

Old Testament Introduction (Online) - KNB 1006HS L6101- Winter 2016

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1. Course Description

This course on the Old Testament presents an overview of the Hebrew canon and explores the content, theological themes, and canonical shaping of selected books. Students will be introduced to the history of interpretation, including dominant critical issues relating to the Old Testament. Additional emphasis will be on interpreting this material as Scripture of the Church.

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

2. Outline of Course Expectations

- 1) Read all assigned readings, and complete all tests and assignments by the assigned dates.
- 2) Log into the course site *at least* three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday):
 - log in once, at the beginning of the week, to engage the course content and acquaint yourself with the week's activities.
 - log in again by Wednesday, to make your main contribution to the weekly discussion (which will usually be based on focus questions posted by the instructor under "Things to do this week").
 - log in again by Friday, to reply in a *substantive* way to your classmates' postings on the Discussion Board.
 - it is expected that all students will interact with other students in a respectful manner.
- 3) Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. We will proceed as a group through units 1–12. It is imperative, therefore, that all students keep up with the assigned course work. This is of particular importance in the case of the Discussion Board, which is organized on a week-by-week, unit-by-unit basis. Do not fall behind and make comments in the previous week's Discussion Board as no one is likely to read them. Late postings will not be counted towards your participation mark.
- 4) If you are unable to participate fully in a given week, you must receive the permission of the instructor. (Of course, you can participate in the course from anywhere that the internet is available, not only from your home.) If you do not receive permission to miss a week, you

will be counted as “absent” from the course. A minimum attendance of 80% is required for a passing grade in this course. Interaction between students is a fundamental component of the learning process of this course. Should you be repeatedly absent (i.e., not online) from this course, it will be necessary to remove you from the course. You will not be permitted to complete this course at your own pace.

Logging into your Blackboard Course

- 1) The university’s Blackboard portal may be accessed at <http://portal.utoronto.ca>. A link to the Portal can also be found at the top of the Knox College webpage (<http://www.knox.utoronto.ca>).
- 2) It is recommended that you enter the Blackboard port using Mozilla *Firefox* as web browser (especially if you are having difficulty using *Safari* or *Internet Explorer*). To install Firefox on your computer, go to www.getfirefox.com and click on Download Firefox, then click Run.
- 3) The *Course Menu*, located on the left side of the Blackboard screen gives you access to the entire course, including:
 - *Home*
 - *Announcements* (visit this section for news related to the course)
 - *Syllabus* (check this section for course requirements and policies)
 - *Course Materials* (materials for Orientation Week and Units 1–12, including links to lectures, readings, handouts, etc.)
 - *Discussion Board* (the location for weekly discussion questions)
 - *Tools* (links for various course-related activities such as email, Blackboard help, grades etc.)
 - *My Grades* (if the instructor uses this function, this is where you would track your progress in the course)
 - *Contacts* (information about the instructor and teaching assistant)
 - *Library Resources* (links to resources and databases provided by the University of Toronto)

4. Required Texts & Resources

Course texts are available on-campus or online through *Crux Discount Theological Books* (www.cruxbooks.com).

- A modern translation of the Bible (e.g. NRSV, RSV, 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.
- Course lectures are in audio-video format for streaming playback on a computer or handheld device. Copyright issues related to the use of proprietary images means that these lectures may not be downloaded or distributed.
- Some course material will 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).

5. Instructional Units

Session 1 Jan. 11–16 COURSE INTRODUCTION ♦ LEARNING TO USE BLACKBOARD ♦ MEET YOUR CLASSMATES ♦ THE OLD TESTAMENT: GOD’S BIG BLUNDER?

 **Online Discussion this week:** Take time this week to introduce yourself to your classmates. Where are you from? Why are you taking this course? Is there a fascinating fact about yourself that others might want to know?

Session 2 Jan. 17–23 CANON ♦ TEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT ♦ GENESIS

 **Reading:**
Syllabus
Syllabus Supplement
“How Not to Plagiarize” (www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html)
Inductive Study Instructions
Longman-Dillard, pp. 13–62
Rasmussen, pp. 8–17
Alive and Powerful: Understanding the Bible, Rev. Matthew Ruttan [as PDF on Blackboard]
Wald, finish reading by session 5

 **Online Discussion this week:** If you wish, feel free to carry on with any introductions or conversations begun last week.

Session 3 Jan. 24–30 CREATION STORIES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE BIBLE

Seminar topic this week: *Translations & Textual Criticism*

 **Due:** Reflection Paper (5%)

 **Reading:**
Rasmussen, pp. 18–43

 **Online Discussion this week:** 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.

Session 4 Jan. 31–Feb. 6 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

 **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 Feb. 7–13 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. [on reserve & as PDF on Blackboard]

Robinson, Haddon W. "The Heresy of Application." *Leadership* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 21–27. [on reserve & as PDF on Blackboard]



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

Feb. 14–20 BASIC DEGREE READING WEEK ☉ NO CLASS MEETING

Session 6 Feb. 21–27 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.



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?

Session 7 Feb. 28–Mar. 5 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.



Online Discussion this week: TBA

Session 8 Mar. 6–12 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.



Online Discussion this week: TBA

Session 9 Mar. 13–19 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.



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 Mar. 20–26 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.

Melancthon, Monica Jyotsna. "Song of Songs." In *Global Bible Commentary*, eds. Daniel Patte et al., 180–85. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004.



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 Mar. 27–Apr. 2 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. [on reserve & as PDF on website]

Session 12 Apr. 3–9 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.

7. Course Evaluation

The class consists of an orientation week plus twelve modules of online instruction beginning January 11th and ending April 9th. Weekly modules will typically include an audio-video lecture, required readings, a written assignment, and an online discussion question.

Students are encouraged to read through the Old Testament at least once during the semester and are required 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).
- **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
- **Bible Tutor Exam (20%).** Students shall be required to pass the Bible Tutor 100-question test with scripture passages at the advanced level. Ideally, this 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). Where distance makes travelling to the college impractical, students may request to complete a paper version of the test using a proctor. For details, please consult the instructor as soon as possible after the start

of the course. (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 Bible Tutor 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%).** Students shall be required to submit a form indicating what portion 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.

8. Course Policies

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 UTOReMail 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 UTOReMail account regularly for messages relating to class. Students should not attempt to forward UTOReMail messages to Hotmail.com, Yahoo.com or other 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 > UTOReMail.
2. **Late Policy:** 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week).
3. **Attendance:** at least 80% attendance is required to pass the course.
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). Standing Deferred (SDF) status must be formally requested by the student and 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.
9. **Copyright and Use of Technology.** Audio recordings of lectures and all handouts contain proprietary information and remain the intellectual property of their respective authors. As such, they may not be electronically reproduced, shared, posted or distributed in any way without the prior written permission of the instructor. Permission

is hereby granted for registered students to make a single copy of lectures in CD format for their personal use for the purposes of this course only.

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

9. Toronto School of Theology Grading Scale and Standards

The following chart presents the standard used for assessment in this course. It is included in the interests of transparency and to assist students in self-appraisal. If you wish to discuss an assignment to be submitted or a grade that has been received, please feel free to make an appointment with the instructor.

Letter Grade	Numerical Value	GPA	Grasp of Subject Matter	Explanation
A Range: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base.
B Range: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.