SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

AS
BB 101S
Instructor Guide
SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

BB 101S

ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE

ADULT AND GRADUATE STUDIES

MONTREAT COLLEGE

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SMALL GROUPS

The foundation of the Montreat College educational philosophy and practice is the recognition of the distinction between the younger college student and the student who has assumed the adult responsibilities of self-determination, financial independence, and professional development. The focus is on two critical learning objectives. The first of these is shared student responsibility of self-directed learning and small-group learning dynamics. Professional and personal growth requires that students develop the skills necessary to manage their own learning. Throughout the program, students are expected to seek answers to their questions, identify and develop resources for their concerns, and take charge of their own learning. For this reason, the programs are designed to provide the structure and support necessary to encourage independence and self-direction.

The second objective is to develop the interpersonal skills necessary for effective participation in groups. Groups are an integrated part of the Montreat College educational model. The groups are comprised of three to five students each that function as mutual support mechanisms through which the students can learn more efficient problem solving from the professional expertise of peers. At Montreat College, students and faculty are acknowledged as major learning resources through which individuals learn from one another by participation in the process of inquiry and involvement with the group. This concept of shared learning responsibility is an integral element in the College’s educational philosophy.

The use of groups as a tool will be enthusiastically supported by the Montreat College student. Experience indicates that the group concept is extremely beneficial in helping students achieve the prescribed learning outcomes. When students accept the fact that they can learn from one another, a system of trust and support evolves, and the learning process becomes interactive.

Montreat College acts on the belief that the validity of learning is not determined solely by its sources. The process of education encompasses the breadth of human experience. Working adults seldom have the time to devote to full-time, formal education. Through combining and sharing the talents, experience, and learning resources of the group, adult students assume a greater self-direction and responsibility for their learning. By sharing the learning and responsibilities, more information can be disseminated among the group members within a limited amount of time. Thus, more content is covered than could be achieved through an individual effort. The group members make the commitment to work together and assist each other in meeting the objectives and outcomes of the course. The curriculum is designed to focus on participative learning outcomes. Through the group process, the learning process is enhanced because students are provided with the opportunity to analyze their experiences and compare and contrast these experiences with theories presented in the curriculum materials.

It is essential that groups discuss and prepare assignments and share learning resources. Each course generally requires a group project in the form of a written and/or an oral report, usually presented to the class for discussion and critique. Group grades
are awarded, so the ability to integrate each member’s total participation becomes the responsibility of all group members and will be reflected in the grade.

The educational model advocated by Montreat College demands active participation by students in their educational process, thus placing substantial responsibility on the learner. The dynamic process of groups maximizes the students’ understanding and involvement in their degree programs. In order to serve the needs of its students better, Montreat College has developed and instituted the group concept.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty, such as cheating on tests and plagiarizing on essays, violates the fundamental trust underlying all academic work—that the work be the product of the student who submitted it. Montreat College defines academic dishonesty as the representation of another’s words, ideas, or images as one’s own. It applies equally to intentional and unintentional quotations, paraphrases, visual images, auditory images, and all electronic means of storage and communication. When academic dishonesty occurs, these procedures will be followed.

DISCIPLINE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

When an instructor suspects a student of academic dishonesty, the instructor will meet with the student to discuss the incident and determine, to the instructor’s satisfaction, whether or not academic dishonesty has occurred. If, in the instructor’s judgment, such a violation of academic integrity has occurred, he or she will present the charges, in writing, to the student.

The only possible disciplinary actions are a zero for the assignment or an F for the course. The student may choose to admit her or his guilt of academic dishonesty and waive a hearing. This involves signing the academic dishonesty notice that outlines the disciplinary action. The academic dishonesty notice will be retained in the student’s academic record.

A student who does not agree to the instructor’s charges must appear before a panel of three faculty members, appointed by the Academic Affairs office or designee, on charges of academic dishonesty. During the intervening period, the student must continue to attend class. The panel will convene a hearing with the student and the instructor at which time the instructor will explain the student’s alleged violation. The student may choose to counter with evidence of her or his innocence or may admit responsibility.
PUNISHMENT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

If the panel indicates, by simple majority vote, that the student has been dishonest, the panel shall uphold the penalty assessed by the instructor. The Academic Affairs office will notify the student, instructor, academic advisor, and Director of Records and Registration, in writing, of the panel’s decision. If the student received a failing grade for the course, the student may remove the impact of the F on her or his grade point average by successfully retaking the course. Two incidents of academic dishonesty will result in a student being dismissed from the College. The student will not be eligible to reapply to Montreat College for at least two years after dismissal. If the panel finds the student not responsible for academic dishonesty, it will notify both the student and the instructor.

If the student wishes to drop the course but has been found guilty of academic dishonesty, the student may withdraw with a grade of W or WF, according to the withdrawal dates on the academic calendar. The academic dishonesty notice will be kept on file if the student has admitted or been found guilty of academic dishonesty.

EXONERATION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

If exonerating information becomes available in the five business days following notification of the panel’s decision, the student may appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of the College. Appeals will be heard only if they meet one of the following conditions: (a) discovery of new information or (b) violation of procedure. A student must remain in the course and work toward its successful completion during the appeal process. The student will be notified, in writing, of the final decision.

A student may be dismissed from the College without refund of tuition or fees after the second incident of academic dishonesty occurs (including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism). That student will not be eligible to reapply to the College for at least two years after the dismissal, and any readmission will be subject to review by the Student Success Team in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of the College.

ADA STATEMENT – EQUAL ACCESS TO CLASSES AND LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Equal access to education means equal opportunity to learn. Under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, students with verified disabilities who are otherwise qualified, have a right to equal access to classes at Montreat College. If you are a student with a disability and you need accommodations for this course, please provide documentation of your disability and discuss necessary accommodations with your Academic Advisor. Your advisor will provide a letter for you to give to your instructor stating your accommodations. Faculty and staff look forward to facilitating your success in the course.
CLASS ETIQUETTE

Students and instructors have the right to an environment conducive to learning. To meet this expectation, students are expected to respect the rights of fellow students to have a class free of personal criticism, distracting noises, and disruptive and inappropriate behaviors. The following are a few examples of inappropriate classroom behavior: using a cell phone in class; keeping personal pagers on; using computers in class for non-class related purposes; talking with other students during instructor or student discussions; sleeping in class; repeatedly going in and out of class; and cheating or plagiarism. If the instructor considers the behavior of a student to be disruptive to the class, the student may be asked to leave. Consequences for missing class activities will depend on the expectations of individual courses. Should repeated disruptive occurrences happen, the student will be required to meet with his or her Academic Advisor and risk possible dismissal from the College.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to the tools and background necessary for understanding, interpreting, and applying the Old Testament to contemporary life. Furthermore, the course prepares the student to discuss intelligently the factual material in the Old Testament and to make clear critical judgments regarding the validity of various interpretations of the Old Testament.

TOPICS

The topics to be covered include the following:

- Worldview Recognition
- Introduction to the Old Testament
- Geographical and Historical Settings of the Old Testament
- The Pentateuch (Torah): Content and Theology
- The Historical Writings: Content and Theology
- The Poetical Writings: Content and Theology
- The Prophetic Writings: Content and Theology
COURSE OBJECTIVES

Objectives to be met by each student in this course include the following:

- Demonstrate the skills of observation, interpretation and application, which are foundational to life-long learners of the Bible. EO-1.1

- Identify the major historical characters and events in the Old Testament and describe how the Old Testament as a whole is a connected story of God relating to broken humanity. EO-1.8

- Explain the historical development of such Old Testament themes as the kingdom of God and the covenant of grace and how the Old Testament understanding of the Kingdom of God relates to the application of the Old Testament to life. EO-1.1

- Defend a hermeneutic of trust regarding the Scriptures. EO-1

- Examine a biblical/theological foundation for the task of integrating faith and learning in other Montreat College courses. EO-1

- Articulate a biblical theology and worldview that influences life choices. (EO-1,3,7)

COURSE OUTCOMES

The following outcomes are expected of each student for this course:

- Through completing written assignments, demonstrate familiarity with the characters, events, and messages of the Old Testament.

- Through participating in all class and group discussions, apply concepts learned throughout the course to everyday life.

- Through completing course projects, articulate the relevance of the Old Testament to modern, real-world situations.

- Through completing weekly tests, demonstrate mastery of course concepts.
INTRODUCTORY NOTES TO STUDENTS

OVERVIEW

The Old Testament serves as the historical and theological backdrop for the Judeo-Christian tradition. (Islam has roots in Genesis as well.) Christians who do not have at least a cursory knowledge of the Old Testament do themselves no favor in their efforts to understand the writings of the New Testament. For this reason, this course is an effort to introduce both Christians and non-Christians to the ancient roots of, arguably, the most important religious tradition in the world.

It must be admitted that it is humanly impossible to cover the entirety of the Old Testament in five weeks. On the one hand, this means much cannot be addressed in this course, but on the other hand, the flexibility allows you to dig deeply into certain areas of interest in the Old Testament to gain an understanding of these select subjects. This course is structured and taught thematically, though, by necessity, it roughly follows both the chronological and canonical structure of the Old Testament.

Due to the immense quantity of material connected with this course, the primary assessment methodology will be weekly tests. Therefore, you can expect a substantial test at the end of each of the five class sessions. The activities of the first three and a half hours of class will reinforce the assigned reading for the week. This time allotment should give you ample opportunity to have all your questions from the readings answered prior to being tested. The group meeting will be your primary tool for preparing for each test. Utilize your group time wisely in an effort to be as fully prepared for class as possible.

The course grade will include your participation in four group projects intended to bring together the historical and theological material of the Old Testament with contemporary application. The projects are creative exercises to be completed by your group with the understanding that each person in the group must participate fully. The projects also facilitate class discussion on the topic for the designated class.

Attendance at all five classes is expected. A class may be missed only if approved by the instructor, and the absence may be reflected in the course grade. Consult the SPAS Academic Bulletin for a more complete explanation of the attendance policy.
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Below are the course assignments and the suggested grading weights:

Weekly Tests 50%
Group Projects 40%
Class Participation 10%

100%

GRADING SCALE

A  =  100-93
A-  =  92-90
B+  =  89-87
B   =  86-83
B-  =  82-80
C+  =  79-77
C   =  76-73
C-  =  72-70
D+  =  69-67
D   =  66-63
D-  =  62-60
F   =  59 or below

GRADING GUIDELINES

A  =  The assignment shows excellent work. It is an example for others to follow.
     The student exhibits unusually sharp insight into several sides of an issue and
     shows considerable critical thought. His/her written work is virtually flawless in
     terms of grammar, spelling, cogency and content.

B   =  The assignment shows above average work. The student demonstrates a
       very good understanding of ideas and expresses them clearly and succinctly.

C   =  The assignment is completed in a satisfactory and acceptable manner.

D   =  The assignment shows below average work. The style and content is minimally
       acceptable.

F   =  The assignment is unacceptable. The effort does not meet minimum
       requirements.

The instructor may hand out a rubric for how writing assignments will be graded.
MATERIALS INVENTORY

The following materials are required for the course:

TEXTBOOK


*The Bible*
You may use any recognized translation of the Bible. You are expected to bring your Bible to class every class. The most commonly recognized translations are KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, NIV, NASB, NLT, and ESV. Do not use a paraphrased edition of the Bible (*The Message, The Living Bible*, etc.).

Additional Optional Reading


CLASS ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this class, each student will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Define the concept of worldview and explain how it affects one’s approach to the Old Testament and to life.
2. Apply the four steps of inductive Bible study.
3. Demonstrate a familiarity with the geographical and historical settings of the Old Testament.
4. Explain the development of the canon in forming the Old Testament.
5. Demonstrate comprehension of the class assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are to be completed prior to this class:

Individual

1. Read chapters 1 and 2 in the text, Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey (hereafter referred to as “the text”)
2. Read the article found at the following website: http://www.mckenziestudycenter.org/philosophy/articles/wrldeview.html
   Answer the following questions: What is a worldview? Are you familiar with this concept? Does this help you make sense of the world? How have you detected different worldviews in the people you encounter each day, in the TV programs and films you watch, and in the books you read?
3. Prepare for test 1, which will be given at the end of Class One. Especially focus on the study questions at the end of chapters 1 and 2.
4. Watch and critique the following YouTube clip: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Txez9sJUtaE&feature=related
   Be prepared to discuss the clip in class.

Group

None
CLASS TWO: ENCOUNTERING THE PENTATEUCH

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this class, each student will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Explain the different interpretations of the Creation passages in Genesis.
2. Summarize the five overarching themes of the Pentateuch as given in the text.
3. Describe God’s custom of covenant-making and His plan of electing and forming a people who would be a light to the nations.
4. Explain the connection of worldview and the pre-modern concept of corporate personality exemplified by the people of Israel.
5. Demonstrate comprehension of the class assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are to be completed prior to this class:

Individual

1. Read chapters 3 through 9 in the text.
3. Apply the four steps of inductive Bible study to Genesis 9:1–17. Bring your findings to class.
4. Prepare for test 2, which will take place at the end of Class Two.

Group

1. Discuss chapters 3 through 9 of the text. Review the study questions at the end of each chapter.
2. Choose one of the following over-arching themes of the Pentateuch listed below on which to prepare a creative presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, skit, video clip) to share your group’s conclusions with the class during the next session. The presentation should refer to at least four passages of Scripture that illustrate the chosen theme. Also prepare to turn in a one-page outline of the presentation.
a. The covenant-making God
b. The sacrificial system in the Old Testament
c. The Decalogue and Law in the Old Testament
d. The festival system in the Old Testament
e. The Suzerainty Treaty and its connection to the covenants and to Deuteronomy
CLASS THREE: ENCOUNTERING THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this class, each student will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the historical events of the taking of the Promised Land, the time of the judges, the monarchy of the united kingdom, the divided kingdom, the exiles, and returns.

2. Articulate and discuss the biblical mandates and limitations for the monarchy.

3. Articulate an explanation for God’s mandate given to the people of Israel to take over the Promised Land.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are to be completed prior to this class:

**Individual**

1. Read chapters 10 through 18 in the text.


3. Prepare for test 3, which will be given at the end of Class Three.

**Group**

1. Discuss chapters 10 through 18 of the text. Review the study questions at the end of each chapter.

2. As a group, you have been hired as the defense attorneys for God to defend His mandate of the violent taking of the Promised Land. The prosecution states that a good God would not possibly mandate such wholesale slaughter. Develop some arguments that might defend this mandate, using biblical texts and biblical commentators as well as reason. Be prepared to share your case in the class discussion. Hand in a one- to two-page outline of your arguments.
CLASS FOUR: ENCOUNTERING THE POETICAL BOOKS

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this class, each student will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Examine Hebrew wisdom literature and explain its value in the canon.
2. Apply wisdom concepts to his or her own life.
3. Demonstrate a familiarity with the major features of Hebrew poetry.
4. Discuss the place and use of the Psalter in Hebrew worship.
5. Explain the concept of Theodicy, the problem of evil, and the answers that have been given throughout history.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are to be completed prior to this class:

Individual

1. Read chapters 19 through 23 in the text.
2. Read Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 22, 51, 69, 73, 103, and 150.
4. Compose your own psalm of lament, using Hebrew poetic features. The psalm of lament should be in either chiasm or acrostic form; use different types of parallelism within the psalm.
5. Prepare for test 4, which will be given at the end of Class Four.

Group

1. Discuss chapters 19 through 23 of the text. Review the study questions at the end of each chapter.
2. Together compose a psalm of praise. The psalm of praise should be in either chiasm or acrostic as the form; use different types of parallelism within the psalm.
3. Together compose a list of ten proverbs that would impart godly wisdom to a brand new cohort at Montreat College.
4. Together compose a list of ten proverbs that would impart godly wisdom to a newly married couple.
CLASS FIVE: ENCOUNTERING THE PROPHETS

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this class, each student will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Summarize the historical settings of the Major and Minor Prophets.
2. Identify the common themes of the Old Testament prophets.
3. Describe the responses of the people of Judah and Israel to the prophetic message.
4. Connect the prophetic messages to their application in today’s church and society.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are to be completed prior to this class:

Individual

1. Read chapters 19 through 34 in the text.
2. Read Isaiah chapters 1–7 and 40–66, the books of Micah, Hosea, and one Minor Prophet book of your choice.
3. Prepare for test 5, which will be given at the end of Class Five.

Group

1. Discuss chapters 24 through 34 of the text. Review the study questions at the end of each chapter.
2. As a group, choose one of the Minor Prophets. Research the context into which that prophet spoke. Bring to class a one-page summary of that context. Together compose a prophecy that would apply the major points of that prophet to our generation. Your prophecy should be at least twenty lines.
INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The purpose of this module is to provide you with the basis for facilitation. It is not a blueprint for, but an idealization of, classroom instruction. Course objectives and outcomes must be met, but there is some flexibility with regard to assignments and activities. Specific instruction governing assignments and activities must be weighted according to the size and composition of the class and the experiential background of the students.

The reading assignments from *Encountering the Old Testament* are meant to ground both you and the students in the various writings of the Old Testament in their respective historical contexts. The text chapters are relatively short and include many pictures and charts, so the emphasis should be placed on understanding the Scriptures. Assist the students whenever possible with the meshing of the historical material with the biblical material.

One of the most important considerations is how to orchestrate four hours of class time. Planning is absolutely critical for success. Courses in an accelerated format are only successful if class time is completely utilized. Do not cut class time short. Fatigue is a constant companion. Be sensitive to the fact that the students (and you) have worked a full day already. Look for ways to pace the activities in order to maximize learning. Do not use fatigue as an excuse to cut class time short. You will need all the time available to accomplish your purpose.

Any changes in the module should be made well in advance of the course and discussed with the Dean of Academics.

Every class is different not only in size, but also in professional composition. It is your responsibility as the instructor to tailor the material in the module to meet the unique needs of the specific class. Get to know your students and then decide how best to proceed.

INSTRUCTOR-SPECIFIC ANCILLARY MATERIALS

It is always helpful to have resources suited to the topic at hand. The following is a bibliography that you may find helpful in preparing to teach this course:

**General Bibliography**


**Old Testament Introduction Texts**


Old Testament History


Old Testament Theology and Issues


**DEVOTIONALS**

Consistent with the mission of Montreat College, it is expected that each class will open with a brief devotional, followed by a time to pray for specific requests from students. Opening class in this way helps you and the students to turn from the press of your many diverse activities and responsibilities outside the classroom and to clear your minds for addressing the subjects and issues scheduled for the class. Moreover, it facilitates the integration of faith and learning throughout the class and beyond. Students in the program generally appreciate and expect you, or a student volunteer at times, to open with a devotional. It is important to refrain from promoting the views of a particular denomination and to avoid “wearing one’s religion on one’s sleeves,” but it is expected that the lesson be from a conservative, evangelical Christian perspective, drawing on the truths from the Bible.
CLASS ONE

Class One Topics: Introduction to the Old Testament; worldview; inductive Bible study

ACTIVITIES

ONE

The instructor will open the class with a devotional, introduce himself or herself to the class, and ask class members to introduce themselves.

TWO

The instructor will facilitate an exercise to introduce a lecture on belief structures.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Exercise suggestion: Have students list five beliefs they hold that influence their interpretations of life. Ask students to share a few of their beliefs for discussion. This discussion should reveal that some beliefs are basic whereas others are more developed. Many beliefs go beyond the idea of worldview because, ultimately, many beliefs people hold are based upon their worldviews.

THREE

The instructor will present a lecture on belief structures.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Introduction to Belief Structures

I. People do not view life from a neutral perspective.

II. Each person has a worldview: "the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things" (Wolters).
   A. These beliefs or presuppositions influence one’s understanding and interpretation of life.
   B. These beliefs or presuppositions influence one’s understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures.

III. Implication: The presuppositions that underlie one's beliefs may be as important as or more important than the beliefs themselves.

FOUR

The instructor will present and facilitate a discussion on "An Historical Overview
Five

The instructor will lead a discussion on the MacKenzie article.

Six

The groups will present their productions of their “Introduction to Worldview.”

Seven

The instructor will present an overview lecture on the history of worldviews.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: A Brief Historical Overview of Worldviews

I. Definition of worldview:
   A. "A worldview is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world . . . and is not just a set of basic concepts but a fundamental orientation of the heart.”
      Dr. James W. Sire (Naming the Elephant, p.13)
   B. "A worldview is, first of all, an explanation and interpretation of the world and second, an application of this view to life. In simpler terms, our worldview is a view of the world and a view for the world.”
   C. “World views act somewhat like eye glasses or contact lenses. A world view should provide the correct ‘prescription’ for making sense of the world just as wearing the correct prescription for your eyes brings things into focus.” “World Views” by Jerry Solomon InPlainSight.org

II. Worldview is based on a set of presuppositions.
   A. Define presupposition: To suppose or assume beforehand; take for granted in advance.
   B. Examples

III. Rene Descartes set out to prove God’s existence by using only one’s reason.
   A. He wanted to show that Christianity was true to those who accept only reason.
   B. He discarded reliable witnesses and Scripture.
C. He ended up undermining the worth of reliable witnesses and Scripture.

IV. Premodernism

Polytheism Plato, Christ’s birth; Constantine, Augustine Aquinas

A. Premodernists presuppositions:
1. Divine origin of human beings
2. Revelation is accepted as normative
3. Reliable witnesses are trusted
4. Hierarchy, caste systems function (trade or calling dictated)

B. Premodernist cosmology
1. Assumes the existence of demons and angels and spiritual beings.
2. Accepts supernatural explanations.
3. Accepts miracles.
4. Example: Put on red bracelet to protect babies from the Evil Eye; Cure: curanderos; passing an egg over the body; voodoo; amulets to ward off evil eye (in Turkey)

IV. Starting in 14th century Europe we see:

A. The shift
1. The rise of the Renaissance, the revival of learning based on Classical sources, and the emphasis shift to the human being as the center of the universe.
2. The Gutenberg Bible is published in 1453. People could read scriptures for themselves in their own language.
3. The Age of Exploration and Discovery; science becomes the new religion.
4. Caravaggio paints biblical characters as ordinary people.

B. The Reformation
1. Martin Luther was expelled from the Roman Catholic Church, and the Reformation movement left the confines of the Church and papal authority, leading to personal interpretation of the scriptures.
2. Modernist cosmology
3. Emmanuel Kant made the case for moral autonomy.
4. Charles Darwin eliminated the God of the Gaps and provided a scientific explanation of the origin of the world, of matter.
5. Sigmund Freud defined anything that cannot be proved by the scientific method as illusion.

These influences led to what is called....

V. The Age of Enlightenment

A. Modernist presuppositions
1. Human reason is the most reliable way to come to understanding. The reliable witness is discounted.
2. The universe is governed in an orderly fashion by laws of nature.
3. The supernatural is discounted as fable.
4. Each individual has the ability to think and decide for himself or herself.
   a. Autonomy is highly valued. The individual is more important than the family or group.
   b. All truth is part of a harmonious whole. Humans have the potential to live together in harmony.
   c. Confidence is placed in science.
5. As people apply universal laws, they will achieve progress and happiness.

B. Enlightenment values:
   1. Reason
   2. Nature
   3. Autonomy
   4. Harmony

C. How might this Modernist thinking have influenced hermeneutics?

VI. My presuppositions
   A. Scripture is God’s revelation and message to humankind.
   B. Scripture is trustworthy, and I employ a hermeneutic of trust.
   C. Scripture asks for a response from the reader. It is to be acted upon.
   D. The hero of the OT is YHWH. God’s deeds, plans, and purposes dominate the OT.
   E. The supernatural is possible and even commonplace in Scripture. There is no need to explain away supernatural occurrences (e.g., parting of Red Sea)
   F. Human nature is portrayed realistically, warts and all.
   G. I assume that I know less, not more than Scripture.

Discussion question: With what presuppositions do you come to Scripture?

EIGHT

The instructor will present an overview lecture on the basic inductive Bible study method.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: This lecture will introduce a basic inductive Bible study method which is designed to encourage students to not simply read about the Bible but to dig into Scriptures themselves.
Lecture: **Inductive Bible Study**

I. **Introduction:** Basic inductive approach to Bible study
   A. *Observe* the facts in the text
   B. *Interpret* their meaning
   C. *Reflect* on its truth
   D. *Apply* them to life

II. **Observation:**
   A. What does the text say?
   B. Observe the open and hidden facts in the text before you.

III. **Interpretation**
   A. Principles for interpreting narrative sections of the Bible
      1. They usually do not *directly* teach a doctrine.
      2. They usually *illustrate* a doctrine.
      3. They record what happened – not necessarily what *should* have happened.
      4. The actions of Bible characters are not necessarily praiseworthy.
      5. We are not always told whether the *result* of the story was good or bad.
      6. All are selective and incomplete.
      7. They have particular, specific, and limited purposes.
      8. In the final analysis, God is the hero of them all.
   B. The text and what we say about the text in Genesis 7:1–10
      In the following list of six points, have students identify which of the following six statements is a point of observation, interpretation, reflection, or application.
      1. God considered Noah a righteous man.
      2. Noah’s obedient response to God’s commands demonstrates his righteous character.
      3. Noah’s family probably put up with a lot of strange sounds and smells from the animals when they entered the ark to escape the flood.
      4. Noah didn’t have to work hard to get the animals into the ark.
      5. We can follow Noah’s example and learn to trust God to bring us through difficult times.
      6. God did not allow other people from Noah’s generation to enter the ark and escape the flood because they were not found to be faithful to God like Noah.

IV. **Reflection**
   Meditate: How does it link to life?

V. **Application:** How do we use this truth?
   A. Think carefully about the application to God’s people as a whole, to your local fellowship, and to you personally.
B. How does your life measure up to God’s truth?
C. What life-changing view of God/his purposes do you see?
D. What insights into human nature should affect your life?
E. Examples that inspire you? Or warn you?
F. Sin to be confessed and have forgiven?
G. Hope renewed? Faith strengthened?
H. Actions to take?

NINE

The instructor will facilitate a review of the first two chapters of the text.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Review the first two chapters of the text and address the following three questions:
1. Why study the Old Testament?
2. Where and when did the events of the Old Testament take place?
3. How did the Canon develop?

TEN

The students will take test 1.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Allow enough time at the end of the class to administer the test. To maximize class time, the test should take no longer than 30 minutes.
CLASS TWO: ENCOUNTERING THE PENTATEUCH

ACTIVITIES

ONE

The instructor will open the class with a devotional, collect assignments due, return graded work, and answer any questions the students may have.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Return test 1 and answer any questions that arise.

TWO

The groups will give their presentations on their chosen over-arching theme of the Pentateuch.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Alternative: The groups can give their presentations as the themes are touched on in the lectures instead of at the beginning of class.

THREE

The instructor will lead a discussion on chapters 3–9 of the text.

FOUR

The instructor will present a lecture and facilitate discussion on contemporary idols.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: *A Biblical Understanding of the Way Things Are*

*Genesis 1:27–31; 2:15; and 18–25*

I. Creation

A. The world was created by God out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and continues to be sustained by him.

B. Human beings were created in the image of God. "He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change" (Westminster
C. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to worship and obey him." Gen. 2:15

II. What we can understand from the biblical account of Creation:
   A. This God is a “good” God. (James 1:17)
   B. Creation was pronounced “good” or TOV. (TOV has the sense of lovely, beautiful, aesthetically and ethically; as intended)
   C. Human beings were created uniquely in God’s image and were differentiated from the rest of creation by the desire to make sense out of life. God pronounced them “very good.”
   D. Human beings were made to live in loving communion with God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and with one another. God made a covenant with Adam and Eve.
   E. We were made to be blessed and to pass on that blessing. (shalom-prospering)
   F. The God who created all is inescapably linked to all and has jurisdiction over all.
   H. No person or people are exempt; even if they deny that he exists, all are accountable to him. He is not a tribal deity but has author’s rights.
   I. God created human beings, man and woman, in his image likeness. We uniquely bear God’s image and reflect his power and majesty.
   J. Humankind finds its greatest satisfaction in the sort of work that stimulates creative faculties and develops potential. We were created to serve in God’s presence, under his control, and for his glory.

III. Some implications of Creation: (from Plantinga’s Engaging God’s World)
   A. The cosmos, human beings, all that is, is not an accident
      1. God loves and celebrates creation
      2. All of creation is potentially redeemable
      3. Created things are purposive, unique, intelligible
      4. God is the absolute originator; out of his goodness, power he created.
   B. God and world are distinct
      1. Material reality is a good thing—we can appreciate the material without worshipping it
      2. God affirms the goodness of work and marriage
      3. Implies responsibilities and rights—dignity, life, freedoms
      4. We need to balance our individual and corporate id’s.
      5. God places us in the scheme of things as creatures.
      6. Objective Truth (read page 43 Plantinga)

IV. Approaches to the interpretation of Genesis 1
   A. Completely literal
      1. Genre seen as historical narrative
2. Deny and distrust scientific consensus; mature creationism
3. Theorize the gap and flood geology to account for fossil records
4. Problem: Seems to conflict with Genesis 2 and flies in the face of widely accepted scientific findings

B. Essentially literal
   1. Genre seen as historical narrative with figurative elements
   2. Harmonizes science and Bible; progressive creationism
   3. Day-age theory: pictorial—revelatory theory; framework hypothesis accounts for fossil record.
   4. Problem: Seems to make questionable concessions in order to hold both biblical and scientific data together

C. Essentially non-literal
   1. Genre seen as historical myth or parable
   2. Dichotomizes into separate truth categories; advocates theistic evolution
   3. Accepts scientific explanation of evolutionary theory
   4. Problem: Accepts scientific theory uncritically and threatens to undermine religious certainty.

D. Consensus on essential teaching of creation in Genesis 1
   1. The creation of all things by the one, true and living God.
   2. The special creation of the first man and woman.
      a. Paul's view—Romans 5:12–21, 1 Cor. 15:20–23, 44–49
      b. Jesus' view—Mark 10:6–9, Matthew 19:4–6
   3. The unity of the human race: All persons share a common, ancestral pair. Therefore no one race, nationality, or social class has a monopoly on the inherent dignity given by God. Racism, sexism, and prideful nationalism fall under the condemnation of Genesis 1 teaching as well.

V. The Fall: “all has been created good . . . but that all has been corrupted by evil” (Plantinga xv).
   A. Evil = any spoiling of shalom; Sin = culpable evil; to miss target; interfering with shalom; “life is not the way it is supposed to be.”
      1. Corruption—we’re all bent towards evil
      2. We question God’s love and goodness
      3. Death and decay
      4. Turns God’s gifts away from intended purposes, perverts
      5. Pollute = bring in debased elements; this is disloyal, ungrateful, foolish
      6. We know what is right, and we do what’s wrong; self-deception
   B. Idolatry—“Idolatry is wrong, therefore, not because it tries to make God visible (which is precisely the human task) but because it goes about this task in the wrong way” (Plantinga).

Discussion:
1. What are contemporary idols?
work environment?
3. What are some of the consequences of the Fall for business?

C. Repercussions of the Fall
   1. Cain and Abel
   2. Tower of Babel
   3. World given over to evil in days of Noah

FIVE

The instructor will present a lecture and facilitate a discussion on the promises of God.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: The Promises of God
I. Covenant
   A. Definition: A binding agreement; a compact; God’s promise to the human race.
   B. God is continually seeking out his people. He made covenants with:
      1. Adam and Eve
      2. Noah, his family and the animals after the flood. Sign = rainbow (Gen. 9:12–17)
      3. Abraham. The covenant promised:
         a. Many descendants (Gen. 17:2–6)
         b. Blessings and to make him a blessing to all the nations (Gen. 12:2–3)
         c. Land (Gen. 17:8)
         d. A great name (Gen. 12:2) Compare to Tower of Babel and people trying to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:1–9)

II. God took his own time in fulfilling the promises.
   A. Abraham took the initiative instead of waiting on God.
      1. The implications of Ishmael
      2. Isaac’s birth
      3. Jacob and Esau
      4. Jacob AKA Israel and the twelve tribes
      5. The sojourn in Egypt
      6. The Exodus

III. The character of God seen in the Exodus: “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14)
   A. God’s Supreme Power
      1. No rivals
      2. Victory hymn—Triumph over Pharaoh (Exodus 15)
      3. Control over nature
4. Ten plagues display defeat of Egyptian “gods” of nature; showed to be powerlessness
   a. Nile turned to blood vs. Khnum, guardian of the Nile, Hapi, spirit of the Nile
   b. Frogs vs. Heqt, god of resurrection in form of frog
   c. Gnats vs. Nut, sky goddess
   d. Flies vs. Nut, sky goddess
   e. Plague on cattle vs. Hathor, mother-goddess in form of a cow; Apil, bull god
   f. Boils vs. Imhotep, god of medicine
   g. Hail vs. of Nut, sky goddess
   h. Locusts vs. Isis, goddess of life, Seth, protector of crops
   i. Darkness vs. Re, Aten, Atum, Horus, all sun gods
   j. Death of firstborn vs. Pharaoh as deity, Osiris, the giver of life

5. In the last plague Pharaoh must give up his firstborn son as punishment for refusing to give up God’s “firstborn son”—Israel (Ex.4:22)

B. God’s faithfulness and mercy
   1. Slavery prophesied (Genesis 15)
      a. People’s response to slavery
      b. God’s response to people’s groaning
      c. God’s people learn to wait on the Lord

IV. The character of God’s deliverance
   A. Liberation and redemption
      1. Spiritual liberation as well as political liberation
      2. Freed from 400 years of pagan influence with its fear, superstition, and ignorance of God’s promises
   B. Creation of a people of God
      1. Formation of a unique people
      2. Liberated to be God’s witnesses
   C. Dependence upon divine intervention
      Forces of personality or military might are insufficient
   D. Involvement of key human figures: Moses—God’s mouthpiece and mediator
   E. Exodus as foreshadowing of ultimate salvation in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Discussion question: How do these themes of covenant and promise enrich our understanding of being God’s people today when we celebrate baptism and communion?
SIX

The instructor will present a lecture and facilitate discussion on the Sinai Covenant.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: The Sinai Covenant

I. God’s grace was made known to Israel before the Covenant.
   A. Fulfilling promises to Abraham
   B. Deliverance from Egypt

II. Covenant
   A. Definition: A binding agreement; a compact; God’s promise to the human race.
   B. The Sinai Covenant is unilateral in nature:
      1. God takes the initiative
      2. God dictates the terms
      3. It parallels the Suzerainty Treaties (see p. 121–122 in text)
      4. God acts for his people
      5. It provides security and assurance
   C. A covenant requires a response.
   D. Fundamental benefits: The Sinai Covenant provides for a loving, just community. It mediates the presence and knowledge of God in the Hebrew community.
   E. The scope of the Covenant is not just for those born Jews; all are welcome (e.g., Ruth). Israel was to be a light to the nations. They are blessed to be a blessing.

III. The Ten Commandments (The Law)
   A. Introduction
      1. Given by our Creator; fits life’s design
      2. Tell us what God expects of all (not only for Jews and Christians); survival guidelines for any human community
      3. Abiding laws which express the will of God for humanity, reflect God’s character of love and justice, and point the way to a loving, just community.
   B. The Commandments: First three commandments deal with God’s relationship with Israel; the rest deal with Israel’s community relationships.
      1. “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”
         a. Remember the Shema
         b. “Before me” has the sense of “in my face” and was used of taking a second wife while the first is alive—quite an affront.
         c. Gerhard Von Rad mentions that this is in the context of the polytheism of the surrounding nations, of Egypt. It is radical.
Tacitus on monotheism: “Tasteless and mean.”

2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God…”
   a. This logically flows from the first commandment
   b. God’s love = hesed
   c. Human beings image God, not idols (read from Walsh & Middleton, The Transforming Vision*, page 65)
   d. No golden or wooden likeness could possibly be adequate.

3. “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God…”
   a. Profanity (usurping God’s place in condemning someone, cursing)
   b. Frivolity (using the name of God in a superficial way: e.g., “Praise the Lord” as a thoughtless conversation filler)
   c. Hypocrisy (claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces him) careless, irreverent use of God’s name.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy…”
   a. Balance, well-being is at stake here
   b. Protection from overwork

5. “Honor your father and your mother…”
   a. Honor קָדוֹשׁ = precious, to weigh heavy
   b. This commandment is given for the stability and health of society
   c. No qualifiers, no asking if they deserve this honor
   d. Read Grimm’s Fairy Tale from Smoke on the Mountain by Joy Davidman

6. “You shall not murder.”
   a. Respect for human life
   b. Hate = murder; slander = murder a reputation (Matt. 5:21–26)
   c. Suicide

7. “You shall not commit adultery.”
   a. Safeguards a covenantal relationship
   b. hesed between spouses

8. “You shall not steal.”
   a. Respect for property
   b. Respecting boundaries in others’ lives

9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
   a. Lies, slander, tale-bearing, questioning someone’s motives
   b. Being tricky with the truth (half-truth);
   c. Giving right information with evil motives
   d. Silence when one should speak up

10. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house . . . wife . . . manservant . . .”
a. \(\mu\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\) — to strongly desire; to seize for oneself.

b. Covetousness is desire out of control; greed

c. Encourages respect of the boundaries in others' lives.

d. Encourages welcoming the giftedness and bounty of others (negative example: Salieri's venomous hatred of Mozart in *Amadeus*)

e. Proverb: "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence."

C. The commandments point to their author and fulfiller and help us realize our need for God's work in our lives.

IV. The Tabernacle

A. God's way of living in the midst of his people.
   1. Plan of wilderness tabernacle (see page 81 of text)
   2. God gives detailed instructions on how to construct and furnish it.
   3. It is to be in the center of the encampment

B. Sacrificial system and priesthood
   1. The ground of forgiveness lies in the merciful character of God himself.
   2. God offers a way of forgiveness.
   3. Burnt offerings (Lev. 1:1–7:38)
   4. Meal or tribute offerings
   5. Peace offerings (thank, vow, freewill)
   6. Sin offerings
   7. Guilt offerings
   8. Priesthood (Lev. 8:1–10:20)

C. Festivals
   1. Passover—deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12)
   2. Pentecost—harvest festival remembering the giving of the Law (Dt. 16:9–12)
   3. 9th of Av—Destruction of first and second temple
   4. Day of Atonement *Yom Kippur*—sacrifices for sins of nation (Lev. 16)
   5. Tabernacles—Wilderness wanderings (Lev. 23:33)

D. The Holiness Code (Lev. 17:1–26:46)

V. Rebellion, Wilderness Wanderings

**Discussion:** Identify and discuss certain of the Ten Commandments that expose the perversions of today's culture.
SEVEN

The students will take test 2.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Give the second test. Allow enough time at the end of the class to administer the test. To maximize class time, the test should take no longer than 30 minutes.
CLASS THREE: ENCOUNTERING THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

ACTIVITIES

ONE

The instructor will open the class with a devotional, collect assignments, return graded work, and answer any questions the students may have.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Return test 2, and answer any questions that arise. Collect the project assigned for Class Three.

TWO

The instructor will lead a discussion of chapters 10–18 in the text.

THREE

The instructor will present a lecture on life in the Promised Land.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Life in the Promised Land
I. The taking of the Promised Land
   A. Moses’ instructions (Joshua 1)
   B. The crossing of the Jordan
   C. Renewal of the Covenant

II. Israel forsakes God (Joshua)
   A. Further conquest in Canaan
   B. 12 tribes occupy appointed areas
   C. Generations after Joshua suffer
   D. A rapid social and moral decline (Joshua 2:10)

III. The pattern of leadership in Judges
   A. Outward result: oppression
   B. Note cycle: Relapse → Retribution → Repentance → Rescue by a Judge → Repeat
   C. Definition of a Judge: a charismatic leader endowed by God with spiritual gifts of administration, wisdom, and discernment that brought peace from the oppression of neighboring tribes.
      1. Historical example: Deborah and Barak (Judges 4 and 5)
      2. Note cycle of Relapse → Retribution → Repentance → Rescue
IV. Inward result: corruption
   A. Idolatry (Judges 5:8; 8:33-35)
   B. Immorality—case of Samson: He was a Nazirite; therefore, he should not drink strong wine, cut his hair, touch dead bodies, or eat unclean food. We see Samson’s steady fall away from God’s favor. He is a tragic figure.

FOUR

The groups will present their cases defending God’s mandate of the violent taking of the Promised Land.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Facilitate discussion and encourage the students to answer the following question: Was the Canaanite genocide necessary?

FIVE

The instructor will present a lecture on the kingdom of God.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: The Kingdom of God

I. Introduction: The Kingdom of God is the most comprehensive theme that best unites the Old and New Testaments. Definition: The active, dynamic rule of God

II. The Significance of the Kingdom of God
   A. Hope for tomorrow
   B. Fear of the Lord
   C. Hopeful view of history – linear (Draw chart contrasting linear and cyclical view of history)
   D. Pattern of leadership in the OT
      1. Patriarchal (use diagram of pyramid with Patriarchs at top, then tribes, then clans, then families at the bottom to illustrate the patriarchal structure)
      2. Corporate personality – Hebrew culture thought in terms of tribe and/or community more than in terms of the individual. The common good was considered more than individual good.

Discussion Question: How does the concept of corporate personality contrast with the modern American individualistic model?
III. The position of Israel’s king
   A. Structure of Hebrew kingship (Deut. 17:14–20)
   B. Paradigm of Israel’s ideal king
      1. Military leader
         a. Part of initial request for a king
         b. Psalm 20
         c. No glorification of war
         d. Trust in God for victory
         e. Law covered ethics of war (Deut. 20)
      2. Administrator and champion of justice
         a. Provide climate of justice
         b. Psalm 72:1–4; 2 Sam. 12:1–14
         c. Solomon’s wisdom provoked awe
         d. Kings often criticized by prophets for this failure
      3. Leader in faith and worship (2 Sam. 23:1)
         a. Responsible for maintenance of temple and its worship
         b. David—Israel’s singer of songs (Psalm 123:1–4, 13–18)
         c. King must be a man of prayer and faith
   C. The Covenant to David
      1. Setting for promise (2 Samuel 7)
         a. Religious and political power now centered on Jerusalem
         b. David’s plan for temple denied
         c. God’s promise follows denial
      2. Three-fold promise (2 Samuel 7:16)
         a. “House” dynasty
         b. “Kingdom”—right to rule
         c. “Throne”—outward expression of governing
      3. A major promise remembered as God worked in history
      4. Covenant ultimately fulfilled in Christ
         a. Prophet (Heb. 1:1–2)
         b. Priest (Heb. 6:20)
         c. King (Rev. 19:16)

IV. The changes brought about by the Monarchy
   A. Dynastic succession
      1. Transfer of power
      2. Divine promise (2 Samuel 7:16)
   B. Centralization of power
      1. Institution of forced labor
      2. Professional army
      3. International relations
   C. Emergence of a middle class
   D. Jerusalem as a political and religious center
   E. Conclusion: Changes resulted in a higher standard of living and stronger sense of unity than in the days of Joshua. The downside will be examined next.
V. Titles of Hebrew kings
   A. Son of God— rights in sonship in human sphere
   B. Anointed— sign of divine approval link God’s Spirit to
   C. Messiah
   D. Servant— term of honor
   E. Shepherd— again assumes power to be a gift to be used for the
      protection and provision of others.

VII. Report card of Hebrew kings
   A. Case studies
      1. What is Saul’s mistake in I Sam. 13:7–14?
      2. How does Solomon handle power?
      3. How does Rehoboam’s reign follow the guidelines for kings
         set forth in Deut. 17?
   B. The problem of power
   C. Application: How is power distributed in America today?

VII. The Divided Kingdom: The collapse of Judah
   A. The downward spiral
      1. Become a tribute nation to Assyria
      2. Assyrian gods expected to be honored
      3. Compromise allowed
      4. Struggling with faith and politics: King Hezekiah
         a. Religious reform
         b. Seen as rebellion
         c. Judah invaded
         d. Jerusalem not taken
         e. Why did God allow Hezekiah to suffer?
      5. King Josiah
         a. Pentateuch rediscovered
         b. Covenant renewal called
         c. Assyria in retreat; Egypt reasserts power
      6. Two prophetic voices of the Kingdom of God: Jeremiah and
         Ezekiel
         a. Both announce destruction
         b. Both focus on the hope of the righteous remnant; others
            blame their ancestors
         c. Both say remnant will suffer
         d. Both announce a new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34)
         e. New covenant is a major indicator to the coming Messiah
            (Luke 22:15, 16, 20)

VIII. The Kingdom of God redefined: A righteous remnant who still maintain
      a commitment to covenant obligations.
   A. Division of the kingdom into North (Israel) and South (Judah)
   B. Decline
      1. Decline of the North: I Kings 12:19
      2. Jeroboam I (931-910 BC): The slippery slope
a. Establishes two new centers of political power: Shechem and Peniel
b. Establishes two centers of worship: Dan and Bethel (golden calf, names own priests)
c. Uses religion to achieve political aims and ambitions.

C. Ahab (874-853 BC): Syncretism
2. Elijah issues proclamation of judgment
3. Power encounter on Mt. Carmel
4. Elijah challenges people of Israel (1 Kings 18:21)
5. Ahab appropriates Naboth’s vineyard: Mosaic values vs. Canaanite notions of power.
6. Combines elements of false religions with revealed truth results in erosion of fundamental values and beliefs.

D. Jeroboam II. (800–743 BC): Spiritual Rot
1. Recovery and resurgence economically and militarily
2. Spiritual rot
3. Rise of classical prophets
4. Separates religious practice from biblical morality and ethics
5. Dichotomy between faith and practice
6. Judgment
7. Imminent judgment announced

IX. The collapse of the North (Israel)
A. Assyria as the instrument of the Lord’s judgment
B. Hope for the remnant

IV. The collapse of the South (Judah)
A. Judah survives Assyrian onslaught but becomes a vassal state
B. Assyria require that images of the Assyrian gods be displayed
C. Two good kings:
   1. Hezekiah (716–687 BC)
   2. Josiah (640–609 BC)

SIX

The students will take test 3.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Give the third test. Allow enough time at the end of the class to administer the test. To maximize class time, the test should take no longer than 30 minutes.
CLASS FOUR: ENCOUNTERING THE POETICAL BOOKS:

Class Four Topics: Themes of the Wisdom Tradition, Features of Hebrew Poetry, Proverbs, Psalms, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Job

ACTIVITIES

ONE

The instructor will open the class with a devotional, collect assignments due, return graded work, and answer any questions the students may have.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Return test 3 and answer any questions that arise.

TWO

The instructor will review chapters 19–23 in the text and field any questions.

THREE

The instructor will present a lecture on the wisdom tradition.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: The Way of Wisdom
I. The biblical definition of wisdom
   A. ḥokmâ: insight, discernment, good sense
   B. Art of being skillful & successful
   C. Some themes are not unique with Israel
      (Compare to Egyptian wisdom)
   D. Israel’s uniqueness
      1. Wisdom as a divine gift of moral discernment
         (case of Solomon)
      2. Seeing life from God’s point of view → “fearing the Lord”

II. Listening to the created order
   A. Genesis 1: A Creator displaying his purpose, design, and order
   B. Hebrew culture: living in harmony with nature
      Example: Native North American culture – mastering and controlling nature
   C. Wisdom calls for balance of harmony and control.
   D. The moral order is the glue that holds together any society

III. The way of wisdom
A. Channels of wisdom
   1. Sages
   2. Solomon
   3. Wise men and women in village life

B. Important themes in wisdom tradition
   1. Choice: foolishness or wisdom
      a. The fool, simple, wicked base, lawless; a fool is a practical atheist
      b. Downward spiral beginning with moral complacency
      c. Life not taken with moral seriousness
      d. Easily influenced by others
      e. Rejection of parental advice and discipline
      f. Mindset on foolishness: Pr. 17:12
      g. Contempt of the standards of the larger community
         Pr. 12:15,16
      h. Quarrels and arguments
         i. The fool's choice leads to destruction Pr. 1:22–23
      j. Wisdom: Passionate appeal to choose to live wisely;
         wisdom is not determined by IQ or SAT scores
      i. Build on the fear of the Lord
      j. See difficulties as opportunities for growth
      k. Wise never assume they have all the answers
      l. The wise carefully monitor their speech
      m. The wise are faithful and loyal to friends

2. Use of the tongue
3. Friendships
4. Pride

IV. Forms of wisdom sayings
A. Proverbs: A short saying that draws attention to a widely recognized principle seen in nature of human experience.
   1. Antithetical parallelism—the second line states the opposite of the first
   2. Synonymous parallelism—the second line reinforces the first
   4. Emblematic parallelism: Pr. 11:22; 14:27; 17:14;

V. Exercise: Find three kinds of parallelisms in chapter 16
A. Parable
   1. Judges 9:8–21
   2. Nathan’s parable—David pays fourfold
B. Riddle
   1. Case of Samson
   2. Case of Queen of Sheba

IV. Loving wisely: Song of Songs
A. A poetic celebration of love in a monogamous relationship.
2. Some interpreters throughout history have found some of the language too explicit and treat it as an allegory of the love God has for his people.

3. Dualism—a heresy from Platonic influence that demeans the physical. Dualism teaches a split between the spiritual and the physical and views only the spiritual as good and the physical as bad.

4. The Bible affirms the physical (What God created was termed “good” and “very good” by God himself; “Everything God created is good.” 1 Tim. 4:4). The body is good. The Bible makes it clear that it is the desires of the flesh that lead us in the wrong direction. The Hebrews were a very earthy people. Sexuality is not sinful; it is a gift to be enjoyed and honored in God’s time and in God’s way with proper context and restraints. The Bible underlines the unity of the physical and the spiritual.

Chuck Colson writes: “That's why it's so important to grasp the full message of the biblical worldview. Christianity's appreciation for the goodness of creation leads us to value that creation, including the body; we are meant to care for the body by not violating its moral order. Christianity's prohibitions against premarital sex, and other forms of sexual license are not repressive rules meant to deny us pleasure. They are there to respect human dignity and to enable the Christian's freedom in the true pleasures of being God's creatures.” [Charles W. Colson, Tough Questions about God, Faith, and Life / Charles Colson (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2006) 128–9.]

B. One interpretation: A love triangle wherein King Solomon tries to lure a beautiful girl away from her shepherd boyfriend.

1. A virtuous Shulammite maiden (Song 6:13)

2. Galilean shepherd

3. King Solomon with all his wealth and prestige.

4. “The Song then may be viewed in its literal sense as a celebration of love between man and woman, but more than that, the elevation of a love so genuine that it cannot be purchased with royal enticements. It is, like divine love, given freely and unmeritoriously.” [C. Hassell Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, Rev. and expanded. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 259.]

C. Use of metaphors from Ancient Near East: What are some of the metaphors used?

D. Thematic linkage: Virtuous woman
In the Hebrew Old Testament, Song of Songs comes after Ruth, a story of a virtuous, wise woman. Ruth is preceded by Proverbs, which ends with chapter 31 extolling a virtuous woman.

E. The core of the Song is covenantal love: “I am my beloved’s and he is mine”

FOUR

The groups will share their proverbs.

FIVE

The instructor will present a lecture on Hebrew poetry.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Hebrew Poetry
I. Hebrew poetic genre
   A. Language artfully arranged
   B. To express concentrated, imaginative awareness
   C. Use of imagery (e.g., Ps. 139:9: “If I rise on the wings of the dawn”)

II. The Poetical books are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

III. Themes of Worship in the Psalms
   A. Respect for God’s holiness
   B. Need for ritual and ethical purity
   C. Celebrating God’s character and deeds
   D. Trust in God’s ever present kindness

IV. Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry
   A. Meter = accent pattern; Hebrew poetry relies more on meter than on rhyme
   B. Parallelism = two parallel lines of verse that complement each other in some way.
      1. Synonymous parallelism—repetition of same thought (Ps. 19:1; Pr. 9:10)
      2. Antithetic parallelism—contrasting lines (Ps. 1:6; Pr. 10:2, 4, 7)
      3. Synthetic parallelism—second line completes the first (Ps. 1:3; 2:6)
   C. Chiasm: Successive lines of poetry reverse the order in which parallel themes appear.
      1. The center part is the most important
      2. An example of chiastic structure (Ps. 8)
3. A verse in a chiastic structure (Ps. 1:6)

D. Acrostics—Alphabetic poems; Each line begins with a different letter of the alphabet or spells out a word (see Ps. 119, 112:1–6; Pr. 31).
   Example: Acrostic Psalm 112:1–6
   Aleph/a: Ah, the happiness of the one who fears the Lord,
   Beth/b: Because of his commandments he delights exceedingly!
   Gimel/g: Great on the earth will be his seed;
   Daleth/d: descendants of the upright will be blessed.
   Heh/h: Honor and riches are in his house;
   Waw/w: without end his righteousness endures.

V. Psalms
A. Brueggemann: All psalms are either songs of “orientation, disorientation, or reorientation.” [Walter Brueggemann and Carolyn J. Sharp, *Disruptive Grace: Reflections on God, Scripture, and the Church* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2011), 4-5.]
B. Genre – songs to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument
C. Classifications of psalms
   1. Hymns of praise (Orientation)
      a. Corporate gratitude (Psalms 107; 100)
      b. Personal gratitude (Psalms 18; 116)
      c. Praise for God’s historical acts (Psalms 8; 136)
   2. Penitential Psalms (Reorientation): The psalmist confesses sin and seeks to be restored to divine favor (Psalm 51)
   3. Wisdom Psalms (Orientation)
      a. *dikān* means to live life skillfully
      b. Wisdom Psalms contemplate life and seek to make sense of life (Psalms 1, 14, 73)
   4. Royal Psalms (Orientation) focus on Israel’s King, describing him as God’s special representative to rule Israel. The Lord will accomplish his will through his anointed servant (Psalms 2; 45)
   5. Messianic Psalms (Orientation) refer to the particular individual whom God would send at some future date to restore theocracy on earth, and he is in fact God himself (Psalms 2; 16; 22)
   6. Imprecatory Psalms (Disorientation) call on God to judge enemies (Psalms 35; 69)
   7. Lament Psalms (Disorientation) bring a complaint and call for God’s intervening help (Psalms 3; 4; 6)
D. Spiritual help from ancient voices—those who realize that God is ultimately in charge.
SIX

The groups will share their psalm of praise.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Ask for volunteers to share their individual psalms of lament.

SEVEN

The instructor will present lectures on Ecclesiastes and Job.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Ecclesiastes
I. Question of Ecclesiastes: How far can humans get without recognizing that the Lord is the source of all wisdom?

II. Qoheleth Explores
A. Exploring various worldviews
   1. Secular humanist: humankind is the center of life and reality
   2. The wise (Eccl. 2: 12–19): fools and wise suffer the same fate; the truly wise recognize their limitations (Ps. 42: 9–11)
   3. Hedonist (Eccl. 2: 2–3): emptiness of cheap thrills
   4. Materialist: amass land, fortunes, delights
   5. Workaholics (Eccl. 4: 4–8)
   6. Pious talkers (Eccl. 5: 1–7)

Discussion Question: How do we reconcile what Ecclesiastes presents with what the rest of the Bible teaches?

B. The problem of injustice in life
   1. Why is there no justice now?
   2. Lament for sufferers
   3. Tyranny of authorities
   4. One needs to step back to see the grand design

III. Some Answers
A. Serve God while there is opportunity
   1. Redeem the time (Eccl. 11: 1–4); no ideal conditions
   2. Savor all life’s joys (Eccl.11: 8–9)
   3. Show loyalty (Eccl. 12: 1)
   4. We are made to know God.
B. All the rest is vanity
Discussion Question: How does Ecclesiastes connect to our prior worldview discussions?

Lecture: Job and Theodicy

I. Introduction

II. When bad things happen to good people
   A. Questioning God’s love (Job 1–2)
   B. Counsel (Job 4–11)
      1. Based on human experience
      2. Based on human tradition
      3. Based on logic alone
   C. Confidence in God, not human wisdom
   D. When God does not answer (Job 31)

III. Justifying God’s ways to humanity
   A. God is greater than humans.
   B. God speaks in our anguish (Job 38)
   C. Two inseparable truths (Job 42)
   D. Vindicated by God

IV. Theodicy—the age-old quest to justify God’s ways in the midst of suffering

Discussion: How might the book of Job help us counsel a young couple who has just suffered the loss of a child?

EIGHT

The students will take test 4.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Give the fourth test. Allow enough time at the end of the class to administer the test. To maximize class time, the test should take no longer than 30 minutes.
CLASS FIVE: ENCOUNTERING THE PROPHETS

Class Five Topics: Prophecy in Israel, the focus of the hope of the prophets: the Day of the LORD—Isaiah; the Servant Songs, the Exile and social justice in Amos and Micah

ACTIVITIES

ONE

The instructor will open the class with a devotional, collect assignments due, return graded work, and answer any questions the students may have.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Return test 4, and answer any questions that arise. Discuss the readings in chapters 24–34 in the text.

TWO

The instructor will present a lecture on the prophets.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Prophecy in Israel

The Prophets

I. Titles
   A. Man of God (76 times) ish dohim
   B. Servant of the Lord (Jer. 7:25)
   C. Messenger of the Lord (functional)
   D. Seer – one who sees visions
   E. n¹ b ì ° One who speaks the word of the LORD—Operational Definition: Spokesperson (Ex. 6:28–7:2; Amos 3:7–8; Jer. 1:1–10)

II. The position of the prophet in Hebrew society
   A. Not hereditary
   B. Not elective
   C. Not confined to men (Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah)
   D. Determined by divine call
      1. Isaiah’s call: Isaiah 6
      2. Visionary experience
      3. Initiative comes from the Lord
      4. Encounter with God’s holiness overwhelms prophet with sense of unworthiness
      5. A strong affirmation of acceptance by the Lord follows
      6. This call shapes his theology and preaching afterwards
   E. Served as check on the power of kings
III. The prophetic activity in Israel
A. Linked to the law
   1. Prophets served as prosecuting attorney, arguing their case against Israel (Hosea 4:1–6). How are Hosea’s words linked to the Law?
   2. Door left open for repentance
   3. Linked to their personality
      Were not holier-than-thou super saints—“Elijah was a man just like us” (James 5:17)
B. Prophets can be mistaken apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 12:1–4)
C. Multiple fulfillments
D. The reception of message from the Lord
   1. The external voice: case of Samuel
   2. The internal voice (Hosea 1:1)
   3. The perception of spiritual realities: case of Elisha in 2 Kings 6
      a. Elisha informing on Syrian troops
      b. Syrians plan ambush
      c. Elisha’s servant is terrified
      d. Not Elisha
   4. The vision
      a. Case of Ezekiel 8
      b. Case of dry bones in Ezekiel 37
   5. The dream: Daniel’s dream in chapter 7
E. The use of symbolic actions
   1. Isaiah’s protest against King Hezekiah
   2. Have each student find one prophetic symbolic action in Ezekiel and explain the significance of that action.
F. Discerning False Prophets
   1. The empirical test (Dt. 18:14–22); note the outcome
   2. The theological test (Dt. 3:15); squares with Law of Moses?
   3. The ethical test (Jer. 23); prophet’s lifestyle
   4. The inner witness of the Holy Spirit (Is. 63:7–13)
V. The focus of the hope of the prophets: The coming of the Messiah
A. The Suffering Servant (Is. 40–42 and 52–53)
B. The Reigning Messiah (Is. 16)
C. A light to the Gentiles (Is. 42:5–7)
VI. The focus of the hope of the prophets: The Day of the LORD
A. Themes begun by Amos; example: Amos—that Day will be terror for covenant violators
B. The universal scope (Is. 13: 9–13)
VII. The dual characteristic of the Day of the LORD
A. The righteous and the wicked
B. Some passages include messiah; others don’t.
   (Is. 2:1–5, 11:1–16)
C. Features of the Day of the LORD
   1. Not 24 hour period
   2. Prophetic foreshadowing—events combined into one picture
   3. Day is imminent, impending
      a. Sense of urgency
      b. Each generation challenged
      c. God’s vantage point. How is this difficult for human minds?
   4. Day is certain
   5. We can count on impartial justice and unbounded mercy of God.

THREE

The instructor will deliver a lecture on social justice.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lecture: Social Justice in Amos and Micah
I. Social justice in Amos
   A. Background
   B. Prophetic words
      1. Contradiction of Israel’s lifestyle (2:6–8) “They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals.”
         a. Israel sins against the poor
         b. Israel sins against God’s holy name
         c. Israel sins against God’s merciful ways
         d. Blunting opportunities for a transformed life
            (Amos 5:10–13)
         e. No love of God’s law
         f. No concern for the poor
         g. No concern to gain God’s approval
         h. You are ripe for punishment (Amos 8:1–6)
      2. The autumn of opportunity (Amos 8:1–6): “Then the Sovereign LORD showed me another vision. In it I saw a basket filled with ripe fruit. ‘What do you see, Amos?’ he asked. I replied, ‘A basket full of ripe fruit.’ Then the LORD said, ‘Like this fruit, Israel is ripe for punishment! I will not delay their punishment again’.”

II. Micah, Prophet of Justice
   A. Background
      1. Micah grew up in Moresheth of Gath.
2. The name Micah means "Who is like Yahweh?"
3. Micah lived in Judah (c. 740–686 BC) during a time of social upheaval
4. The second half of the eighth century was a time of prosperity and affluence for both northern and southern kingdoms.

B. Structure of the book has three cycles
1. Each cycle contains a warning, a threat of judgment, and a promise.
2. Each cycle starts with a call to listen.
3. First cycle: Judgment and restorations of Israel (Micah 1–2)
4. Second cycle: Indictment of Judah’s leaders, but future hope for God’s people (Micah 3–5)
5. Third cycle: God’s charges against his people and the ultimate triumph of his kingdom (Micah 6–7)
   a. God’s emotional plea; Micah is moved and humbled by God’s pleading.
   b. God wants our very selves, our lives, our hearts
   c. Chapter 7—a hymn of praise to God (Micah 7:18–20)
   d. Answer to Micah’s name: Who is like Yahweh? There is no God like YHWH—our God of compassion, loyalty, justice

C. What God requires (Micah 6:6–8)

Discussion Question: What might Amos and Micah have to say about the economic disparities in contemporary U.S. culture?

FOUR

The groups will share the prophecies they have composed.

FIVE

The instructor will deliver a lecture on the exile and restoration.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Lectures: Exile and Restoration
The Restoration of Israel
I. The three returns
   A. Return following Cyrus’ edict—538 BC
      1. Value of spiritual heritage
      2. Fulfilled Isaiah and Jeremiah’s predictions
      3. Altar built
      4. Temple foundation laid
      5. Thwarted efforts of the enemies
6. Haggai and Zechariah prophesy

B. Ezra’s return—458 BC
   1. Encourages worship
   2. Calls for spiritual purity in marriages

C. Nehemiah’s return—445 BC
   1. Rebuilds Jerusalem’s wall
   2. Renews covenant

II. A faithful remnant returned

SIX

The students will take text 5.

Facilitation/Lecture Notes

Give the fifth test. Allow enough time at the end of the class to administer the test. To maximize class time, the test should take no longer than 30 minutes.

SEVEN

The students will complete the student end-of-course surveys.