

**University of Dubuque Theological Seminary**  
**BI511D – Old Testament Introduction**  
**Online Course – UDTSLearning.net**  
**Fall Semester, 2008**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the content, historical background, canon, theological and critical issues of the Old Testament. This course fulfills the M.Div. basic first-year requirement in Old Testament studies (3 credits, letter grade only), but is open to all UDS students.

OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course will:

- 1) understand the basic content of the books of the Old Testament;
- 2) be able to place each book in its particular historical and canonical setting;
- 3) begin to think theologically about Old Testament themes; and
- 4) be familiar with several critical methodologies for interpreting the Old Testament.

In keeping with the stated purpose of the M.Div. degree (“to serve the one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and prepare women and men for faithful, compassionate, and effective pastoral ministry”), this course meets the following M.Div. curricular objectives:

- 1) be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church.
- 2) interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive a passing grade students must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Class Preparation and Participation – students must adequately demonstrate their understanding of the assigned reading material by submitting written responses to posted discussion questions. In addition, students are expected to interact with other student responses in an appropriate manner. *See course objectives #2 and #3.*
- 2) Quizzes – regularly scheduled quizzes will be given to evaluate knowledge of specific Old Testament content. The format will focus on objective information, not response (which is monitored via requirement #1 above). *See course objective #1.*
- 3) Interpretation Exercise – students will be assigned an Old Testament passage to

interpret according to a specific interpretive methodology. Each student will approach the text from a different method, utilizing the particular emphasis of that method to highlight various items in the text. The results of this exercise will be recorded in a short (5-8 page) paper. *See course objective #4.*

4) Exams – students will complete a cumulative mid-term and final examination. Material to be covered on each exam will be distributed prior to the examination. Examinations are taken closed-book, operating with the student’s pledge of honesty. *See course objectives #1-4.*

### ASSESSMENT and GRADING

Final grades will be assessed as follows:

- Preparation/Participation - 30%
- Quizzes - 20%
- Interpretation Exercise - 20%
- Exams – 30% [mid-term 15%, final 15%]

The grading scale utilized in this course is provided below.

A+ = 100-97%  
A = 96-93% C = 76-73%  
A- = 92-90% C- = 72-70%  
B+ = 89-87% D+ = 69-67%  
B = 86-83% D = 66-63%  
B- = 82-80% D- = 62-60%  
C+ = 79-77% F = 59% or below

### TEXTBOOKS

The following textbooks are *required* for course participation:

- 1) Any good study Bible. Among those considered “good” (i.e., scholarly rather than devotional in nature) are *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (NRSV), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (NRSV), and *The NIV Study Bible*. Students wishing to use a Bible other than those listed here should consult with the professor.
- 2) Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, revised and expanded ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- 3) John Drane, *Introducing the Old Testament*, completely revised and updated ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- 4) Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah: The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1988.
- 5) Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- 6) Rodney R. Hutton, *Fortress Introduction to the Prophets*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- 7) William P. Brown, *Character In Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom*

*Literature of the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students are encouraged to consult the bibliographies included in each of the required textbooks, as well as the items included in the section entitled “For Further Study” in each week’s introductory statement. Questions about specific resources for further study may be directed to the professor.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- 1) Late policy – due to the interactive nature of an online course, deadlines for assigned items must be met. Quizzes and exams must be taken the week they are given to avoid falling behind. Exceptions to this policy may be made for serious unforeseen circumstances with *prior* permission from the professor. Exceptions will not be made after the deadline has been missed.
- 2) Plagiarism – please consult the current UDTS Student Handbook ([www.udtseminary.net](http://www.udtseminary.net), choose “Current Students,” then “Student Handbook”) for definitions and consequences.
- 3) Inclusive Language – every effort will be made to use non-gender specific language, as this concern influences our interpretation of the Bible. Please refer to the current UDTS Student Handbook (see #2 above) for a more thorough explanation.
- 4) Academic Support – students needing tutoring, writing assistance, or other academic help should contact the professor to make arrangements.
- 5) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement – Any student with a disability that might affect his/her performance in this course should consult with the professor and the campus ADA compliance officer (Jennifer Erickson, [JErickson@dbq.edu](mailto:JErickson@dbq.edu), 563-589-3570) by the second week of class. All such consultations are confidential.
- 6) Subject to Change Clause – this syllabus, course calendar, and other attending documents are subject to change during the semester.

## COURSE CALENDAR and ASSIGNMENTS

The course calendar below provides a brief overview of the subject(s) to be covered during the week(s) of study. Reading assignments are included to allow students to start reading ahead if desired. Response questions and specific items for quiz/exam preparation will be posted to the web the week they are covered.

| <b>WEEK</b> | <b>SUBJECT</b> | <b>READING</b>   |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1 – Sept 1  | Introduction   | Drane – Chapters 9, 1, & 10<br>Mann – Intro. & pp. 10-29 |
| 2 – Sept 8  | Pentateuch     | Genesis - Deuteronomy<br>Drane – Chapters 2, 11, & 12    |

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|  |                       | Mann – Sections I-V and Conclus.   |
| 3 – Sept 15  | Method I              | McKenzie/Haynes – Chapters 1-5   |
| 4 – Sept 22  | Conquest,<br>Monarchy | Joshua - Samuel<br>Drane – Chapters 3 & 4  |
| 5 – Sept 29  | Divided<br>Kingdom    | Kings - Chronicles<br>Drane – Chapters 5 & 6   |
| 6 – Oct 6  | Method II             | McKenzie/Haynes – Chapters 6-8<br><b>Mid-Term Exam</b>                                     |
| <i>October 13-19: Reading Week Break</i>   |                       |  |
| 7 – Oct 20   | Prophecy I            | Hosea - Micah and Isaiah<br>Hutton – Chapters 1-6  |
| 8 – Oct 27   | Prophecy II           | Nahum – Zephaniah and Jeremiah/Lamentations<br>Hutton – Chapters 7-12                      |
| 9 – Nov 3  | Method III            | McKenzie/Haynes – Chapters 9-14  |
| 10 – Nov 10  | Worship               | Psalms<br>Longman – (whole book)   |
| 11 – Nov 17  | Wisdom                | Job, Proverbs – Song of Solomon<br>Drane – Chapter 13<br>Brown – (whole book)              |
| <i>November 24-30: Thanksgiving Break</i>  |                       |  |
| 12 – Dec 1   | Exile and Return      | Esther, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and<br>Haggai - Malachi<br>Drane – Chapters 7 & 8 |
| <i>Finals Week: December 8-12</i><br><b>Final Exam</b><br><b>Interpretation Exercise Due</b> |                       |  |