OT 511  
Interpreting the Old Testament  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
Fall 2014  
Instructor: Thomas Petter

Tues/Thurs 8-9:25am

Course Description:

An introduction to the principles of Old Testament Hebrew Exegesis and to the study of the Old Testament. Various exercises will be assigned that prepare students for 600-level exegesis courses (e.g., text criticism, translation, grammar, structure, lexical analysis). In addition, students are exposed to the major questions pertaining to Old Testament studies (Inspiration, authority, historical questions, critical methodologies).

Prerequisites:

OL 501, OL 502 (may be enrolled in OL 502 concurrently with OT 511), OT 500, NT 501.
Note: Hebrew requirements must be met in order to pass the course

Learning outcomes:

- Familiarity with the process of Hebrew exegesis in preparation for 600-level exegesis courses.
- Development of critical skills to assess the major schools of interpretation in Old Testament studies (literary, historical and recent trends, e.g. reader-response and liberation readings)
- Strengthened commitment to the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God (cf. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s Mission Statement)

Note: No personal internet usage, texting, etc. during class times. At the end of the course, students will need to produce a signed written statement they did not go online for personal purposes during class times. Regular attendance, punctuality and active participation are required in this class. Penalties can be up to 10% of final grade.
**Required Readings:**

J. Merrick, Stephen M. Garrett, eds. *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (Zondervan)

E. Brotzman, *Text Criticism* (Baker)


M. Adler, Ch. Van Doren, *How to Read a Book* (Touchstone)

**Recommended Readings:**

A. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*


**Course Evaluation:**

Final Exam: All course readings and lectures (40%)

Exegetical Exercises (60%)
  1. Literary context
  2. Text Criticism
  3. Grammar
  4. Lexical Analysis
  5. Structure
  6. Application

Instructions will be given in class for each of these exercises
Schedule and Readings:

WEEK ONE: Sept 9, 11

“The Old Testament as History and Theology”

- Old Testament themes and topics
- Historiography, ideology and inerrancy
- Readings: Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy

WEEK TWO: Sept 16, 18

“Exegesis: The Big Picture”

- Overview of the exegetical process
- Reading: Old Testament Textual Criticism

WEEK THREE: Sept 23, 25

“Literary context”

- Contours, placement and function of a text
- Reading: How to Read a Book
- Assignment on Literary Context of Nehemiah 8 is due next week on Friday Oct 3

WEEK FOUR: Sept 30, Oct 2

“Text Criticism”

- Introduction to Text Criticism
- Readings: Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, chs. 1, 2, 3, 4 (OT sections), 5, 6.
- Assignment on text criticism is due next week on Friday Oct 10
WEEK FIVE: Oct 7, 9

“Lexical Analysis”

- How to do a word study

  Note: Accordance or Bible Works is required for the lexical analysis exercise. Brown Driver and Briggs (unabridged) is also required

- Assignment on lexical analysis is due Tuesday after Reading Week (Oct 24)

WEEK SIX: Oct 14, 16 READING WEEK

- Read Kitchen

WEEK SEVEN: Oct 21, 23

“The Formation of the OT”

- Understanding and evaluating JEDP
- Understanding and evaluating the Deuteronomistic History
- Post-exilic history and the minimalist schools
- Finish Kitchen

WEEK EIGHT: Oct 28, 30

“Grammar”

- How to observe and interpret grammatical features
- Read and translate Nehemiah 8:1-6 from Hebrew
- Assignment on grammar is due next week on Friday Nov 7

WEEK NINE: Nov 4, 6

“Structure”

- Identifying Structure and Narrative Art
- Translate the rest of Nehemiah 8 from the Hebrew
- Exegetical assignment on Structure is due next week on Tuesday after Reading week, November 18
WEEK TEN: Nov 11, 13 READING WEEK

- Readings: Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, chs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12

WEEK ELEVEN: Nov 18 (NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 19)

- Biblical Context: OT and NT

  - Legitimate trajectories

WEEK TWELVE: Nov 25 (Nov 27 is Thanksgiving: No class)

- Cultural, Theological and Contextual Backgrounds

  - How is the is text illuminated by history, geography and archaeology
  - Theology
  - Contextualization
  - Application and proclamation

WEEK THIRTEEN: Dec 2, 4

- The Goal of Exegesis

  - Review for final exam
  - Application Assignment is due Friday Dec 5

WEEK FOURTEEN: Dec 9, 11 EXAM WEEK

Final Exam: Check with registration office for time and day during exam week

Bibliography and select articles will be posted on Sakai