I  COURSE DESCRIPTION

A general introduction to the study of the Old Testament in terms of authority (inspiration and canonicity), ancient near eastern backgrounds, major hermeneutical approaches, and the components of exegesis. The major objective will be to inform and strengthen the student's commitment to the scripture as the Word of God.

Corequisites: OL 502, OT 500, NT 501

II  SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Interpretation is a broad term. In common usage it can include some very subjective elements. In general we should be careful to identify and avoid such elements. Biblical interpretation can include, and should include, the role of the Holy Spirit, who can help the interpreter arrive at an understanding of a biblical text or verse consonant with what the Holy Spirit himself meant when he produced the material in question. The foregoing considerations obviously have implications for what is commonly called “authorial intent.” The position which underlies this course is that, as Peter says, prophets were carried along by the Spirit as they spoke and wrote. It follows that the true meaning of a text is the meaning which the Spirit articulated through the prophet. A corollary principle is that all biblical material is “prophetic” because it is all “God-breathed.” The Spirit worked with the personalities, experiences and talents of the biblical writers to produce the Bible. It follows that, for example, not all OT poetry is at the same level: Isaiah was a greater poet, qua poet, than Ezekiel. It also follows that there are times when a biblical writer probably wrote more than he understood (a good example could be Isa 9:5).

On the basis of such principles we undertake the task of biblical interpretation, which includes two large areas of concern: hermeneutics and exegesis. Hermeneutics have to do with the presuppositions which condition an interpreter's approach to the biblical material. The history of scholarship displays a variety of hermeneutical approaches, and we will consider the major ones in this course. Exegesis has to do with achieving a comprehensive understanding of a pericope, and such an understanding may be arrived at by following a number of exegetical steps which define the procedure and promise to yield an accurate grasp of the passage. Hermeneutics, then, have to do with presuppositions and their consequences. Exegesis has to do with a defined and consistent process and its consequences. A hermeneutic always runs the risk of being grounded in subjectivity or veering into the subjective. Exegesis, grounded in the right hermeneutic, offers a means of avoiding subjectivity.
III COURSE SCHEDULE

Sep 12 Introduction: Canon, Inspiration, Historicity, Languages

Sep 19 ANE Backgrounds

Sep 26 Hermeneutical approach: Literary Criticism

Exegetical issue: Historical Context

Oct 3 Hermeneutical approach: Form Criticism

Exegetical issue: Genre and Structure

Oct 10 READING WEEK

Oct 17 Test on Lectures of Sep 14 – Oct 5

Oct 24 Hermeneutical approaches: Oral Tradition, Rhetorical Criticism, Canonical Criticism, Deconstruction, Reader Response

Exegetical issue: Literary Context

Oct 31 Hermeneutical approaches: Covenants and Schemes

Exegetical issue: Textual Criticism

Nov 7 READING WEEK

Nov 14 PROFESSOR AWAY

Nov 21 Hebrew text: Genesis 15

Exegetical emphases: Genre, meanings then and now

Nov 28 Hebrew text: Joshua 2

Exegetical emphases: Structure, biblical theological themes

Dec 5 Hebrew text: 1 Kgs 19:1-21

Exegetical emphases: Translation, Word Studies

Dec 12 Test on Lectures Oct 26 – Dec 7
IV  COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A  Required Readings

Required readings = REQUIRED TEXTS (WITH PAGES TO BE READ), as listed below. These count 10% of the course grade. Use reading report attached to syllabus. The reading report must be stapled to your final paper and submitted with it. Reading reports submitted late will not receive full credit, but will receive proportional credit at the discretion of the professor.

B  In Class Translation

Each student will be called upon to translate and comment upon his/her translation when the course takes up the Hebrew passages, Genesis 15, Joshua 2 and 1 Kings 19. These translations will count 10% of the course grade.

C  Tests

Two one hour tests will be given. These will cover specified lectures (as indicated on the COURSE SCHEDULE). Each test will count 20% of the course grade.

D  Required Paper

A 15–page, double–spaced paper on Genesis 15 is required, and will count 40% of the course grade. The first five pages of the paper must deal with higher critical analysis of the passage. The last ten pages must be an exegesis study of the passage, and the study must produce biblical–theological conclusions. Feel free to draw on any conservative commentaries or literature you desire, for assistance. Note all references in footnotes or endnotes. Due 4 p.m. 20 Dec. (Graduating seniors, 9 Dec., 4 p.m.).

V  Required Texts


VI Ancillary Readings

Cassuto, Umberto, *The Documentary Hypothesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1941)


-----------------, *The Bible in its World* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>ASSIGNED</th>
<th>READ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brotzman, Ellis R., <em>Old Testament Textual Criticism</em></td>
<td>170</td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broyles, Craig, <em>Interpreting the Old Testament</em></td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson, D. A. <em>Exegetical Fallacies</em></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niehaus, Jeffrey J., “God’s Covenant with Abraham”</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart, Douglas, <em>Old Testament Exegesis</em></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>744</strong></td>
<td>.......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>