OT 975 Methods and Developments in OT Study  
Spring 2014    Thursdays, 2-5 PM  D. Stuart  
Office Hours M,Tu,W,Th, 9:45-11:00 AM; office phone ext. 4095 (646-4095)  
Syllabus subject to change. Changes will be communicated as expeditiously as possible.

Course Description

Students are exposed to various developments, methodologies, viewpoints and trends in the modern scholarly study of the Old Testament. Taught partly in pro-seminar format, with student presentations providing part of the class content. Appropriate for but not limited to those planning on advanced formal biblical study. Advice on studying the OT at an advanced academic level and on teaching the OT in higher education will also be included at points during the course.

Required reading

Note: The required reading is listed here and also below in connection with assignments for the respective classes. The prices listed further below for each required book are approximate prices for new books. Students are encouraged to share purchases, buy books used or in electronic format, and, of course, to read library copies, in order to keep the cost of course materials as low as possible.


Assignments and Grading

Initial requirement:

Hebrew competency exam. Taken at the beginning of the first class. Those unable to pass the exam will not be able to continue in the course.
Graded assignments:

1. Mid-term exam. A one-hour exam at approximately the mid-point of the course, testing knowledge of the readings, class presentations, and class discussions to that point via a set of pre-distributed questions. You will be given all of the questions that could appear on the exam at least one week in advance. 10% of course grade.

2. Class presentation by you on your evaluative paper topic. 30 minutes, during which and after which you will be expected to respond to questions that may arise. A one-page handout summarizing/précising your report must be prepared in advance and distributed at the beginning of your presentation. Your paper must be written on one of the twenty-eight methods described in the book Method Matters. 10% of course grade. Presentations will be scheduled by the professor once all paper topics have been chosen and approved.

3. Final exam. A one-hour exam at the end of the course, testing knowledge of the readings, class presentations, and class discussions since the mid-term exam. You will be given all of the questions that could appear on the exam at least one week in advance. 10% of course grade.

4. Term paper: Evaluative paper reviewing and evaluating one of the twenty-eight methods described in the book Method Matters. 20-40 pages. All choices must be approved in advance by the professor. 70% of course grade. Due at the published final due date for written work for the semester.

5. Class participation. Your class participation is an essential part of the course and its quality and quantity will count for up to 10% of the course grade, potentially lifting the grade average otherwise earned via the assignments above. (Warning: Quantity without quality will have negative consequences.)

Schedule

Jan 30
Class #1  Where we are now: What the OT field looks like and what has shaped it, Part 1.

Feb 6
Class #2  Where we are now: What the OT field looks like and what has shaped it, Part 2.
• Reading: John J. Collins. The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age (Eerdmans, 2005) ISBN-13: 978-0802828927 ca. $23 211 pages (Please note that this book represents an evaluation of the state of OT studies from the viewpoint of a leftist scholar, in part to demonstrate how such a scholar defines the results of skeptical scholarship.)

Feb 13
Class #3: Where we are now: What the OT field looks like and what has shaped it, Part 3.

[Feb 20  Reading Week.  Assignment: Finish Reading Baker and Arnold.]

Feb 27
Class #4  Where we are now: What the OT field looks like and what has shaped it, Part 4: How twenty-eight different practitioners of various modern critical methods view their disciplines.
• Paper topic presentations begin.

Mar 6
Class #5  Varieties of ways that scholars identify and treat evidence.
• Paper topic presentations. continue.
• Distribution of potential mid-term exam questions not later than this date

Mar 13
Class #6  Can the finest scholarship be consistent with a high view of Scripture?
• Mid-term exam
• Paper topic presentations. continue.

[Mar 20  Reading Week. Assignment: Finish reading Kitchen.]

Mar 27
Class #7  Where some of the evidence comes from and how it applies.
• Paper topic presentations. continue.

Apr 3
Class #8  Archaeology, broadly defined, and its proper role in OT studies.
• Paper topic presentations. continue.

Apr 10
Class #9. A test case using an issue that never seems to go away: the “documentary hypothesis.”
• Paper topic presentations. continue.

Apr 17
Class #10  Further discussion and/or make-up session, as needed. Progress toward finishing any unfinished reading, and toward paper completion.

Apr 24
Class #11  Further discussion and/or make-up session, as needed. Progress toward finishing any unfinished reading, and toward paper completion.
• Distribution of potential final exam questions not later than this date

May 1  Final Exam
May 5  Last Day for written work, due 4:00 PM.  No electronic submission. Paper must be printed on paper.

**Other Course Information**

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 the assignments 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.

Extensions Prior to Last Day for Submission of Written Work: The basic concept that governs the process is the desire to show 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 grade per week or 1/2 grade per 1/2 week is deducted.
- Late work at the end of the session (after the last day for submission of 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 can and may assign significant penalties for unexcused late work.