OT 511
Interpreting the Old Testament
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Spring 2014
Instructor: Thomas Petter
tpetter@gordonconwell.edu
Tues/Thurs 9:35-11am

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 iphone usage (texting, etc.) during class times. This class requires approximately 10 hours of concentrated research and study per week.

Required Readings:

G. Beale, The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism (Crossway)
E. Brotzman, Text Criticism (Baker)
D. Stuart and G. Fee, How To Read the Bible for All Its Worth. Third Edition (Zondervan)

**Recommended Readings:**

M. Adler and C. Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*
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: Jan 28, 30

“*The Old Testament as History and Theology*”

- Brief recapitulation of Old Testament themes and topics
- Historiography, ideology and inerrancy
- The Old Testament in its ancient Near Eastern context

Readings: Beale; OT chapters of Fee and Stuart
WEEK TWO: Feb 4, 6

“Exegesis: The Big Picture”

- Overview of the exegetical process
- Readings: Begin Kitchen; begin Brotzman

WEEK THREE: Feb 11, 13

“Literary context”

- Contours, placement and function of a text
- From Hebrew to English: principles of translation
- Readings: finish Brotzman; continue Kitchen
- Assignment on Literary Context of Nehemiah 8 is due next week on Friday Feb 21

WEEK FOUR: Feb 18, 20 READING WEEK

WEEK FIVE: Feb 25, 27

“Text Criticism”

- The Texts of the Old Testament
- 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 March 7

WEEK SIX: March 4, 6

“Grammar”

- How to observe and interpret grammatical features
- Translate Nehemiah 1 from Hebrew
- Readings: finish Kitchen
• Assignment on grammar is due next week on Friday March, 14

WEEK SEVEN: March 11, 13

“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 next week on Friday March 21

WEEK EIGHT: March 18, 20 READING WEEK

WEEK NINE: March 25, 27

“The Formation of the OT”

• Understanding and evaluating JEDP
• Understanding and evaluating the Deuteronomistic History
• Post-exilic history and the minimalist schools
• Readings: Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, chs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12

WEEK TEN: April 1, 3

“Structure”

• Identifying Structure and Narrative Art
• Translate Nehemiah 8 from the Hebrew

WEEK ELEVEN: April 8, 10

“Biblical Context: OT and NT”

• Biblical Context: discerning true from false parallels
• Readings: select readings will be posted on Sakai
• Exegetical assignment on Structure is due next week on Friday April 18
WEEK TWELVE: April 15, 17

“Cultural Environment”

- How is the text illuminated by history, geography and archaeology

WEEK THIRTEEN: April 22, 24

“The Goal of Exegesis”

- Theology
- Contextualization
- Application and proclamation
- Application Assignment is due on Monday May 5

May Graduates must turn in their written work by Friday April 24

WEEK FOURTEEN: April 29, May 1

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

Bibliography will be posted on Sakai