Class #12: December 9

VII. The Poetical Books:
   The Big Picture
      The Historical Setting: dating and background
      The Literary Setting: major themes/structure

   Its Individual Parts
      Song of Songs "The Relationship of Relationships"
      Psalms "Praises for the Relationship"

   The Poetical Books and the Overarching Theme of Covenant

Class #13: December 16

   FINAL EXAM