I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide the student with a general introduction to the historical, sociological and religious world in which the Old Testament was produced, as well as the discipline of Old Testament theology and the major theological emphases of the Old Testament.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:
A. Knowledge and Understanding
1. identify and describe the major theological streams within the Old Testament and their emphases.
2. recall key events within the history of Israel.
3. describe the contents of the three major canonical units of the Old Testament (Law, Prophets, Writings).
4. discuss the history of interpretation of the Old Testament, including current issues in Old Testament scholarship.
5. describe the key issues in the discipline of Old Testament theology.
6. recognize the importance of knowing the theology of the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament.

B. Discipline-specific Skills
1. apply the necessary tools, skills and various methods for interpreting the Old Testament.
2. do an inductive study on a biblical book.
3. assess and evaluate various approaches taken to the Old Testament.
4. critically evaluate books and articles written on the Old Testament.
5. seek practical ways in which the message of the Old Testament can be appropriated in the life of the Church today.

C. Transferable Skills
1. use the available resources for studying the Old Testament.
2. foster the ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally by participation in discussion groups.
3. develop critical thinking skills to analyze, evaluate and synthesize a wealth of material.
4. learn self-disciplined study habits and the ability to meet fixed deadlines as set out by the course outline.
5. foster a desire for life-long learning in the study of the Old Testament.
6. develop a strategy for the contemporary appropriation of the Old Testament.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS AND TOOLS:


The STEP Bible (a helpful Hebrew and Greek online resource) [https://www.stepbible.org/](https://www.stepbible.org/)
Tyndale recommends this free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) for word searches of original language texts, as well as for topical
searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the Library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The following written assignments and discussion groups will help foster the skills of critical analysis and exegesis, the ability to evaluate various approaches and perspectives taken to the Old Testament, and deepen the student’s knowledge of the overall message of the Old Testament.

1. **Book Review Discussion Groups** (15 % of the final grade).

During the course of the semester the students will read and discuss the textbook by Sandra L. Richter, *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*. See below the instructions for the discussion groups. The discussion groups will be held on the following dates: Sept 25, Oct 2, Oct 9, 2019.

*Book Review Discussion Groups Instructions:*
During the course, there will be three in-class discussion times of approximately 30-40 minutes each. These discussions have five purposes:

a. to challenge students to develop their critical, thinking skills.
b. to enable students to improve their skills in developing and expressing theological arguments in a group context.
c. to empower students to foster ability in leading fellow students in discussion.
d. to have students take responsibility for their fellow students’ education by mutually supporting one another.
e. to encourage students to listen respectfully to views not their own.
Responsibilities of the student as group participant:
Having read the assigned chapters carefully for the day of the discussion groups, each student in the group should come prepared with some questions arising from their reading as well as some thoughtful reflections on the material. Some possible questions to ponder are:
- What struck you about the reading? What new and helpful insights did you find in the reading? Do you agree with Richter’s views and argument? Do you find Richter convincing or are there weaknesses in her arguments? Each student also needs to report to the group whether they have read all or only some of the assigned chapters for that day. Their answer needs to be taken into consideration when assigning a grade.

After the discussion, each student will assign a participation grade for each member of the group and submit the grade to the teacher by emailing it to her or to her research assistant (grade from zero to five, with five being highest). Base the grade on the following criteria:

- If the student’s comments during the discussion reflected an informed reading of assigned material, allocate a higher grade.
- If the student has contributed their fair share (not too much, not too little), allocate a higher grade.
- Consider a grade of 4.5-5.0 if the individual has excelled with respect to the above two criteria.
- Consider giving a grade of 4 if the individual has contributed capably with respect to the above two criteria.
- If the student has dominated discussion in inappropriate ways, reduce their grade.
- If the student has not contributed or contributed only minimally, reduce their grade.
- If a student has contributed but their contributions were not informed by a careful reading of the material, reduce their grade.
- Has the discussion led to a better understanding of the textbook and to a critical interaction with it? If not, reduce the grade.
- If the student has not completed reading all the chapters assigned for that day, reduce their grade.

The average grade should be between 3.0-4.3. If the student has excelled, give a 4.7. If their contribution is outstanding, give a 5. If the student’s contribution is less than adequate, give a grade of 2.5 or below.

All grades are confidential (the student may give fraction grades: e.g., 3.7).

Discussion Group Schedule:
Discussion around Sandra Richter’s book *The Epic of Eden*.

2. Inductive Study (worth 30 % of the final grade) due Nov 6, 2019.
Do an inductive Study on one of the following books: Joshua or Judges, following the instructions below.

**Inductive Study Guidelines:**

The purpose of inductive studies is to draw you into intensive, direct study of the biblical text and to suggest a method of Bible study which can be used in any book. Inductive studies also provide background for detailed studies of individual passages and texts within the books which you examine. Avoid the use of annotated Bibles, commentaries and other reference works. However, you may use a Bible atlas for place names.

As a suggestion, first read the following sections in Oletta Wald’s *The New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*, on reserve in the library. Pay particular attention to the chart listing (pages 17–18) “Specific Things to Observe.” On this chart, the point about “Repetition and Progression of Ideas” is important since the theme of a book is often related through repetition. Then do the following:

Read quickly through the biblical book noting references to places, dates and people. What patterns (or even lack of patterns) emerge from your study? (A photocopy of the book can help you in the process, so that you can mark the things that strike you as particularly important or unusual. You might even want to mark things on the photocopy with different colour pencils.) Then read the book again (or several times) in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the book. (You may even want to listen to the book read aloud by listening to it on a Bible CD or online). Note differences in literary style, e.g. poetry, biographical material (if any), sermonic material, etc. Note changes in person, whether in first or third person, speeches by the prophet, the Lord or other persons, etc.

Your study should be organized along the following sections:

1. **Chapter Titles**: Prepare your own table of contents to the book by giving short and distinctive captions to each chapter (do not give titles to smaller sections of each chapter). Do the captions as newspaper headlines? Be creative!

2. **Structure and Genre**: What major divisions can you discern in the book? How is the book structured? Look for paragraphs which belong together and therefore suggest the structure of the work. What types of material do you find in the book (genre)?

3. **Themes**: What are the major themes or topics of the book? What sub-themes are found in the text? Pay particular attention to repetitions of literary motifs and language. Ask yourself why these texts were preserved. What is the message of the book? What are the author’s most pressing concerns? What is the book’s dominant tone? Any exceptions? Support your answers with references to the text.
4. Questions and Future Projects: What questions emerge from your study? Take note of particularly intriguing, challenging or enigmatic passages that you may want to investigate further at a later date. What projects or topics would you like to explore further in the future?

5. Appropriation: Formulate one or more generalizations arising from your study. What theological insights can be gleaned from the book? In what ways can you practically appropriate 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?

What to hand in:

You may use maps, diagrams or charts in presenting the results of your study. However, ten to twelve pages double-spaced of written analysis is also expected, including answers to the questions posed above. Please note that this study should not be a detailed commentary on every chapter in the biblical book (then the study would be too long). Please summarize your results under different headings, like main themes, sub-themes, etc.
Please double-space, using Times New Roman, font size 12 point (for all your written assignments).

3. Reading Assignment (worth 20 %) due Dec 4, 2019.

The student will be given a list of required readings that will come from the required textbooks, the Bible, and selected articles or chapters found either on the Moodle course resource page or on reserve in the library. The student is expected to report that they have completed the readings, by keeping a record of what has been read and when it was completed. This record will be submitted along with the reflections on Dec 4, 2019 (see attached form). With some of the readings, the student is also required to respond to the reading by writing a reflective summary on the assigned reading. See specific instructions below.

Old Testament Reading:

Since this is a course that introduces the student to the Old Testament, it is important that the student becomes familiar with the Old Testament by reading it. Therefore, part of the required reading for this course is to read sections from the Old Testament. Please read Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Amos.

As part of your reading report, please comment on three texts from your reading of the Old Testament that you saw in a new light. State what struck you about them and why. Write one paragraph for each biblical text.
Pick two biblical characters which intrigued you in your reading of the Old Testament and write a prayer for each of them, as if you were that person (e.g. Noah, Abraham, Hagar, Miriam, Aaron, Hannah, David, Samuel, etc.). Try to put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they would pray, based on what you know about them from the biblical account. Submit these prayers as part of your reading assignment.

Secondary Literature Reading:


You are to reflect on the reading of the textbook *Old Testament Theology* by John Kessler by submitting a four page double-spaced (approximately 1200 words) written response. In your report, pick two chapters from the textbook that you want to comment on specifically. What were the main theses or arguments of the chapter? What struck you about the reading of those chapters? What was helpful and/or problematic for you and why? After discussing the two chapters, then evaluate the usefulness of the textbook as a whole. For example, what are some things that you learned from it? How did it change and shape your understanding of the Old Testament? What is Kessler’s approach and do you find this approach to doing Old Testament theology useful and why? What were its strengths and weaknesses? What are some things that you wished that it had included? Support all your answers with specific examples from the text (giving page numbers).

You also need to read all the articles and chapters listed below but give a written response to the readings written by Paul Copan and Philips Long and Christopher Wright only. For your reading report on the three readings, write a paragraph about one thing that may have struck you about the reading. Write a second paragraph giving a brief critique of the reading, indicating whether it was helpful or problematic, stating why. Support all your answers with specific examples from the text (giving page numbers). For each of the articles, you should not submit more than one page double-spaced written response.

Altogether the reading reports on the Old Testament, the textbook, and the articles/chapters will come to about 9 pages double-spaced (plus the length of the two prayers). Remember to include the completed reading report as well.

Please read the following articles/chapters and comment on the chapters by Copan, Long and Wright. Some readings are found on reserve in the library and others are posted on the Moodle course resource page.


Please NOTE: Going over the allowable page limit by more than one page on any of the written assignments will result in a reduction in the grade.

4. Scripture Memorization (worth 5%): due on or before Dec 4, 2019.

1. Choose a passage of Scripture in the Old Testament that is 20 verses long, which you have not previously memorized, and memorize it. Alternatively you can choose 20 different verses or 4-5 verses from 3-5 passages of OT Scripture, as long as it adds up to a minimum of 20 verses not previously memorized.

2. You will recite the passage/verses to someone. Your recitation must be word perfect with the allowance of 1 prompt or 2 errors. If you cannot do this the first time, do it as many times as possible until you reach this goal. If you managed only to memorize some verses before the end of the course, please indicate how many verses and from which OT passage/s.

3. You may use any language and any Bible translation.

4. Please indicate the passage/verses of Scripture memorized, the date your recited it, and the name of the individual to whom it was recited, and submit it along with your Reading Assignment on the final day of class.

5. Final Exam (worth 30 % of the final grade) (the date to be confirmed by the Office of the Registrar)

The exam will be based on the lectures given in class.

D. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. New students must self-identify and register with the Accessibility
Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. Current students must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Review Discussion Groups</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Study</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Assignment</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization of OT Scripture</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grade =</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

   - **Accuracy** (a fair and accurate presentation of scholarly judgment on the issues) – Is what I say correct? Is it valid? Have I understood the topic or question?
   - **Critical Analysis** – Have I understood the main issues? Have I done sufficient research on the topic? Does my paper show critical reflection, interaction and dialogue with the biblical text and with authors writing on the subject?
   - **Organization** – Does my paper follow a clear outline? Does my paper have a thesis statement? Is there a clear progression and development of an idea or an argument in the paper? Does my argument have a meaningful order?
   - **Clarity** – Does what I say make sense? Will others clearly understand what I am seeking to express?
   - **Good Grammar and Writing** – Is my paper clean of spelling mistakes? Is the text punctuated correctly? Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar? Do I use inclusive language?
   - **Well Documented** (thorough) – Is my work complete? Does my bibliography reflect sufficient research? Have I fully and accurately documented where I have relied upon the work of others? Have I provided complete information about my research sources? Will others be able to locate these sources on the strength of my documentation? Do my footnotes and bibliography follow the proper citation style required?

2. Matters of Style

of Style Online, especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241.

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straightforward style of academic prose (cf. the guidelines in Strunk and White, Elements of Style). Written work ought to betray clear organization, argument and coherent thought. The use of inclusive language is expected.

The title page for all written work ought to include the following: The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name.

Students are encouraged to consult writing resources.

Students should also 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.

Research Ethics
All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; aau@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

3. Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

In all work, you are obliged to pay careful attention to matters of intellectual property, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. Plagiarism, by definition, is the use of the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following: copying a sentence or part of a sentence from a book or article without using quotation marks and citing the source; rephrasing another person’s words without giving credit for the idea that you have borrowed by citing the source; copying the work of someone else and handing it in as your own. It is assumed that each assignment required for this course will be written independently. Please note that plagiarism in any form on any
assignment will automatically result in a grade of “F” for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission.

4. Late Assignments

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on and before the corresponding due dates. Should this not occur, the following policy shall govern the evaluation of your work. For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5%, a half a letter grade (i.e. one week late: 82% A- becomes 77% B+; two weeks late, 82% becomes 72% B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations, or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the professor explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted prior to the due date.

All assignments must be handed in by the last day of exams (Dec 13, 2019). No assignments will be accepted after that date, unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the Registrar and not to the professor.

5. Criteria for the Evaluation of Written Work

Your work will be evaluated on whether you answered the specific questions given and whether you followed the general guidelines for submitting written work. For example, the evaluation of your inductive study will be based on whether you followed the specific instructions for doing an inductive study.

6. Submission of Written Work

Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version). If a student wishes to submit written work by mail, they must be mailed directly to the Professor, c/o Tyndale Seminary. Alternatively, work may be given directly to the Professor in class on the due date. If the student wishes to have all written work returned to them (after the semester is over), they must submit the written work with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise assignments will be returned to the main Tyndale reception and the student can pick them from the receptionist.

G. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale
Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sept 11  Introduction to the Old Testament  
          Why Study the Old Testament?

Sept 18  Introduction continued

Sept 25  The Theology of Genesis 1–11: Creation and the Problem of Evil  
          First Discussion Group

Oct 2    Creation and the Problem of Evil Continued  
          Second Discussion Group

Oct 9    The Abrahamic Covenant  
          Third Discussion Group

Oct 16   The Redemption Theme: The Significance of the Exodus

Oct 23   READING DAYS, October 22-25: NO CLASS

Oct 30   Exodus Continued

Nov 6    The Mosaic Covenant: Characteristics of the Covenant  
          Inductive Study due

Nov 13   Mosaic Covenant continued

Nov 20   The Theology of the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings)  
          The Writing of History in the Old Testament

Nov 27   The Davidic Covenant  
          The Theology of the Prophets (Latter Prophets)
Dec 4  The Theology of Wisdom Literature
Reading Assignment due
Memorization of OT Scripture due

Dec 11?  Final Exam (Date to be confirmed by the Office of the Registrar)

Suggested Reading Schedule:

- Before Oct 2 read: Leviticus; Numbers; Richter, pp. 92–165;
- Before Dec 4 read: Ezra; Nehemiah; Amos; Kessler, *OT Theology*, 447–532.

V. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

(Tyndale Library supports this course with e-journals and e-books. See the Library FAQ page.)


For additional resources, a good starting point is the Biblical Studies website at [http://tyndale.ca/seminary/biblical-studies](http://tyndale.ca/seminary/biblical-studies).

Helpful websites:

[https://www.stepbible.org/](https://www.stepbible.org/)
Old Testament History and Theology (OLDT 0511)  
Rebecca Idestrom (Tyndale Seminary)  
Required Reading Summary Statement (Fall 2018)  
Due: Dec 4, 2019

Please write yes or no to indicate if the reading has been done. If you have not completed the reading, indicate the exact percentage you have read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>75-99%</th>
<th>50-74%</th>
<th>25-49%</th>
<th>Less than 25%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kessler, <em>Old Testament Theology</em> (the whole book)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richter, <em>The Epic of Eden</em> (whole book)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enuma Elish: The Epic of Creation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epic of Gilgamesh: The Flood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copan, “Indiscriminate Massacre?” (p.158-197)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. A. Alexander, “Authorship”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long, “History and Fiction”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright, “Preaching from the Law”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student’s Name ____________________________  Student Number ____________________________  Date ________________