A Hebrew exegesis course providing an introduction to OT exegetical method using Pentateuchal legal texts as the basic corpus of study. Considerable attention will be to given gaining familiarity with the nature and purpose of the Mosaic law via the examination of sample texts in context from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy in a modified case-study method. Students will also have the opportunity to consider the Law’s application in passages from historical and prophetical contexts. Additionally, they will be introduced to comparable legal materials in the ancient world as well as the ongoing function of OT law in Christian belief and practice, with attention to Jesus’ teaching on the Law. The course involves systematic coverage of the various steps of the Hebrew exegesis process and seeks to build overall Hebrew language and Hebrew exegetical competence via secondary readings, regular translation requirements, quizzes and an exegesis paper.

**Required Texts:**

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*

**Recommended Texts (some familiarity with these books is assumed in the course):**

G. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, 3d. ed. (Zondervan)

Course pre-requisite: OL 502, completed and passed, or equivalent via approved transfer; also passing grade on Hebrew competency quiz given in connection with this course
Course objectives: introduction to OT Hebrew Exegetical method; exposure to the general content of the legal texts of the Pentateuch and exegetical sampling of specific passages weekly; increased facility in OT Hebrew at the intermediate level; increased sense of how to preach and teach from prophetical books; exposure to hermeneutical errors commonly committed by OT preachers and teachers; exposure to useful commentary literature on legal materials.
**Th.M. Elevation:** To elevate this course to a 900-level, you must get prior approval by petition on a proper form from the Registration Office. You must then do all the coursework as prescribed in this syllabus and, in addition, write a special research paper on a topic relevant to the course, approved by the professor, of at least ten pages, showing extensive bibliographic consultation (usually a minimum of two dozen sources with good representation of periodical literature, not just books and commentaries) cites or discusses biblical texts in English rather than Hebrew, Greek or other appropriate languages, you will be graded down substantially.

**Th.M. Writing Course use:** To make this course the one in which you write your Th.M. “major research paper” you must get prior approval as required by petition on a proper form from the Registration Office and/or the director of the Th.M. program. You must do all the coursework as prescribed and, instead of the usual more limited exegesis paper, write a more extensive exegesis paper, following the same instructions but clearly labeled “Th.M. Major Research Paper,” at least 40 pages in length (that’s a bare minimum; it may need to be substantially longer), with extensive bibliographic consultation (usually a minimum of about forty sources with good representation of periodical literature, not just books and commentaries, and extensive footnotes interacting with the secondary literature). The paper must be a Hebrew exegesis paper throughout. If any part of the paper cites or discusses biblical texts in English rather than Hebrew, Greek or other appropriate languages, you will be graded down substantially.

**Major Integrative Paper** (M.A. requirement for students for whom English is a second language, in place of a summative evaluation): Prior approval required by petition to the professor. The paper must be at least 25 pages in length, and written and submitted entirely in addition to all other course requirements (it does not substitute for any course requirement and is not graded as part of any course’s grade). If you obtain permission to write it for me I require that it be written on one of the following topics:

a. An evaluation of the influence of the Old Testament on Christian theology as seen in specific examples over the span of Church history.


c. Misunderstandings of the Old Testament that have resulted in problems for denominations or movements as indicated in the writings of leaders of those movements.

**ASSIGNMENTS and grading information:**

1. **HEBREW COMPETENCY TEST**  **First Day of Class.** You must pass this quiz (at least 60 out of 100 points) to continue in the course. It is graded p/f. It contains sections on vocabulary, parsing and reading. The way to study for it is simply to review your Hebrew.

2. **COURSE QUIZ #1.** 25% of course grade. First half of exegesis terms (see *OTE* 177-180); first half of hermeneutical fallacies (see *OTE* 181-183); reading to date; Hebrew text assignments up to and including the week before the quiz; class lectures. Lexicons not allowed. Bring a clean BHS to the quiz.

3. **COURSE QUIZ #2.** 25% of course grade. Remaining exegesis terms (see *OTE* 177-180); remaining hermeneutical fallacies (see *OTE* 181-183); reading to date; Hebrew text assignments not on first quiz; class lectures. Lexicons not allowed. Bring a clean BHS to the quiz.

4. **HEBREW EXEGESIS PAPER** on a passage of your choosing from one of the Minor Prophets. Recommended length of passage: 4-6 verses. **Choose a passage that has at least three text issues associated with it.** Due last day for written work, 4:00 PM. This paper
is a formal paper with footnotes and a full bibliography. Value: 50% of course grade. Please be careful to follow the directions below. Sample papers are on CAMS and in my office.

5. Class attendance and participation (mainly responding to questions): 10%. Persons who attend fully and participate regularly and competently will usually receive this credit.

6. **Important note:** As the catalog states, you must demonstrate adequate competence in both Hebrew language and in exegetical method in order to pass the course, regardless of your grades on assignments 1-5 above. If you fail to demonstrate Hebrew and/or exegesis competence in any aspect of the course, including the Hebrew competency quiz, you cannot receive a passing grade or credit. Naturally, cheating, plagiarism and other breaches of academic propriety will also result in failure. Be sure to read the seminary statement on plagiarism.

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**LATE WORK/EXTENSIONS PRIOR TO LAST DAY FOR WRITTEN WORK:**
Basic concept: fairness to those who make the sacrifices to get their work in on time, not a desire to hurt anyone. Fairness requires that everyone have essentially the same amount of time to complete the assignments.

- True unavoidable emergency, including illness: no penalty as long as simple written request is made and approved and lateness does not exceed actual time lost by reason of the emergency.
- Late work otherwise: 1/2 point per 1/2 week is deducted.

Late work at the end of the session (after last day for submitting written work) cannot be accepted by the professor, but must be submitted directly to the Registration Office after approval of your petition for an extension. The Registration Office may assign additional penalties to those assigned by the course professor.

**Graduating seniors:** Your work must be in by the May grad deadline to graduate.

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Exegesis paper instructions: This is a full paper, which could easily be 20-30 pages or more. Organize it according to the "12 steps" of OTE Ch. 1, but don't produce a detailed outline with subordinated letters and numbers (I, A, I, a, etc.). Instead, group things together mainly by spacing. Step 11 will be evident from the bibliography (and footnotes where appropriate). Don't make it a separate section. Thus, your finished outline will have eleven sections (each with a heading) plus a bibliography. For step 1 (text) be sure to print out your reconstructed text in your own handwriting. If it is poetic, print it out in stichometry (poetic format), showing clearly how you think the couplets and triplets are grouped by the way you space them apart from one another. Then immediately after that, still within step 1, type your annotations to the text (justifying and/or explaining all the significant text problems or decisions or issues). You indicate your annotations by raised letters in the text corresponding to raised letters at the beginning of each annotation. For step 2, type out your
own translation, and immediately after that type the annotations to your translation. Use the same raised-letter annotation system. You should comment on every word or phrase not obvious or automatic in the translation. After step 2, your other steps need have no footnotes although you may use them if you choose. Submit the paper without a cover or binder (a title page is fine), stapled in the upper l.h. corner. Samples of acceptable exegesis outlines are available, so please don't guess at the proper format. Instead, check out the samples. Please remember that you need to write a solid Hebrew exegesis paper, not a paper that is partly a Hebrew exegesis and partly an English exegesis.

You can see if I preach what I practice at Linebrook Church, 391 Linebrook Rd., Ipswich, about 20 minutes from campus.

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Everything listed for a given day should be prepared for that day. Be sure to prepare text assignments according to the 12 steps, and always from the Hebrew. You must bring a BHS to class.

2/1 Class #1 Hebrew Competency Quiz  Comments on introduction and methods; goals; use of texts; general considerations on OT exegesis, and its use by the minister, etc. Lecture: Introduction to OT Law. Reading assignment: Pritchard, The Ancient Near East, 150-155. Review Stuart and Fee, How To, 163-180.

2/8 Class #2 Hebrew text assignment: Exod 20:1-17. Reading assignment: Stuart, Old Testament Exegesis, especially ch.1; Also, read Wegner, Textual Criticism, 1-57, with emphasis on OT; Stuart, Exodus, 438-468. Pick a paper topic and start working on your paper.


2/22 NO CLASS -- READING WEEK Reading assignment: Finish reading Wegner, Textual Criticism (emphasis on OT) and Stuart, Old Testament Exegesis.


[3/22 NO CLASS – READING WEEK Read Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*]


4/19 **QUIZ #2** on everything since 3/8. No class otherwise, unless a make-up session is needed

[4/26 NO CLASS unless make-up session is needed; paper preparation]

**Friday, 4/29 4:00 PM Exegesis papers and all other written work due from graduating seniors**

**By the last day for written work as published by the Registration Office**: Exegesis papers and all other written work due from all other students. Reminder: After the last day for written work, no work can be submitted to me. It is submitted to the Registration Office once it is done, and after you have petitioned through that office for an extension. They may assess a penalty. They will forward your work to me for grading.