The passion of Bethel Seminary is to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ among all people in culturally sensitive ways. As a Spirit-empowered, biblically grounded community of learning, Bethel strives to develop and equip whole and holy persons to serve and lead so that churches and ministry agencies can become all they are called to be and do in the world for the glory of God.

The objectives and assignments of OT501 are designed in light of this statement of mission.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An examination of the books of Genesis through Ruth, including the contents, major themes, and theological messages of each. Special emphasis is placed on the nature and significance of God’s promises and covenants with His people. Special attention also is given to legitimate ways of reading the Bible. This involves understanding the particular qualities of narrative literature and Old Testament law, and developing a valid hermeneutic for interpreting them. Attention is given to the application of these biblical texts to current issues in society and your personal life.

**Prerequisite or concurrent enrollment:** BT501/BI501.

### COURSE CONTENT

When I started seminary I was most familiar with the New Testament by far. So, no surprise...that’s where I was most comfortable both in my own personal devotions and in preaching and teaching. It dawned on me that what I was almost purposely ignorant of was the only Bible Jesus and Paul ever read (Matt. 4; 2 Tim 3:15-16; Rom. 15:4, etc). It was the Bible Phillip and Peter used in evangelism and Paul used in church planting. It was a text that has profoundly influenced Western civilization.

So, I am eager to help you both broaden and deepen your understanding of the Torah and the first few “historical books” of the Hebrew Bible so that you can better understand the details "on the ground" you will be studying later, both in elective courses and in your ongoing ministry as you prepare to communicate “the whole counsel of God.”
**Course Benefits**

Upon completion of this course you should be able to

- ✔️ state the basic facts with respect to each book’s setting, theme, and content and recount the "story line" of this portion of the Hebrew Bible. As you prepare for vocational ministry, this is essential to teaching and preaching the “whole counsel of God.” As St. Jerome (340?-420AD) claimed in the prologue to his commentary on Isaiah, “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” (Knowledge)

- ✔️ trace and synthesize core theological themes. A good facility in biblical theology is essential to “doing” theology in contemporary settings. (Analysis & synthesis)

- ✔️ locate the historical/geographical/cultural setting of main events recorded in this portion of the Hebrew Bible. Whether in the pulpit, study group, or counsellor’s office, clear exposition requires an understanding of the context of revelation. (Knowledge & synthesis)

- ✔️ describe the key characteristics of the main literary genres and show how such understanding affects your understanding of the text. (Knowledge & synthesis)

- ✔️ demonstrate greater skill in interpreting the Scripture. This will benefit both you and all those to whom you minister. (Application & articulation)

- ✔️ describe and assess modern critical theories regarding the Torah. These are issues that educated layfolk grapple with and, therefore, pastors and teachers must be familiar with. (Knowledge & analysis)

- ✔️ more effectively and faithfully apply the 77% of Scripture we call the Old Testament in life and ministry. This is critical because the whole Bible really is the Christ-follower’s Bible. (Valuing & application)

- ✔️ articulate personal objectives achieved.

**Course Literature**

**Primary literature:** (required)

Bible. (Whichever translation you are comfortable with. International students may use a translation in their mother-tongue) An on-line concordance featuring several Bible translations can be found at [BibleGateway](https://biblegateway.com).

**Secondary literature:** (required)


**Supplemental resources:** (*assigned reading but not required to purchase)


Alexander, David, Pat Alexander. Zondervan Handbook to the Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. (This is especially helpful if one has never read a particular book of the Bible)


___, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downers Grove: IVP, 2001


**APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

In any field of study, new concepts and new vocabulary may make the work seem a bit heavier at the beginning, but it will lighten up as we go (assignments will become somewhat lighter and, as you get used to them, they will become easier).
Since we take matters of personal growth and preparation for ministry seriously, a high value is placed on regular and intentional participation in preparation and in class sessions.

And remember Joshua 1:5-9! That would be a good passage to commit to memory if you haven’t already.

Assignment Checklist:

✔ READINGS (10%): Due as assigned on Agenda You get to dig into primary sources. Be looking for how an ancient Israelite believer saw the world. This will be supplemented with readings in selected secondary literature. To facilitate “getting the big picture” you will read each Bible book at one sitting before the class session on that given book. You are responsible to keep a record of completing your reading assignments on-time. You will be asked to report your reading record on the exam. See Agenda for due dates.

- The entire text of each Bible book (any version) is to read at one sitting prior to classtime.
- The associated chapters in Dillard & Longman are to be studied along with your Bible reading.
- Pritchard’s ANET selections
- Kitchen’s “The Patriarchal Age”
- Beecher’s Prophets and the Promise chs 8-9
- Robinson’s “Heresy of Application”
- Vogt’s Interpreting the Pentateuch

✔ INVESTIGATION (25%): You get to engage in a more detailed research in engaging in investigation of Deuteronomy 6 and writing a 2000-2500 word exegetical paper (excl. bibliography & appendix) of the results of your investigation.

The paper will be accompanied by an appendix containing a syntactical layout (map) with exegetical outline and a one page homiletical outline. (For an approach refer to W.C. Kaiser, Toward an Exegetical Theology (esp. syntactical layout. See pp. 99-103, 165-181) and H.W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching.) See guidelines on web site.

✔ ANALYSIS & REFLECTION (15%): You get to enhance your spiritual development under the discipline of the Word of God through Personal Application Portfolio. In addition to being mini-exegetical exercises, these are intended to facilitate personal reflection on the texts we are working with. Be faithful in doing your Personal Applications. Be sure they are personal, specific and practical. guidelines on website.


You are encouraged to do the P.A.’s as you do the assigned reading rather than leaving it to the end. The P.A.’s will be submitted as a portfolio on date indicated on the Course Agenda.

✔ INTERACTION (5%): One of the opportunities you have to develop life-long learning skills is your involvement interacting with others’ perspectives on issues. You get to interact with others on issues related to the material you are studying by means of readings and Interactive Reviews. As you interact with these persons, analyze the perspective they bring to the issue, their philosophical and theological presuppositions, evaluate their handling of the evidence, and respond to the conclusions they offer. The fruit of this interaction will evident in your class discussions and in the assigned interactive reviews.

Interactive reviews:
- W.J. Beecher, The Prophets & the Promise, chs 8-9 (limit 750 words)
- K. Kitchen, “Patriarchal Age” (limit 500 words)
- H. Robinson, “Heresy” (limit 500 words)

You also get to engage with peers in a case study in formation & leadership. (Worksheet 9)

✔ PARTICIPATION (20%): Consistent, constructive participation in our common enterprise is expected. This involves prepared interaction in class sessions and via Blackboard.

✔ EXAM (25%): Taken via Blackboard, the exam is designed to assess progress toward realizing the intended
Course Benefits as well as your personal objectives. The best preparation for the exam is to keep these objectives in mind as you study throughout the term. See the Review Guide on the course website.

N.b.: Guides and resources for these assignments are available on the OT501 website.

Submitting Assignments:

All written assignments are to be submitted in either MSWord or WordPerfect format. The filename given each assignment must follow a prescribed protocol. The filename will include course number, section, term, your last name, and assignment name. For example ot501-23-sp10-jones-PAPortfolio. Documents submitted without this filenaming protocol may not be registered and graded. All written assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard. Weekly preparation is due by classtime. Projects (e.g. portfolio, paper, case study) are due by midnight Saturday. The exegetical paper will be submitted via Safe Assignment on Bb.

The Seminary Catalog stipulates: “students are expected to submit all work by the dates set by the course instructors and complete all course requirements on or before the last day of the quarter.” A deduction of 10% will be taken for each day past a published due date, up to five days. Work more than five days late will not be accepted.

Miscellany:

• Policies: Refer to the seminary catalogue and student handbook for policies that apply to all courses.

• Attendance: Unexcused absence and multiple tardiness will result in reduction of grade.

• Auditing: Since auditors, by definition, are not expected to complete assignments and assessments, it is expected that they will not normally participate in class discussions.

• Digital device use: Digital devices are useful for note-taking and impromptu data searches related to class discussion. Out of respect for your classmates and the financial and time-investment both you and they are making, you are requested not to use these devices for surfing, game-playing, e-mailing, texting, etc. during classtime.

• Etiquette: Phones and beepers to be turned off during class. Tape recording is not permitted inasmuch as it can inhibit class participation. Men: hats off, please.

• Accessibility: Accommodations for student with documented disabilities are arranged through the Office of Disability Services. Contact Kathy McGillivray at 651-635-8759 (on campus ext. 8759).

• The professor may modify or otherwise supplement this syllabus and/or class instructions via Blackboard or e-mail. Other course material is available on Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to avail herself or himself to such resources and check Blackboard and/or their email for such notices.
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<th>DATE</th>
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| 29 Mar | Course Introduction  
OT Introduction issues  
Hebrew Bible backgrounds; | Worksheet 1 (Submit via Blackboard prior to class) |
| 5 Apr | Hebrew Narrative;  
Genesis: Prolegomena - Chs .1-11 | Read Vogt, ch 1, 3  
Read Genesis (in one sitting– about 3 hrs); Read IOT 17-56;  
Worksheet 2  
Read: Akkadian Creation Epic, Enuma Elish, tablet 4-6a (blue text), ANE1 31-39 & sketch impressions |
| 12 Apr | Genesis: Promise and Fulfilment - Chs 12-50 | Read Vogt, pp. 194-209  
Read: Kitchen, “Patriarchal Age” - post interactive review;  
Read: W.J. Beecher, The Prophets & the Promise, chs 8-9 - post Interactive Review; |
| 19 Apr | Exodus: Plan of Redemption & Righteous Expectations | Read: Exodus (in one sitting– about 2:25); IOT 57-71;  
Worksheet 3  
Skim: Code of Hammurabi, ANE1 138-167;  
Mesopotamian Sale-Adoption Contract (#2) ANET 219-20;  
Amarna Letters EA 286, 287, ANE1 269-274;  
Read Vogt, ch 2  
Read Robinson, “Heresy” - post interactive review |
| 26 Apr | Leviticus: Attributing Worth to a Holy God & Living in His Presence  
Numbers: The Wages of Sin, The Hope of a New Beginning | Read Leviticus (in one sitting – about 1:45); IOT 73-82;  
Worksheet 4  
Read Vogt, pp. 179-193  
Read: Numbers (in one sitting – about 2:30); IOT 83-90;  
Worksheet 5 |
| 2 May | “At Home” | ...drop in at Ferris' 7:00 PM... R.S.V.P. |
| 3 May | Deuteronomy: Living Under the Treaty of the Great King | Read: Deuteronomy (in one sitting – about 2:10); IOT 91-106;  
Read: Hittite Treaty, ANET®, 203-205 (ANET® 548-550) & sketch impressions;  
Worksheet 6 |
| 10 May | Joshua: Living with the God Who is There | Read: Joshua (in one sitting – about 1:25); IOT 107-117;  
Worksheet 7  
Case study (Worksheet 9 + Case Study Narrative) - engage with your assigned group to develop the case study narrative |
| 17 May | Judges: Law & Grace  
Ruth: Providence of God | Read: Judges (in one sitting – about 1:25); IOT 119-127;  
Read: Ruth (in one sitting – about :15) IOT 129-134;  
Worksheet 8;  
Complete Case Study by Sat.  
PAPortfolio (due Sat.) |
| 24 May | Preaching & teaching from Torah & Former Prophets | Read Vogt, chs 5-6  
Exegetical paper via Safe Assignment on Bb (due Sat.) |
| 31 May | No Class | Online Exam (5/31-6/2) |