MTS Modular Program

SYLLABUS

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND HISTORY
OLDT M503 – M28

January 9 - February 13, 2012
Mondays, 6:00-10:00 PM

Instructor: Grace Ko
Office Hours: By appointment
Tel: (905) 737-7722
Email: g.ko@rogers.com
MTS Modular Webpage: www.tyndale.ca/seminary/mtsmodular
Course Resource Page: http://mytyndale.ca

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide the student with a general introduction to the following: the historical, sociological and religious world in which the Old Testament was produced; the discipline of Old Testament theology and the major theological emphases of the Old Testament. Special attention is given to the identity and vocation of Israel as God’s people living amidst their cultural environment.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the nature and mission of God in the Old Testament
- Gain awareness of the various major Old Testament theologies
- Demonstrate a knowledge of key elements and issues in Old Testament history
- Gain knowledge of the social, political and religious world of ancient Israel derived from both biblical texts and extra-biblical sources
- Know the contents of the three major canonical units of the Old Testament: Law, Prophets and Writings
Appreciate the importance of knowing the theology of the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament
Apply the message of the Old Testament for contemporary Christian living.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXT:


B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Reading assignments (10%) Due: Feb. 13, 2012

One of the main assignments in this course is the reading assignments. You will be assigned readings from the Old Testament as well as from the textbooks. You will be required to submit a statement indicating the extent of your completion of the assigned readings for each week at the end of the course as follows:

I, (supply name), have read the assigned readings for the course to the following extent (give percentage).

2. Weekly written assignments (30%) Due: end of each class

As for the weekly written assignments, you will be required to write a response to some of your readings. When writing your response to a certain book in the Old Testament, ask yourself what is the main idea or theological theme emphasized in this book. Write not more than one paragraph
(maximum half a page) on your response to this question. Do not read any secondary sources before writing your response. Only after you have read the biblical text, read what SOT has to say about the book. The purpose of this assignment is to help you formulate your own Old Testament theology. When responding to the readings from the secondary sources, write a paragraph about one thing that may have impressed you most about the reading. Write a second paragraph giving a brief critique of the reading, indicating whether it was helpful or problematic, and stating why.

3. Inductive study on Esther (30%) Due: Jan 30, 2012

The purpose of this exercise is to help you develop a method of Bible study which can be used in studying any other biblical books. Avoid the use of annotated Bibles, commentaries and other reference works or secondary materials. This is an independent study using inductive method.

• Inductive Study Method Guidelines:

As a suggestion, read the following sections in Oletta Wald’s *New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002), pp. 4-6, 10-33, 46-48 and 56-57. Pay particular attention to the chart on pp. 17-18. Of particular importance is the point about repetition and progression of ideas since the theme of a book is often related through repetition.

a. Read through the book of Esther at least three times, noting patterns, emphases, development, recurring theological concerns and structural devices. Try to read through the book in one setting.

b. Write your inductive study using the observations that you have made. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, font 12, no longer than 8 pages. It should contain the following five sections:

• Chapter captions/titles
Prepare your own table of contents by giving appropriate, concise and creative captions to each chapter.

• Analysis of the book’s structure
What are the major sections of the book? How are these sections subdivided? What markers in the text indicate a move is being made from one section to another section of the book?

• General observations regarding the book’s major characters and geographical setting
Are there any patterns in how the characters are portrayed? Do the character portrayal and the geographical setting have an impact on the story? What significance do they have for the plot?
• Theme of the book
What is the gist of the book (you should be able to state the theme in one sentence)? How is this theme developed in various parts of the book? Be sure you don’t confuse the theme of the book with sub-themes or motifs. You are encouraged to outline the sub-theme as well, but only insofar as this aids your outline of the theme.

• Theological insights and application
What are some of the more prominent theological emphases of the book? How are they developed? How do these emphases relate to other books in the Bible? (Make sure to show where in the book your emphasis is grounded before exploring links with other biblical books). In what ways can you practically apply these truths in your life and in the life of the Church? (Give specific suggestions). What ideas for preaching and teaching in the Church emerge from your study?

4. Final paper: Write your own OT theology (30%) Due: Feb 13, 2012
Scholars debate over how one should write an Old Testament theology. Based on what you have learned from this course, if you have to write your own Old Testament theology, how would you do it? Would you argue for one main theological theme or center of the Old Testament or several theological streams or themes? What would it/they be and why? You should support your argument by citing appropriate biblical passages. This essay is to be 4-6 pages in length, double-spaced, font 12.

As a suggestion: Read chapter 1 (pp.11-57) and appendix (pp.548-59) in Paul House, Old Testament Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998). This reading will inform you of the challenges in doing Old Testament theology and the various approaches used by scholars to compile an Old Testament theology.

Note: Please make sure to have someone proof read your paper and read it over yourself a couple of times before handing it in, so that your paper is written with good grammar, clear writing style, and clean of spelling mistakes.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:
Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

1. Reading assignments 10%
2. Weekly written assignments 30%
3. Inductive study on Esther 30%
4. Final paper: Write your own OT theology 30%
E. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

For proper citation style, consult the Chicago-Style Quick Guide (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the Chicago Manual of Style Online, especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE, REQUIRED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment before first class

- **Read** chapters 1-2, 26 (pp. 21-52; 481-497) in Survey of the Old Testament (SOT).
- **Read** chapter 3 (pp. 75-104) in Christopher Wright’s The Mission of God. **Write a response to it**, indicating in the first paragraph one thing that impresses you the most, and in the second paragraph how that helps you understand God as a God of mission. Maximum for this paper is two pages, double spaced, font 12. **Due Jan 9.**
- Consider the following scenario and write a short response to it. A new Christian asks you why you are studying the Old Testament. To him/her, New Testament is much more important and meaningful. Write down some of the objections and negative views one may have against the Old Testament. Then write down how you would respond. Be prepared to discuss in class.

Week One (Jan 9): Introduction to the Old Testament

- Why study the Old Testament?
- What is the Old Testament?
- How to compile a theology of the Old Testament?
- Is the Old Testament reliable and is it still relevant to us today?

Required readings and assignments for next week:

- **Bible reading**: Read Genesis and Exodus. **Write a paragraph response each to Genesis and Exodus.** Ask yourself: What is/are the main idea(s) or theological theme(s) emphasize in each book? Only write one paragraph (maximum half a page, double-spaced, font 12) for each book. **Due Jan 16.**
After you have done the biblical reading, **read** chapters 3-5 (pp. 57-120) in *SOT*.

**Week Two** (Jan 16): The Pentateuch (I)

- Some critical issues of the Pentateuch: Source criticism, historicity of the patriarchs and the exodus.
- The structure of the Pentateuch
- The theology of the Pentateuch: Creation theology and Covenant theology
- What does the biblical text tell us about God?

**Required readings and assignment for next week:**

- **Bible reading**: Read Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
- **Read** chapters 6-8 (pp. 125-176) in *SOT*. **Write a response** to your reading, indicating in one paragraph one thing that impresses you most, and the second paragraph how your reading help you understand the Bible. **Due Jan 23**.
- Be prepared to discuss in class: Are the laws still relevant to us today?
- Begin working on your inductive study.

**Week Three** (Jan 23): The Pentateuch (II)

- The Mosaic Covenant: Law and worship
- Differing ways of grouping laws
- The uniqueness of the Decalogue (The Ten Commandments)
- Discussion on the ethical authority of the Old Testament

**Required readings and assignment for next week:**

- **Bible reading**: Read Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings.
- **Read** chapters 9-10 (pp.181-212) in *SOT*; consult chapters 11-12; 14-15 in *SOT*.
- Consider the following scenario and be prepared to discuss in class:
  Your friend is discouraged with the picture of God that is portrayed in the books of Joshua and Judges. He/She comes to you and asks: How can a loving God call for genocide? Is he an angry God just waiting to judge any would-be transgressor? Is the God of the OT a God of judgment and the God of the NT a God of grace? How would you counsel him based on your understanding of God’s character? **Hand in your response at the end of next class (Jan 30).**
• Your inductive study is due next week.

**Week Four** (Jan 30): Historical Books: Former Prophets

• The writing of history in the Old Testament
• Kingship in ancient Israel
• The Davidic Covenant
• The theology of the former prophets (Joshua-Kings)

**Required readings and assignment for next week:**

• **Bible reading:** Isaiah 1-12, 40-66; Jeremiah 1-7, 31-33; Hosea; Amos; Habakkuk; Zephaniah; Haggai; Malachi.

  • **Read** chapter 27 (pp. 503-515) in SOT. Write a response. **Due Feb 6.**
  • Consult chapters 28-29; 33; 35; 40-42; 44 in SOT.
  • Begin working on your final paper.

**Assignment due:** Inductive study on Esther.

**Week Five** (Feb 6): Prophetic Literature: Latter Prophets

• The Major and Minor Prophets
• The role of the prophets
• How relevant is Old Testament prophecy for us?

**Required readings and assignment for next week:**

• **Bible reading:** Read Psalms 1-2, 30, 72, 73, 89, 90-92 and 145-150; Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

  • **Read** chapter 20 (pp. 374-396) in SOT. Write a response to it. **Due Feb 13.**
  • Consult chapters 21-25; 17-18 in SOT
  • Final Paper on OT Theology due next week

**Week Six** (Feb 13): The Writings: Psalms, Wisdom literature, and Post-exilic history

• The editing of the Book of Psalms; the “Davidic psalms” and the historical narrative; a Christological reading of the Psalms
• Various facets of the theology of wisdom literature: creation theology, fear of the Lord, retribution theology, human experience and questioning.
• Application and integration

Final paper on OT Theology and the statement of readings are due today

IV. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

(See also Tyndale’s Old Testament and Biblical Interpretation online Reading Room)

Interpretation and Reading Strategy


General Old Testament Studies


**Old Testament Theology**