

OT 501 Reading the Old Testament Missionally

February 26–March 26; Also March 16
Tuesdays 6:30–10:00 pm; Saturday 9:00–4:00 pm
Spring 2019

Last revised: October 11, 2018

**Biblical Seminary exists to produce missional Christian leaders-
men and women who incarnate the story of Jesus with humility and authenticity and who
communicate the story with fidelity to Scripture, appreciation of the Christian tradition,
and sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of postmodern culture.**

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: by appointment via Skype, phone, or in person in my office in the MacRae House (to the left when you enter and up the stairs). Contact me by email or voice mail to schedule an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the great sweeping narrative of how the God of Israel is engaged in a relentless mission to set to right all that was destroyed in creation's rebellion. Since the Old Testament is embedded in a cultural, geographical, and political context completely foreign to us, an intuitive reading of the text is difficult. This course is like a cross-cultural experience requiring humility, patience, and effort to understand the ancient world. The course will introduce major themes and ideas, and the theories of modern biblical scholarship. Attention will be given to the historical background of the Bible, ancient Near Eastern parallels to the Bible, and geographical significance of the land. We will read the Old Testament and try to understand how historical writings, poetry, and prophecy all fit in God's grand mission. This narrative climaxes in the life of Jesus, but it also continues into the present. Therefore, a missional perspective on the Old Testament challenges us not only to gain a deeper understanding of God's character but also to ask ourselves how we can participate in his mission to bless the world.

PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE PROFESSOR

I love the Old Testament. When I read about the faith decisions people struggled to make, I see myself. When I read the heartfelt pleas for God to listen to and act on behalf of his people, I hear my community. When I study the complex political situations enticing rulers to make decisions based on power, greed, and influence, I see our world today. So where is God in all of this? The grand narrative of the Bible shows us that God is still in the business of relentlessly pursuing imperfect people to the end goal of reestablishing his type of *shalom* on earth as it is in heaven.

~ Cyndi Parker

SYLLABUS

This syllabus provides an overview of the course and course requirements. Students are responsible to know the content of the syllabus and follow the course schedule. Questions about the syllabus or schedule should be emailed to the professor promptly and will generally be answered in an email to the entire class so that everyone is informed.

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the term and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the professor reserves the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as course needs arise.

PROGRAM GOALS AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

PROGRAM GOALS	COURSE OBJECTIVES
<p>Goal 1: Students will cultivate grace-based missional lives increasingly characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, and love for God and others.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage new ideas with humility, and be open to opportunities to grow in wisdom and obedience to God by (re)aligning our story to HIS story. 2. Develop professional behavior towards one’s work and towards one’s student community and towards one’s professional community. 3. Wrestle collectively with challenging texts and ask of each other how to be leaders who orient people towards God.
<p>Goal 3: Students will cultivate knowledge of the Bible and ability to humbly interpret & apply it in light of history, culture & genre.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Explain the organization of the Old Testament, articulate major themes in each book, and connect these themes to the rest of Scripture. 5. Identify geographical context of the narratives, locate places on a map, and connect people, place, and time.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS AND HOMEWORK HOURS

ASSESSMENTS AND HOMEWORK HOURS*	RELATED OBJECTIVES	PERCENT OF GRADE	ESTIMATED TIME
Attendance, participation, preparation (includes all online forums)	All	25	n/a
Reading and Open Book Quiz	1, 2, 4	15	32
Context of a Prophet Presentation	1, 2, 4, 5	10	4
Reflection Paper: Lament	1, 2, 3	10	4
Biblical Narrative Paper	1, 2, 4, 5	20	20
Final exam	2, 4, 5	20	20
Total estimated time on homework		100%	80 hrs.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY IN ADDITION TO CLASS SESSIONS*	RELATED OBJECTIVES	ESTIMATED TIME
Video	1, 2, 5	1.25
Guided Reading	1, 2, 3, 4	6
Online Forums	1, 2, 3, 4	4
Total		11.25 hrs.

*These required assignments involve instruction comparable to what occurs in the classroom (lectures, presentations, and instructor-led activities such as discussions, debates, and collaborative work. They should be completed on the due dates listed in this syllabus.

Note: All assignments must be submitted by the due date listed in the syllabus and no later than the final due date for the course listed in this syllabus by permission of the instructor. After the final due date, faculty cannot grant students permission to submit late work. See “Completion of Course Work” below.

REQUIRED READING AND MATERIALS

NOTE: Hyperlinks to Amazon.com are placed here for your convenience. Please be aware that there may be other websites (by publishers or by other ebook publishers) that may sell the same item for cheaper prices. Please shop around! Check out bookbutler.com for comparative prices. In addition, some sites offer ebook rental prices for a limited number of weeks. These may also be cost effective. Just be sure to buy the right edition and recognize some of the smaller sellers may not deliver books in a timely fashion.

Books:

Bible

Davis, Ellen F. [Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament](#). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Matthews, Victor H. and James C. Moyer. [The Old Testament: Text and Context, 3rd ed.](#) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

Articles:

Various articles will be made available to students through E-Campus

Video:

Required videos will be available through e-Campus

Please Note: There will be an additional charge for the University of Pennsylvania museum visit (\$20).

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Alter, Robert. [The Art of Biblical Poetry: Revised and Updated](#). Basic Books, 2011.

———. [The Five Books of Moses: A Translation and Commentary](#). W. W. Norton, 2004.

Baker, David (2009). [Tight Fists or Open Hands: Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law](#). Baker.

Brueggemann, Walter. [The Message of the Psalms](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1984.

Davis, Ellen F. [Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament](#). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Davis, Ellen F. and Richard B. Hays. [The Art of Reading Scripture](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

Kugel, James. [The Bible As It Was](#). Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999.

Lamb, David. [God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist, and Racist?](#) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Matthews, Victor H. [The Old Testament Text and Context, 3rd ed.](#) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.

Matthews, Victor H. and Don C. Benjamin. [Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East, 3rd ed.](#) New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2006.

Peterson, Eugene. [A Long Obedience in the Same Direction, 2nd ed.](#) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

———. [Run with the Horses](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

Rasmussen, Carl. [Zondervan Atlas of the Bible](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Wilson, Marvin. [Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1989.

Wright, Christopher J.H. [Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

———. [The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

YouTube Video: [Satellite Bible Atlas](#), videos #1–13

COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

Attendance Policy and Grades

We have a limited amount of time together in class. I expect all of us to respect each other's time and effort to arrive on time despite our busy schedules. For the sake of professionalism, I will take attendance at the beginning of class. **Participation points will be deducted for every late arrival or missed class. The student is responsible for all material covered in class (even for excused absences!).**

Students are also expected to login to the E-campus course site regularly and participate in the course activities in a timely manner. If you know you are going to be absent from the course site for more than three or four days, please notify the instructor and group members (if applicable) in advance. Nevertheless, recognize that your grade may be lowered for tardiness or absences at the discretion of the instructor.

Attendance in this course constitutes both 1) coming to class and 2) logging in to the E-campus course site and participating in the online or out-of-class activities assigned throughout the course. Students are responsible for reading and familiarizing themselves with the material posted on the E-campus course site throughout the course.

Student usage of the course site is tracked by the E-campus software and monitored by the professor of the course. Students who need to be absent from the course site for three or more days during a discussion forum activity or required web conference should email the professor in advance of the absence (see Attendance Policy and Grades in this syllabus). Students may email the instructor at any time if they have questions about the course.

Completion of Course Work

All assignments must be handed in to pass the class. All course work should be completed by the last day of classes for the term or by the date posted in the course syllabus. Extensions to this time limit will be made only by the academic administration committee. The individual faculty member does not have the authority to grant any extensions of time beyond the last class of the term. Requests for extensions must be made in writing to the committee at least one week prior to the last day of classes. Variance forms for this purpose are available in the academic office or on BTS' website. All requests should specify the reasons for the extension and the length of the extension desired. Requests are not automatically granted.

Late Work: Assignments submitted after the time specified on the syllabus will automatically be deducted **3 points** for every late day. All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Online submissions: Assignments that are requested for submission online should be formatted in the following way: Heading with Student's name, Professor's name, Assignment's Name. One inch margins. Single spaced. Use Times New Roman 12pt. font (or something similar). Present your paper in a professional way.

Printed paper submissions: Assignments should include a heading on the first page with the Student's name, Professor's Name, Assignment's Name. Do not use a title page. The paper should be single space with 1" margins and 12pt. Times New Roman font. Please number the pages and include a Bibliography.

Rubrics: All rubrics for submitted assignments will be posted online. Also note the added articles for helpful hints for writing successful essays.

Plagiarism: In this class we follow the seminary's policies on plagiarism as outlined in the Student Handbook. Remember, if you use someone else's words, put them in quotations and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone else's idea, even if you summarize, you must cite the source. **Do not cut and paste full paragraphs.** Each essay is to be your own work and not a long series of quotes from others.

Disability Accommodation: Biblical Theological Seminary complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you believe you have a condition which will require accommodation, please refer to the BTS Student Handbook and

follow the procedures outlined. Please review this syllabus carefully and make an appointment with the professor to discuss any assignments for which you believe you will need accommodation according to the arrangements made with the dean.

Student Laptop Security Statement: BTS recognizes the need for computer use throughout the entire educational process today. Computers equipped with Internet access and applications that help deliver information and knowledge are vital. Students are encouraged to bring their electronic computing devices to campus to facilitate their course work and supplemental activities. Given the current climate of online dangers such as viruses, malware, phishing scams, and other related risks it is critical to secure all such devices regardless if they are being used on campus or not. Please take the appropriate steps to safeguard the security of your own electronic devices to protect the integrity of the student network on campus and provide a safe computing environment for everyone to use. Contact the Academic Office if you have any questions about this statement.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS AND GRADING

Open Book Quiz

One open book quiz is required for Matthews and Moyer book on our reading list. The Reading Quiz will be available on the e-Campus website, and you can take anytime during the second half of the course. It is open book, but it is to your advantage to have completed the reading before trying to take the quiz. Although this quiz is due on the last day of class, do not put this off until the end of the semester!

Online Forums

Discussion questions about a given subject are due according to the calendar below. This is not a formal writing assignment (can be more like a journal entry). The paper is your chance to pause and think about how the Old Testament text is relevant to Christian thought and formation. Papers receive a “Pass+” for thoughtfulness and for references to the biblical text *and to our reading material*, a “Pass” for a “fine” answer that is completed on time, “Pass-” for a late assignment, and a “Fail” for not turning the reflection paper in.

Context of a Prophet Presentation:

From the list provided in class, research the historical and geographical context of the prophet. Create a presentation including the following details:

1. Identify your prophet and explain the physical context of where the prophet lived. Use maps when possible. See if you can find pictures online of the region the prophet is from.
2. Explain how your prophet fits on a timeline. Identify both the Israelite king ruling at the time and the significant international powers. Explain the events happening in Israel, and events happening in nearby countries. Identify which chapters from the Historical Narratives explain the political context of the time of your prophet.
3. Summarize the prophet’s message. To whom is it directed and what are the significant points.

Reflection Paper: Lament (500–600 words) submitted online:

Read Lamentations 3 and write a reflection paper on the following:

1. Find a quiet place in which to do this exercise. Be fully present. Notice your sensations and tensions of opposites in yourself as you read this passage. What is happening to you? What impulses and/or compulsions do you notice arising? In other words, how are you reacting to this text.
2. Use the experience of feelings, reactions, impulses, and compulsions to put yourself in the place of Jeremiah and then of his audience. Reflect on how this experience disrupted or reorganized your thinking on how you perceive God’s presence and absence. What does this add to your experience of God?

Biblical Narrative Paper (1,300 words) submitted in print: Your final project should include the following parts:

Part 1 Tell the narrative of the Old Testament in one page (300–500 words).

1. Make your recounting of the narrative into a story and not a wooden, boring, recounting of events.
2. Include at least 10 Old Testament references.
3. Avoid using theological but non biblical vocabulary (i.e. sanctification)

Part 2 What are the implications of studying the Old Testament missionally in your faith community? What might the restoration of *shalom* look like in your community, and how can you engage that restoration? (1000 words).

Final Exam: the final will be available online after our final class on March 26. Students must finish before March 30 at 11:59 pm. It is a closed note, closed Bible, closed book exam. It will cover material from the lectures, videos, and readings. A review sheet will be posted online.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY	IN CLASS	HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK
February 26		Creation Canon, Comparative Literature, The Human	Read: Matthews/Moyer, pp. 1–49 Read: Davis, pp. 45–90 Respond to Online Forum
March 5	Online Forum #1	Abraham Introduction to the Land, Patriarchs, and Covenant	Read: Matthews/Moyer, pp. 50–82 Read: Davis, pp. 153–159 and 185–208 Respond to Online Forum
March 12	Online Forum #2	Sinai Moses, Deuteronomy	Read: Matthews/Moyer, pp. 83–180 Read Davis, pp. 7–44
Saturday, March 16	Context of a Prophet Presentation	Kings and Prophets Judges and Kingdom(s)	Read: Matthews/Moyer, pp. 181–256 Read Davis, pp. 91–152 and 160–184 Respond to Online Forum
March 19	Reflection Paper: Lament Online Forum #3	Exile International Politics; The Writings	Read: Matthews/Moyer, pp. 257–283
March 26	Reading Quiz Due Biblical Narrative Paper	Temple Messianic Hope	Final Exam is due by Sat. March 30 11:59 pm

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC POLICIES

1. **Academic Policies:** Students are fully responsible to know and follow all seminary rules, regulations, and deadlines published in the Academic Catalog and all requirements concerning their degree programs. See the e-campus home page.
2. **Course Syllabus:** Students are fully responsible to know and fulfill the requirements stated in the course syllabus. Students should email the professor about issues related to course work and deadlines during the course. See above under “completion of course work” for policies on course extensions.
3. **E-campus Course Site:** Students are fully responsible for course content and materials that are posted on the course site. Students are encouraged to check the course site frequently during the course. Students who experience difficulty accessing or using the E-campus should email helpdesk@biblical.edu and include their student ID# in their correspondence.

4. **Academic and General Integrity:** As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to integrity and Christ-likeness in all areas of life. What this means in the academic realm is that the completion of all assignments and assessments are to reflect your own work. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a grade of zero on the assessment and will follow the process outlined in the Academic Catalog. See the Academic Catalog for more information on plagiarism and policies related to cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING SYSTEM

To remain in good academic standing, a student must maintain the grade point average designated for his or her program.

A	4.00	93.0–100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90.00–92.9	
B+	3.33	87.0–89.9	
B	3.00	83.0–86.9	Good
B-	2.67	80.0–82.9	
C+	2.33	77.0–79.9	
C	2.00	73.0–76.9	Fair
C-	1.70	70.0–72.9	
D+	1.30	67.0–69.9	Poor
D	1.00	63.0–66.9	
D-	0.70	60.0–62.9	
F	0.00	0.0–59.9	Failing