

Knox College	KNB 1006HF – Reading the Old Testament (Fall 2016)	Brian P. Irwin
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Class: Tuesday, 2–4pm, Room TBA, Knox College
Seminar A – Tuesday, 11am–12pm, Room TBA, Knox College
Seminar B – Thursday, 11am–12pm, Room TBA, Knox College
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Teaching Assistant: TBA

A. Course Description and Student Learning Goals

This course on the Old Testament presents an overview of the Hebrew canon and explores the content and theological themes of selected books. Emphasis will be placed on reading various Old Testament genres and interpreting and applying them as Scripture of the Church. Some attention will be given to the history of interpretation, including dominant critical issues relating to the Old Testament.

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the Old Testament and its canonical units
- 2) identify the major periods of Israelite history and the theological issues associated with them
- 3) identify the major powers in the ancient Near East and their influence on ancient Israel
- 4) exercise the basic exegetical skills necessary for interpreting the Old Testament effectively and faithfully for today
- 5) identify the major eras and movements in the history of interpretation and reflect on his/her own interpretative location
- 6) demonstrate the research and writing skills necessary for graduate-level Old Testament study
- 7) demonstrate ethical behaviour, taking responsibility for the expectations of course and showing respect and willingness to listen in the learning atmosphere including class discussions and small groups

B. Required Textbooks

Required texts are available at Crux Theological Books located at Wycliffe College.

- A modern translation of the Bible (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NAB, TNIV, NIV, NJPS, NET, or NASB). The NET Bible offers extensive textual notes and is available for use online or as a free download from www.bible.org. The NJPS (Tanakh) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible by the best in Jewish Biblical scholarship. As such, it provides a helpful complement to any of the standard Christian translations.
- Longman III, Tremper and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.
- Wald, Oletta. *The New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Revised ed. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2002.
- Some course material may be distributed online in PDF format. Students should, therefore, download Adobe Acrobat Reader, a utility that enables PCs to read PDF files. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available as a free download from the Adobe web-site (www.adobe.com).

C. Recommended Resources

- Badke, William. *Beyond the Answer Sheet: Academic Success for International Students*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003.

This valuable work explains how the approach to education in North America differs from that common in many other countries. Includes helpful advice on academic expectations, studying, research, writing, avoiding plagiarism, and dealing with professors. This work is *highly recommended* for all ESL and International students.

D. Course Requirements and Assignments

The class consists of a two-hour lecture and a one-hour seminar held separately during the week. On some occasions, a portion of class may be devoted to work in small groups. Small group discussions will be based on assigned readings or an exercise given by the Instructor. Other assignments are outlined below.

Students are expected to read through the Old Testament at least once during the semester and to cover faithfully the other assigned readings.

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

- **Reflection Paper on Inspiration and Interpretation (5%).** Students shall briefly address the following questions: How have you read and interpreted the Bible in the past? What has been your greatest challenge in reading and interpreting Scripture? Is there anything in the reading, *Alive and Powerful: Understanding the Bible*, that has addressed your concerns? What concerns remain? What do you hope to get out of this course? (*maximum* two pages, double spaced). (*maximum* two pages, double spaced).
- **Online Discussion (30%).** Students shall be responsible for engaging in a weekly online discussion related to a given question, topic, or task. The grade for your online participation will reflect the extent to which you make relevant, informed, thoughtful, and clear contributions to the discussions. *While the online discussion will be monitored, students should not expect the Instructor to contribute directly to an open discussion.* In the interest of allowing discussion to develop unimpeded any Instructor comments will be offered in class or via email after the discussion is closed. Your participation will be evaluated according to the following criteria, as appropriate:
 - familiarity with unit content and readings
 - appropriate use of relevant terminology
 - clarity and reasonableness of contributions (i.e., your statements are supported by appropriate textual references, and explicit reasoning, and not merely asserted)

Criteria also include your ability to:

- explain or elaborate on factual information
- provide illustrations and examples when making a point
- demonstrate understanding of key themes and principles
- compare and contrast concepts
- relate new knowledge to previously known ideas and concepts and to organize information
- integrate newly acquired knowledge within a broader and deeper perspective
- apply new concepts and principles to relevant issues
- propose hypotheses and creative solutions to problems
- critique competing views or evaluate alternative courses of action

For the online discussion to be helpful and relevant, it must be a place where all students feel safe to ask questions and explore new ideas without fear that their views will be repeated in other contexts. For this reason, views expressed by other students should not be shared outside of this space without their consent.

- **Bible Knowledge Exam (20%).** Students shall be required to pass the Knox College Bible Knowledge 100-question test. The test is written by booking a computer for this purpose in the Caven Library. Contact Head Librarian Joan Pries (joan.pries@utoronto.ca) for booking details. Students may write this online exam at a time of their own choosing before the end of the semester (session 12). Students may take the test multiple times until they pass. (For the purposes of this course, a pass is 70%.) *Knox students in the MDiv program who pass the test with a grade of at least 80% will have fulfilled their Basic Bible Knowledge programme requirement.* Details to follow in class and on the course Blackboard page.

- **Inductive Study (35%).** Students shall write a 12–15 page inductive study on one of the following Old Testament books: Ruth, Jonah, or Esther. Instructions and sample studies will be available on Blackboard. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, literary awareness and understanding of the text, effective use of primary sources, and ability to follow assignment instructions. A completed Assignment Checklist (see Syllabus Supplement) must accompany your final paper. *Your paper must be submitted both in paper (in class) and electronic form (via Turnitin.com).* Due session 12.
- **Readings & Participation (10%).** By the final class meeting, students shall be required to submit an e-mail declaration indicating what percentage of the required readings they have completed. This element will also take into account factors such as attendance and participation in class discussions. Due session 12.

E. Course Policies & Information

Policies for courses are contained in the *TST Basic Degree Handbook* and the *Knox Student Handbook*. See further, the *Syllabus Supplement* available from the class website. In particular, please note the following:

1. **E-mail:** E-mail correspondence related to the course will be sent to *UTORmail addresses only*. All students are required to have a University of Toronto e-mail address (e.g., *firstname.lastname@utoronto.ca*) and to check their UTORmail account regularly for messages relating to class. Students should not attempt to forward UTORmail messages to Hotmail.com, Yahoo.com, or similar accounts as such messages can be rejected as spam. To receive a University of Toronto e-mail address, go to the library website (<http://content.library.utoronto.ca/>) and select Library Services > Computing & connecting > UTORid.
2. **Late Policy:** 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week).
3. **Attendance:** 80% attendance at a lecture course is required for credit.
4. **Completion of Course work:** all course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the last day of exams. Only in the case of illness (with a note from a doctor), bereavement or other unusual circumstances will an extension be considered (SDF status) and this must be authorised by the Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.
5. **Style Guidelines for Papers:** see Knox “Style Manual” booklet and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.
6. **Email assignments:** Papers and assignments are not accepted by fax or e-mail, except in rare cases by prior permission of professor.
7. **Plagiarism Policy:** See *TST Basic Degree Handbook*.
8. **Use of Turnitin.com.** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays or other major written assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. Students who have principled objections to the use of this service should see the course instructor early in the semester to arrange an alternative. During the first week of the course, students should look at the “Set Up” and “Originality Check” instructions found at the following link: www.turnitin.com/en_us/training/student-training, and follow the instructions to create a user profile. The course ID and password will be distributed to students via Blackboard during the first week of the course.
9. **Use of Technology.** Laptops and other computing devices may be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. The use of the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a specific class activity. Students wishing to text message, search for images, fact check etc. should do so during the break or outside of class. Much of the learning that goes on in the classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between the instructor and the student and between students. Parties outside of that learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. For this and other reasons, permission to record lectures in audio format is granted for use by registered students only. Video recording is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. *Recordings and notes of class lectures may not be electronically reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.*

10. **Logging onto your Blackboard Course.** For information on how to access this course on Blackboard, and how to perform basic Blackboard tasks do the following:

- a) Go to <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and click on the Log-in to the Portal button.
- b) Enter your UTORid and password
- c) You should see this course listed on this page.

Should you encounter difficulties accessing Blackboard, please visit:
http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/5/blackboard-_-portal.html

Note also the other links for help with "Using the Discussion Board," "Handing in an Assignment," "Joining a Group," FAQ's, etc.

11. **Consultation:** Please do not hesitate to consult with the instructor about any questions you may have.

F. Weekly Schedule of Classes, Readings & Assignments

Session 1 **Sept. 13** COURSE INTRODUCTION ♦ THE OLD TESTAMENT: GOD'S BIG BLUNDER? ♦ CANON
Seminars do not meet during the first week

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Session 2 Sept. 20 TEXTUAL WITNESSES ♦ GENESIS
Seminar topic this week: *Inductive Study Instructions/Research Tips from the Chief Librarian*



Reading:

Syllabus

Syllabus Supplement

"How Not to Plagiarize" (www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize)

Longman-Dillard, pp. 13–62

Rasmussen, pp. 8–17

Wald, finish reading by session 5

Alive and Powerful: Understanding the Bible, Rev. Matthew Ruttan [as PDF on Blackboard]



Video Lecture:

The History, Geology, and Geography of Ancient Israel

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Session 3 Sept. 27 CREATION STORIES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE BIBLE

Seminar topic this week: *Translations & Textual Criticism*



Due: Reflection Paper on Inspiration and Interpretation (5%)



Reading:

Rasmussen, pp. 18–43



Online Discussion: How would you teach or preach Genesis 1? How would your approach be different if your audience were children? adults? Where relevant, illustrate your ideas using the biblical text.

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Session 4 Oct. 4 EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS: AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ♦ COVENANT

Seminar topic this week: *Hebrew Narrative Technique & Reading Biblical Texts: Genesis 22 in context*

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 63–101
Rasmussen, pp. 44–63

**Video Lecture:**

A Short History of Pentateuchal Criticism



Online Discussion this week: The Old Testament law forbids working on Saturdays, eating lobster, wearing composite fabrics, and a host of other things. Should Christians pay any attention to the Old Testament covenant law? Does it apply today? If so, then how?

Session 5 Oct. 11 DEUTERONOMY AND THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: Leviticus 26 in context*

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 102–132, 151–89
Robinson, Haddon W. "What's the Big Idea?" Chap. 2 In *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001. [as PDF on Blackboard]
Robinson, Haddon W. "The Heresy of Application." *Leadership* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 21–27. [as PDF on Blackboard]

**Video Lecture:**

An Overview of the History of Ancient Israel*



Online Discussion: If scriptural accounts of history exist to convey theology, how does this affect their value as sources of historical information?

Session 6 Oct. 18 HISTORY WRITING IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ♦ JUDGES

Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: 2 Samuel 6 in context*

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 133–50
Rasmussen, pp. 64–84
Phiri, Isabel Apawo. "Ruth." In *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo, 319–324 Nairobi; Grand Rapids, MI: WordAlive; Zondervan, 2006. [as PDF on Blackboard]

**Video Lecture:**

The Emergence of Israel in Canaan



Online Discussion this week: How are we to understand Jephthah's vow and his daughter's obedience (Judg 11:1-12:7)? What, if anything, does the passage teach?

Oct. 25 BASIC DEGREE READING WEEK ◎ NO CLASS MEETING

Session 7 Nov. 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS

Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: 2 Chronicles 26 in context*

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 301–41
Rasmussen, pp. 85–95
O'Connor, Kathleen M. "Jeremiah." In *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, 178–86. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998. [as PDF on Blackboard]



Online Discussion this week: TBA

Session 8 Nov. 8 PROPHETIC LITERATURE ♦ ISAIAH

* Last day to submit draft of Inductive Study for review and comments.

Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: Psalms 1–2, 23*



Reading:

Longman-Dillard, pp. 397–408, 420–34

Morrell, Keren E., and Catherine Clark Kroeger. "Hosea." In *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, 432–42.

Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002. [as PDF on Blackboard]



Online Discussion this week: TBA

Session 9 Nov. 15 APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE ♦ EZEKIEL ♦ DANIEL

Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: Isaiah 40 in context*



Reading:

Longman-Dillard, pp. 354–396

Irwin, Brian P. "The Book of Daniel and the Roots of New Testament Mission." In *Christian Mission: Old Testament Foundations and New Testament Developments*,

edited by Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, 42–63. Eugene, OR:

Pickwick, 2010. [as PDF on Blackboard]



Online Discussion this week: Does prophecy function today? Why or why not? If prophecy is still a valid gift, then what should govern its use?

Session 10 Nov. 22 POETRY ♦ PSALMS

Seminar topic this week: *Reading from within a Community*

Come to the seminar having read the material from the *Global Bible Commentary*. Thinking about this material and that read earlier from the *Africa Bible Commentary* and *The Women's Bible Commentary*, be prepared to discuss how each author approaches the material from their social or cultural location. In what ways is their treatment helpful or unhelpful?



Reading:

Longman-Dillard, pp. 237–77, 89–300

Ching, Wong Wai. "Esther." In *Global Bible Commentary*, eds. Daniel Patte et al., 135–40. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004. [as PDF on Blackboard]

Melanchthon, Monica Jyotsna. "Song of Songs." In *Global Bible Commentary*, eds. Daniel Patte et al., 180–85. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004. [as PDF on Blackboard]



Video Lecture:

The Shape of the Psalter



Online Discussion this week: Should we preach the imprecatory psalms (e.g., Psalm 137). Why or why not? If we should preach on them, then how might this be done?

Session 11 Nov. 29 WISDOM LITERATURE ♦ JOB ♦ ECCLESIASTES

Seminar topic this week: *No seminar this week*

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 224–36, 78–88

Holladay, Carl R. 1994. Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible. In *New Interpreter's Bible.*, ed. Leander E. Keck. Vol. I: General articles on the Bible.

General articles on the Old Testament. Genesis. Exodus. Leviticus. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, pp. 140–49. [as PDF on Blackboard]

Session 12 Dec. 6

EZRA ♦ NEHEMIAH ♦ CHRONICLES ♦ POST-EXILIC THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Seminar topic this week: The Use of the Old Testament in the New



Due: Inductive Study due (35%); Required Reading Completed Declaration due (10%); Bible Tutor online test (20%)

**Reading:**

Longman-Dillard, pp. 190–212, 477–502



Online Discussion this week: Is Nehemiah right or wrong in his response to the issue of intermarriage with non-Judaeans? Explain your answer.

G. Select Bibliography

1) Style and Writing Guides

Alexander, Patrick H. et al., eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

An academic style guide based generally on Turabian and used by the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

Includes extensive lists of abbreviations related to biblical studies. A recommended purchase for those who plan to continue to do advanced work in biblical studies.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, ed. John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 6th ed. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

This paperback volume has much in common with the larger *Chicago Manual of Style*, which may be consulted for items that Turabian omits. A recommended purchase for students entering a degree programme.

Vyhmeister, Nancy J. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology: Your Indispensable Guide to Writing*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

A guide to research and writing geared specifically to Biblical studies. The work includes a step-by-step guide to writing a research paper as well as a helpful distillation of the main points of Turabian's style manual. A good choice for those who have not had previous experience in research and writing.

2) General Works on the Old Testament

Baker, David W., and Bill T. Arnold. *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester: Baker; Apollos, 1999.

This volume offers an extremely valuable examination of the state of research on a wide variety of topics related to the Old Testament. Detailed notes provide excellent opportunities for further reading. Although the contributors all possess a confessional and generally conservative perspective, their discussion covers the complete range of critical and interpretative perspectives. A helpful supplement to a traditional introduction.

Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin, eds. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Orient*. 2nd ed. New York, NY; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1997.

Features over sixty translated texts from the ancient Near East that are relevant to understanding the Old Testament text. Minimal introductory material. Texts are given without section and line numbers. The dynamically equivalent approach to translation makes this a good choice for classroom use.

Soulen, Richard N., and R. Kendall Soulen. *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. 3rd ed. Louisville, KY; London; Leiden: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

This handy resource brings together in one place, definitions for terms related to Old and New Testament criticism. Coverage is very good for a book of this size. A recommended purchase for students.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

This helpful volume brings together a wealth of historical and cultural data relating to the Old Testament. A well-conceived and valuable aid to Bible study.

3) Introductions

Anderson, Bernhard W., and Katheryn Pfisterer Darr. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Abridged and updated ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.

Archer, Gleason L., Jr. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Revised and Expanded ed. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1994.

First appearing in 1964, this oft-reprinted and now-revised work has been a mainstay in conservative undergraduate classrooms. A full quarter of the book is given over to introductory material, much of which is devoted to refutation of the documentary theory of Pentateuchal composition. Much of the treatment of individual books is also preoccupied with polemical interests. Despite the work of revision, many of the references are to older sources. In general, the book shows little interaction with the latest developments in Old Testament interpretation and scant interest in theological reflection. Archer's comments are often well-informed, but sometimes marred by an unflattering air of superiority. Helpful as an example of well-informed, mid-twentieth century fundamentalist thinking.

Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Encountering the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.

A well-illustrated and visually appealing survey of the Old Testament aimed at an undergraduate audience. Sidebars contain materials such as excerpts of extra-biblical texts, or syntheses of scholarly arguments. Each chapter ends with boxed text devoted to Summary, Key Terms, Study Questions, and Further Reading. The authors' comments are well informed. Critical views are presented fairly, but with a brevity expected in a volume of this kind. The authors' own views on critical issues tend to be conservative in nature. Bibliographies include a wide range of material with the emphasis on more conservative works. End matter includes a glossary, notes, and indices. Includes a CD-ROM (Windows and Macintosh readable) containing the full text as well as handouts.

Bandstra, Barry L. *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1999.

This undergraduate-level introduction is written in a clear and direct style. The emphasis is on learning to read Biblical texts. To this end, the format of the book includes extracts from the Old Testament itself followed by comments and observations by the author. The presentation of materials in the Pentateuch follows the documentary approach. Here and elsewhere, critical issues are addressed obliquely, in a manner that does not detract from the primary focus of the book. Bandstra is concerned to treat the overall literary and theological shape of the books under discussion. Timelines provide a context for understanding various books. Chapters conclude with review and discussion questions and suggestions for further reading. End matter includes an extensive glossary and bibliography as well as the expected indices.

Brueggemann, Walter. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster/John Knox, 2003.

Brueggemann's work owes much to the canonical approach of Brevard Childs. Even so, he does not go so far as does Childs in the role he affords the community of faith. Consequently, Brueggemann tends to make

more of those passages that he feels have not been completely brought into the mindset of the community. These provide him with opportunity to reflect “imaginatively” and so avoid what he regards as the danger of theological “repression”. Critical issues such as dating and composition receive little attention, as do also issues of literary structure. Instead, Brueggemann focuses on the theological dimensions of the text. The volume is almost entirely devoid of the tables, charts, or other illustrations that might be expected in a work of this kind. End matter includes an extensive bibliography, as well as scripture and name indices.

Ceresko, Anthony R. *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. Revised and expanded ed. Maryknoll, NY; London: Orbis; Geoffrey Chapman, 2001.

Ceresko’s work is influenced by the sociological and liberationist approach of Norman Gottwald. The treatment of the Pentateuch uses the documentary theory as a starting point. Subsequent chapters are less occupied with historical-critical concerns. This introduction is organised chronologically, with biblical books, or portions thereof, discussed according to their date of composition. Some non-canonical books are treated (e.g. Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon), while some biblical books (e.g. Ruth) are not. Each chapter ends with thought-provoking review questions. A clearly-written and accessible entry into liberationist interpretation from the pen of a careful scholar who has taught in both the industrialised and developing worlds.

Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979.

Fully aware of critical issues and the history of interpretation, Childs focuses on the final form of the text and emphasizes theological matters.

Collins, John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004.

It is the ambitious goal of this volume to assist both undergraduates and graduates, as well as those in confessional and non-confessional settings. The Biblical material is discussed in the Hebrew canonical order. Footnotes are absent, but each chapter concludes with a select bibliography of resources for further research. Collins’ method is historical-critical, with the documentary approach being the primary means by which he examines the Pentateuch. Discussion is often punctuated by reference to relevant ancient Near Eastern texts. While he often treats themes, Collins’ interest is not literary or canonical, as the absence of book outlines attests. Only occasionally is reference made to contemporary relevance. Unlike most works of its kind, this volume includes discussion of the books of the Apocrypha. End matter includes a glossary, but no index. Includes Windows-compatible CD-ROM. An accessible and thorough treatment of the Old Testament and Apocrypha from a seasoned practitioner of the historical-critical method.

Craigie, Peter C. *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1986.

A basic introduction by a highly regarded evangelical scholar with interests in Ugaritic and ancient Near Eastern backgrounds to the Old Testament. Lacking the detail and footnotes found elsewhere in Craigie’s work. Completed after the author’s death.

Dillard, Raymond B., and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

A medium-length introduction from an evangelical perspective. Biblical books are treated under the headings, historical background, literary analysis, theological message, and relation to the NT. The authors present critical issues thoroughly and fairly and show good judgement when deciding among various positions.

Driver, S. R. *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. International Theological Library. Eighth ed. New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898.

An excellent source of 19th-century interpretation from a British scholar and churchman who did much to introduce German critical scholarship to the English-speaking world.

Gottwald, Norman K. *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985.

A well-illustrated, sizeable, and non-traditional introduction. Gottwald emphasises literary and social-scientific approaches as a means to move beyond the limitations of the historical-critical method. Excellent treatment of the formation of the canon and textual history leading to contemporary English translations. Superb discussions of source and form criticism. The work is arranged according to blocks of tradition, so

does not stress interpretative issues relating to individual books. Many helpful maps and charts. A valuable resource.

Harrison, Roland K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969.

A dated, but significant, work from a prominent conservative evangelical scholar. An excellent source for material on the history of critical interpretation, Harrison's work has a strong conservative apologetic interest.

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.

A survey of the Old Testament from an evangelical perspective and one well suited to undergraduates. Critical views are presented clearly and fairly.

LaSor, William Sanford et al. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

An excellent evangelical introduction written at a seminary level. The authors present critical issues well, but sometimes revert to a more conservative position than their own presentation would allow. A revision of the highly successful 1982 edition.

McConville, J. Gordon. *A Guide to the Prophets*. Exploring the Old Testament, 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.

An introduction to the Prophets by a well-known British evangelical. Each book is examined under the headings, date and destination, critical interpretation, theological themes, rhetorical intention, and place in the canon. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading. Text boxes offer questions for further investigation or reflection. A sophisticated text for undergraduates or those new to biblical studies.

McKenzie, Steven L., and M. Patrick Graham, eds. *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.

Pfeiffer, Robert H. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Revised ed. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1948.

Written from a mainline critical perspective and reflecting the state of the discipline at the midpoint of the 20th century.

Pleins, John David. *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

In this non-traditional introduction, the author offers an "integrated social reading" of the various books of the Old Testament. The standard questions regarding date, composition, structure, theme, critical issues etc. are generally overlooked in favour of an emphasis on the moral, social, and ethical aspects of the texts under discussion. Critical views do, however, occasionally come into play. Discussing Genesis to Deuteronomy, for example, Plein attempts to sketch a social ethic for each of the traditional Pentateuchal sources. Attention is given to the sensitivity necessary in order to read texts that are often theologically divergent. Treatment of some books (e.g. Ruth) is unusually brief. As a themed work it is instructive, but not to be used in place of a comprehensive and traditional introduction.

Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Old Testament: An Introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986.

A concise introduction by a respected German scholar who combines critical awareness with canonical interests. Includes sections on the history of ancient Israel, its institutions, and the books of the canon. Helpful discussion of the intersection between literary forms and Israelite social life. Treatment of individual books is brief. Section bibliographies understandably emphasise German sources.

Schmidt, Werner H. *Old Testament Introduction*. New York, NY; Louisville, KY: de Gruyter; Westminster/John Knox, 1999.

This volume represents the second English edition, but the ninth of the German original. The book opens with a brief survey of Israelite history, including key social developments. Discussion of the Pentateuch is from the perspective of the traditional sources with attention given to the theological intentions of each. The section dealing with the prophetic books is preceded by a concise, but helpful treatment of the genre. Treatment of individual prophetic and poetic books is similarly concise, with most chapters providing an

outline of the book and some reference to major interpretative issues. Emphasis, however, is on noting theological highlights and the message for the original audience. The volume closes with a series of short essays under the heading, "Theology and Hermeneutics". The body of the work employs neither references nor footnotes. Instead, the concluding bibliography is presented in sections that generally correspond to the chapter divisions of the book. Helpful as an overview of the scholarly consensus with an emphasis on European scholarship.

Steussy, Marti J., ed. *Chalice Introduction to the Old Testament*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2003.

Wenham, Gordon J. *A Guide to the Pentateuch*. Exploring the Old Testament, 1. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.

A well-illustrated introduction to the Pentateuch by a prominent British evangelical who has written extensively on the subject. Emphasis is on structure and theme. The author also discusses relevance for understanding the New Testament. Concluding chapters discuss theme, composition, and rhetorical intent. Each chapter ends with a brief annotated bibliography. Text boxes address specific critical or interpretative issues. End matter includes glossary and index. A sophisticated text for undergraduates or those new to biblical studies.

4) Commentary Guides

Childs, Brevard S. *Old Testament Books for Pastor and Teacher*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1977.

Dated, but still valuable, this handy volume evaluates Old Testament commentaries. Child's superior grasp of the history of interpretation is evident in the range of works (which include many by European scholars) that he discusses. Child's highest evaluation is reserved for works that show good scholarship combined with theological interest. Conservative evangelical readers will at times be more comfortable with the recommendations offered by Longman. A wise purchase for serious students of the Old Testament.

Glynn, John. *Commentary & Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2003.

This survey covers the Old and New Testaments, systematic theology, and church history. Annotations are spare and sparse. The author uses a coding system to rate commentaries on a scale reflecting their theological stance—Evangelical through Liberal/Critical. The criterion on which this assessment is made is the commentator's commitment to inerrancy. Commentaries are grouped according to type—technical, semi-technical, expository etc. The section on building a theological library is helpfully geared toward the needs of various groups, including lay people, students, and pastors. Covers Bible study software. The theological perspective of the author is conservative, but the works listed cover the entire theological spectrum.

Goldingay, John. *Old Testament Commentary Survey, 1991 Edition*. RTSF Booklets, 12. Leicester: Religious & Theological Studies Fellowship, 1991.

A commentary survey produced for the UK equivalent of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Goldingay represents the best in British evangelical scholarship and is not averse to recommending works from a critical perspective if they are characterised by careful scholarship. Comments are briefer than those found in Longman. The emphasis on works from European authors makes it a good complement to Longman.

Longman, Tremper, III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995.

A guide to selecting Old Testament commentaries and reference works. Section on reference works is thin. Longman takes pains to identify commentaries according to their stance on critical issues—critical, moderately critical or conservative. Now available in a newer edition.

Stuart, Douglas. *A Guide to Selecting and Using Biblical Commentaries*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1990.

A guide that provides basic orientation to the world of commentaries, explaining what a commentary is, and what separates the good ones from the poor ones. Stuart provides a book-by-book listing of available commentaries on Old and New Testament books and an annotated list of what he considers to be the best commentaries. He also offers remarks on one-volume commentaries and commentary series. An excellent guide for someone who is entirely new to biblical studies and academics.

* Indicates a course element that is under development, but not yet available.

