OT 511
Interpreting the Old Testament
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Jacksonville Campus
Spring 2015
Instructor: Thomas Petter
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Feb 27-28
March 27-28
April 24-25

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). Hebrew exegetical exercises will be drawn from Genesis 15 and Nehemiah 8

Prerequisites:
OL 501 and enrolled in OL 502 concurrently
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. Students must be present for the three weekends in order to pass the course (no exceptions, e.g., outreach, weddings, etc.)
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* (a highly recommended overview of Old Testament history)


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

Schedule and Readings:

*Pre-course readings:*

Read *How to Read a Book*

Read *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*

Note: These readings must be done before class starts
Feb 27-28
Friday Evening Session
“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

Saturday Morning Session
“Exegesis: The Big Picture”

• Overview of the exegetical process
• Literary analysis of Nehemiah: How to do an overview chart

Afternoon Session
• Contours, placement and function of a text

Assignments for next weekend:
• Read Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, chs. 1, 2, 3, 4 (OT sections), 5, 6.
• Exegetical assignment:
  “The big picture of Nehemiah”
• Read and finish Brotzman
• Begin reading Kitchen (instructions will be given on how to read Kitchen effectively)

April 27-28
Friday Evening Session
“The Exegetical Process”

• Introduction to Text Criticism
Saturday Morning Session

- The search for contextual meaning: lexical analysis

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

Afternoon Session

“The Formation of the OT”

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

Assignments for next class

Exegetical assignments:

- Text Criticism (note that this assignment is due two weeks from today)
- Lexical Analysis
- Translate from the Hebrew Nehemiah 8

Readings:

- Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, chs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
- Continue reading Kitchen

April 24-25

Friday Evening Session

“Grammar and Structure”

- Translating Nehemiah 8 in class

Saturday Morning Session

- Interpreting Hebrew grammar and syntax (Nehemiah 8)
- How to outline a Hebrew text (Nehemiah 8)
Afternoon Session

“Situating the text”

- Biblical and historical context
- Conversation of the goal of exegesis: contextualization, application and proclamation

Exegetical assignments:

- 50 observations from the grammar of Nehemiah 8 (due two weeks from today)
- Hebrew-based outline of Nehemiah 8 (due one month from today)

Final Exam: due within a month (via proctoring)