



Course Syllabus - DRAFT

KNB 1006HF – Reading the Old Testament

Knox College, Toronto School of Theology

Fall 2017

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dr. Brian P. Irwin, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture
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Course Identification

Course Number:	KNB1006HF
Course Format:	In-class
Course Name:	Reading the Old Testament
Course Location:	Knox College, Room TBA
Class Times:	Class: Tuesday, 2:10–4:00 pm Seminar A – TBA Seminar B – TBA
Prerequisites:	None

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.

The Learning Goals listed below relate to the following areas:

- a) Understanding of Area Content (**UAC**)
- b) General Academic Skills (**GAS**)
- c) Ministerial and Public Leadership (**MPL**)
- d) Personal and Spiritual Formation (**PSF**)

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

- 1) demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the Old Testament and its canonical units (**UAC**)
- 2) identify the major periods of Israelite history and the theological issues associated with them (**UAC**)
- 3) identify the major powers in the ancient Near East and their influence on ancient Israel (**UAC**)
- 4) exercise the basic exegetical skills necessary for interpreting the Old Testament effectively and faithfully for today (**GAS, MPL**)
- 5) identify the major eras and movements in the history of interpretation and reflect on his/her own interpretative location (**UAC, PSF**)
- 6) demonstrate the research and writing skills necessary for graduate-level Old Testament study (**GAS, PSF**)
- 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 (**PSF, MPL**)

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.
- Main Textbook - TBA.
- 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.

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?
*Only once you have completed this question should you go on to read the PDF, *Alive and Powerful: Understanding the Bible*, by Matthew Ruttan. Is there anything in, *Alive and Powerful* that has addressed your concerns? What concerns remain? What do you hope to get out of this course? (maximum two pages, double spaced).*
- **Online Discussion (30%).** Students shall be responsible for engaging in a regular 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

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

- 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. 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 Blackboard page. In particular, please note the following:

1. **E-mail:** Email correspondence related to the course will be sent to *UTmail addresses only*. All students are required to have a University of Toronto email address and to check their UTmail account regularly for messages relating to class. Students should not attempt to forward UTmail messages to gmail.com, yahoo.com, or similar accounts as such messages can be rejected as spam. All college-related correspondence should be sent from a UTmail address. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses. Students must set up their utoronto email address as it is entered in the ACORN system. Information regarding UTORid and UTmail is available at <http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>. For help with these and other technological issues the following options are available: email help.desk@utoronto.ca; phone 416-978-HELP; or visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons at Robarts Library.
2. **Attendance:** 80% attendance at a lecture course is required for credit.
3. **Completion of Course work:** students are expected to submit assignments by the date given in the course outline. The penalty for late work is 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week). All course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the last day of exams. Students who experience exceptional circumstances (e.g., ongoing or debilitating medical issues, bereavement, personal calamity etc.) should inform the instructor as soon as possible and should consult with their faculty advisor or the Director of Academic Programmes to request an extension beyond the end of term (i.e., “Standing Deferred” or “SDF” status). The SDF, if approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. Such a request must be made as soon as possible, since an SDF must be authorised by the Knox Basic Degree Advisory Committee and the Faculty, which meet according to a fixed schedule. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

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

4. **Style Guidelines for Papers:** see Knox "Style Manual" booklet and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.
5. **Email assignments:** Papers and assignments are not accepted by fax or e-mail, except in rare cases by prior permission of the instructor.
6. **Plagiarism Policy:** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to the Knox Director of Academic Programmes. For details, see the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks>) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* ([http://www.adfg.utoronto.ca/Assets/ADFG+Digital+Assets/Code+of+Behaviour+on+Academic+Matters+5bAugust+18\\$!2c+1995\\$!5d+Updated+July+1\\$!2c+2016.pdf](http://www.adfg.utoronto.ca/Assets/ADFG+Digital+Assets/Code+of+Behaviour+on+Academic+Matters+5bAugust+18$!2c+1995$!5d+Updated+July+1$!2c+2016.pdf)). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.
7. **Use of Turnitin.com.** Where specified in the syllabus, 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 during the *first two weeks of the course* to arrange an alternative. Typically, this will involve submitting drafts of the assignment at regular intervals throughout the semester. If one is using the Turnitin service, then 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.
8. **Use of Technology in Class.** 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.*

9. **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.

10. **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. 12 COURSE INTRODUCTION ♦ THE OLD TESTAMENT: GOD’S BIG BLUNDER? ♦ CANON
Seminars do not meet during the first week

Session 2 Sept. 19 TEXTUAL WITNESSES ♦ GENESIS
Seminar topic this week: *Inductive Study Instructions*
 **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

Session 3 Sept. 26 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:** In a nutshell, what is the core message of Genesis 1? How would you preach or teach it to children? adults? Where relevant, illustrate your ideas using the biblical text.

Session 4 Oct. 3 EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS: AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ♦ COVENANT
Seminar topic this week: *Hebrew Narrative Technique & Reading Biblical Texts: Genesis 38 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. 10 DEUTERONOMY AND THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY
Seminar topic this week: *Reading Biblical Texts: Leviticus 26 in context*

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

**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 Lectures:**

Pentateuchal Criticism and the Deuteronomistic History

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. 17

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. 24

BASIC DEGREE READING WEEK ☉ NO CLASS MEETING

Session 7

Oct. 31

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. 7

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]

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Online Discussion this week: TBA

Session 9 Nov. 14 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. 21 POETRY ♦ PSALMS ♦ INSTRUCTOR AT THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ANNUAL MEETING

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 in previous weeks 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]



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. 28 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. 5 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%); Emailed statement of Required Reading Completed due (10%); Knox Online Bible Knowledge 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.

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

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.

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

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,

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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.

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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.

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