

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	HEBREW EXEGESIS II OLDT 0712
Date and Time	JANUARY 11 – APRIL 12, 2021 TUESDAYS 2:15 PM – 5:05 PM
Instructor	JOHN KESSLER, Docteur de l’Université Telephone number: 416-226-6620 ext. 6724 Email: jkessler@tyndale.ca
Class Information	<p>The classes will be livestreamed on Tuesdays 2:15 PM – 5:05 PM.</p> <p>Office Hours: I will be available for zoom meetings each week. Please e mail me at jkessler@tyndale.ca with several potential times so that we can set up an appointment.</p> <p>General questions about the course can be addressed to me at jkessler@tyndale.ca. Assignments must be submitted to: assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca.</p> <p>Please note: I will make every effort to respond to e-mails within two business days. However, at times, due to absences or heavy volume or demand, my response might take a little longer.</p> <p>Note: This is a draft syllabus, minor changes may still be made before the end of the first week of class.</p>
Course Material	<p>Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One.</p> <p>Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.</p>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The continuation of OLDT 0711. A study of selected prophetic, poetic, and wisdom passages stressing exegetical method, hermeneutics, and contemporary application in preaching and teaching.

Prerequisites: BIBL 0501, OLDT 0711.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. demonstrate competence in the comprehension and translation of intermediate texts of Biblical Hebrew, in both prose and poetry.
2. demonstrate the ability to discuss the literary, rhetorical, exegetical, and theological dimensions of a Hebrew text.
3. demonstrate an intermediate knowledge of Biblical Hebrew grammar and syntax.
4. demonstrate the ability to formulate relevant sermons and Bible Studies based on a Hebrew text.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

E. Ben Zvi, M. Hancock, and R. Beinert. *Readings in Biblical Hebrew*. New Haven, CT: Yale, 1993. This work is referred to as RBH, below.

R. E. Murphy, *The Gift of the Psalms*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a 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](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room

- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Completion of Exercises in RBH, (20%) DUE Saturday, March 6, 2021.

The student will complete RBH sections: 2.1; 2.3. 3.3 and 4.1 for in-class discussion, and one other section (student's choice). Students will scan the relevant sections of the book and email them to the professor at assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca for marking on by 11:59 on March 6, 2021. *Please note—no late submissions will be permitted for this assignment. Just hand in what you have on the due date.*

2. Personal Response Paper (10%). Due: Saturday, March 13, by 11:59 (no late papers accepted).

Students will read pp. 1-67 of R. E. Murphy, *The Gift of the Psalms*, and write a 3-4 page personal response to the material presented in these pages. I am specifically interested in any areas of agreement or objection that you may have to Murphy's ideas.

Then students will choose any **ten of the psalms** in the commentary section, read the corresponding section in Murphy's book, and make one or two brief (2-4 sentence) comments per psalm.

3. Exegetical Notebook and Psalms Translations (35%) DUE: Saturday, March 27, 2021.

The student will prepare an exegetical notebook on Pss 12, 30, and 73. The notebook will be divided into 4 sections, one for each psalm.

Each section must include:

1. Translation and Parsing of all verbs
2. Rhetorical Analysis highlighting
 - Rhetorical analysis of printed text (repetitions, chiasms)
 - List of key rhetorical features: chiasms, repetitions, literary structure, alternations, assonance etc.
 - Key figures of speech
 - Cast of characters
 - Division into strophes
 - Timeline (narrative reconstruction)
3. Interpretive Questions

4. Paper or Paper and Class Presentation (35%) DUE: by 11:59, April 10 (Saturday). Those opting for a class presentation may make their presentation on either March 30 or April 6.

ESSAY OPTIONS

1. Exegetical Option

The purpose of this assignment is *to practice the methodology learned in OLDT 0711 and 0712.*

The student will present a 16-18-page paper (not including analysis of printed text, rough notes, and bibliography, all of which may be submitted as supplementary attachments) on any OT pericope listed below or any Psalm *not* studied this semester (student's choice).

Some suggestions:

Gen 28:10-22

Numbers 14:1-25

Amos 4:6-13

Hos 5:15-6:6

Amos 9:7-13

Zeph 3:14-20

Zech 9:9-17

The assignment presupposes that the student will have created a rough term chart with interpretive questions, then answered them. *The rough term chart with interpretive questions and answers may also be appended to the assignment, if the student chooses to do so, but will not be counted in the page limit.*

The paper must include the following elements.

(1) Introduction

Begin the paper with an introduction stating which biblical passage will be analyzed. Then include the following components:

(2) Authorship, Date, Occasion and Purpose

In no more than *three* paragraphs

- A. Discuss the various approaches to the question of authorship and date of the larger unit (i.e. the book) in which the textual unit (pericope) is found.

- What, if anything, can be determined about the date and authorship of the book as a whole?
- NOTE: these matters are often complex; do not become bogged down by them. A good place to start for such discussions in the introductory section of a good commentary, or an entry in a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia. For example, “Isaiah, book of” in *Dictionary of Old Testament, Prophetic Books*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Gordon McConville. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012).

B. Assess the place of the passage to be studied in the broader flow of the book?¹
Describe the literary context of the passage. This involves analyzing the place of the passage within the chapter, within the section of the biblical book, and within the book as a whole (the immediate context and the larger contexts). In other words, how does the passage relate to what precedes and follows it and within the document as a whole? Is the text part of a larger narrative/story? Is the topic addressed in the passage found elsewhere in the book? What is the significance of the position or placement of the passage within the larger context? How does the larger context shed light on the passage? *Often the best way to get to this is by looking at the outline of the book as a whole that is presented in the introductory section of most commentaries.*

(3) Genre and Structure

Identify the genre or literary form of your passage (e.g. whether it is narrative, poetry, epistle, prophecy, etc.), and then outline its structure of the passage. Outlining the structure involves dividing the passage into sections and adding a heading or title for each section. Include the verses for each section.

An Example of the Structure of Ezekiel 34:1–31: The Salvation of Yahweh’s Flock

- A. Preamble and the Announcement of Deliverance (34:1–10)
 - 1. The Indictment of the Shepherds of Israel (34:1–6)
 - 2. The Sentencing of the Shepherds of Israel (34:7–10)
- B. The Nature of the Deliverance (34:11–22)
 - 1. Deliverance from External Threats (34:11–16)
 - 2. Deliverance from Internal Threats (34:17–22)
- C. The Goal of Deliverance: Yahweh’s Covenant of Peace (34:23–31)
 - 1. The Human Agent of Peace (34:23–24)
 - 2. The Nature of the Peace (34:25–30)

¹ This is not necessary if you have chosen to study Ps 12.

3. Epilogue: The Significance of Peace (34:31)²

(4) A translation of the pericope with footnotes and detailed explanations of all key syntactical and text-critical choices. (See the translation section of any volume of the Word Biblical Commentary, the New International Commentary on the Old Testament, or any volume in the Hermeneia series, for an example of what is required).

(5) Exegetical Analysis of the Text in the form of a verse-by-verse explanation of the text.

The essence of this section of the assignment is to clarify and elucidate the meaning of your passage in its life context in the world of Ancient Israel. In it you are taking the answers to your interpretive questions and setting them out in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary.

*In numerous instances, the meaning of the biblical text is not obvious and may be understood (and have been understood) in more than one way. Hebrew words can carry various meanings, and may be translated into English in various ways. Your task here is to explore these various translational and exegetical possibilities, and to discuss the most important ones, and, if possible, to present a coherent explanation as to which one you feel is most probable, and why. As such you will be writing your own ‘commentary’ on the passage. **At this stage, your job is not to ‘apply’ the passage, or to relate it to the New Testament.** You are simply tasked with explaining what it would have meant to an ancient Israelite author and/or audience.*

To do this part of the assignment, you must (1) do your own exegetical work, using the Hebrew text, the STEP Bible, and one or more lexicons, and (2) consult several of the major commentaries on the passage (see syllabus below), Bible Dictionaries, Theological Dictionaries, and specialized articles (see the ATLA database).

In this section, you present the results of your in-depth, close reading and study of the text. Go through the whole passage, verse by verse, discussing the most significant interpretive issues that appear in each verse. Compare and contrast the positions of various commentators on the most important issues, and where possible, present your opinion as to which option appears most probable.

Study the key words of the passage—these will often be discussed in the commentaries. Are there geographical, historical or cultural referents that need clarification (e.g. the mention of the “former and latter rains” in Joel 2:23 or “raisin cakes” in Hos 3:1)? Are there key theological terms used in the passage (such a *torah*, covenant, *hesed* [unfailing love], knowledge of God, fear of the Lord)? Are there any key words or phrases repeated in the passage? What is the meaning or nuance of certain key words (you may need to do a word study, although this is

² Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 273–308.

optional)? Assess their meaning in light of the topic of the passage, the author's use of them elsewhere, and the historical situation and the theological issues at stake. You may consider looking at any grammatical or syntactical features, like main and subordinate clauses, connective terms, modifiers (adjectives and adverbs), etc. Discuss any similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech. Why are they chosen? What do they contribute to the author's purpose in light of the situation/problems being addressed? What emotional impact might they have on the readers?

Always relate your study of the details of a passage to the flow and development of the passage and its main argument(s). How do your conclusions on the various details fit together to form a logical thread, explaining that which the writer was communicating?

(6) Main Themes and Theological Message

In this section, you will state the main themes in the passage as well as the theology that is emphasized in the text. You are synthesizing the results of your exegetical study, looking at the message of the passage as a whole.

Some questions to consider: What specific aspect of the biblical conception of the Person of God, God's purposes in the world, and the Divine-Human relationship, is this passage discussing? What patterns of response is this passage calling for from the people of God? What are the main themes or sub-themes in the passage? What is the main overall message? Is there a main argument? What is its purpose? Are there certain theological traditions or themes alluded to in the passage (e.g. Exodus, Covenant, Creation theology, etc.) which are found elsewhere in the biblical canon? Does the passage echo and clarify earlier passages? Is it echoed or developed in later passages (intertextuality)? Why was this passage included in the book? What theological truths are communicated? Summarize your conclusions.

(7) Theological Implications and Appropriation

In this section, you are moving from what the text *meant* to what it *means* for us today. You are moving from the biblical context to the contemporary context. Here you want to look for appropriation by *recontextualization*.

The question you must ask yourself is this: having studied this text in detail, what difference could or should it make in the life of a person of faith today? How should it shape the perspectives and choices of Christians in your particular faith community? As well, to prevent misapplication, consider what possible ideas some people might take from this text that would be unhelpful or even destructive to themselves or others.

First, outline the perspectives, principles, values, virtues, and theological ideals arising from the biblical passage. What are some general principles or core values which flow out the biblical

text? These ideas must flow from the perspective of the text's theological purpose in its original, ancient, biblical context. But although these perspectives, principles, values, virtues or theological ideals must arise out of the text, they must reflect relational and theological issues that *transcend the particulars of the biblical context*, and are *more generally true* in the broader biblical perspective of the character of God, and the divine-human relationship.

Your perspectives/principles/values/virtues/ideals must be *rooted in the intentional theological outlook and purpose of the text* and should have a *relational focus*. They should be rooted in what the text says about who God is, about living the life of faith, or about what God is looking for in his relationship with his people, as seen in the text. It may also involve the relationship of God's people with one another, with the nations or with the creation, or God's relationship to the nations or to the creation.

Once you have outlined these core values, then recontextualize by considering the question of appropriation in the modern context. What is the contemporary significance of the passage in your context?

Here it is helpful to situate yourself and your contemporary hearers in relationship to the text. Determine the points of contact as well as dissimilarity between the biblical and modern contexts. How they are different, yet how they are the same? Here you may include a statement of any cautions and warnings your hearers might need to hear about what NOT to do with this text (perhaps based on abuses of it that have gone on in contemporary or earlier societies).

In the process of recontextualization and appropriation, it may be helpful to define your own context. What is the context in which you and your faith community live? How would you appropriate the message of the text in your context? Consider both personal appropriation and corporate/communal appropriation. Give specific suggestions as to how the perspectives, principles, values, virtues or theological ideals that you have identified could be 'incarnated' by Christians today, individually or collectively. What is God saying to you through the passage? What is God asking you to do or be? Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the biblical text.

A final word: be careful of making the application too general or vague. Often applications are presented which could fit 99% of the passages in the Bible!! *Ask yourself, "What is the distinctive emphasis of this text, as opposed to many others?"* Once you can see what that is, your applications/appropriations will be far more insightful and meaningful.

The critical areas for this assignment are (i) careful analysis of the Hebrew text and other relevant passages; (ii) depth of thought and reflection on primary and secondary sources, (iii) depth of research on the text—especially the use of first-rate commentaries, grammar and syntax books; (iv) logic and clarity of argument and presentation.

Papers must not exceed the stated limit above.

Class Presentation

Students *may* choose to prepare a 30-minute class presentation highlighting the most critical, interesting and salient aspect of his/her research. This will involve 15-20 minutes of presentation and 10-15 minutes of class discussion and interaction. Handouts, PowerPoint, and other learning aids should be used if possible. The student may re-submit a revised paper in light of the class discussion and the professor's comments. This however is optional, not obligatory.

The student will submit the entire project as a final paper by the date indicated above.

OR

2. Thematic Study Option

This assignment is intended to allow the student to undertake an in-depth study in an area of his/her interest. It could be a specific theme or theological motif, or an historical, grammatical or theological issue. It will consist of a formal written essay and a class presentation. The formal written essay should resemble a scholarly article, or section of a commentary.

The student will present a 20-page paper (plus bibliography). If the paper exceeds this limit marks will be deducted. The student will discuss potential topics with the professor and agree on a topic and methodological approach to the topic.

Suggested topics:

- Sabbath
- Slavery in the OT
- Jubilee
- Treatment of the poor in the laws of the Pentateuch.
- Treatment of the poor in the Prophets (select sections)
- Exile, Forced Migration, and Diaspora

Class Presentation

Students *may* choose to prepare a 30-minute class presentation highlighting the most critical, interesting and salient aspect of his/her research. This will involve 15 minutes of presentation and 15 minutes of discussion and interaction. Handouts, PowerPoint, and other learning aids

should be used if possible. The student may re-submit a revised paper in light of the class discussion and the professor's comments. This however is **optional**, not obligatory.

The student will submit the entire project as a final paper by the date indicated above.

The student is expected to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the commentaries, specialized studies, Bible dictionary/encyclopaedia entries and articles relevant to his/her topic. Most especially, the paper must display a careful analysis of the relevant biblical texts, and the commentaries dealing with them. The paper must include a detailed bibliography and the meticulous citing of all sources used in correct SBL or Chicago style. APA/MLA style is *not permitted*. The paper must use footnotes, *not endnotes*.

The critical areas for this assignment are (i) careful analysis of the Hebrew text and other relevant passages; (ii) depth of thought and reflection on primary and secondary sources, (iii) depth of research on the text; (iv) logic and clarity of argument and presentation.

Marking Standards

NOTE: The Seminary requires the Professor to identify students who display difficulties with English language skills in their assignments and refer them for further language assessment in the Tyndale Centre of Academic Excellence. To help them improve in their studies, students may then be required to take the English for Academic Purposes course in conjunction with current courses. Please see the attached *Guidelines for Written Work* for further information.

Assignments will be marked according to the following general principle: papers which satisfactorily meet the professor's expectations will receive a B/75%. Grades above or below B will reflect the degree to which the student's work manifests strengths or deficiencies relative to the satisfactory level. A step-by-step description of the essay-writing process can be found in the document "Tyndale Seminary Research and Writing Manual" on the course page. *It is virtually impossible to write a B-level (or higher) essay without a thorough knowledge of the material in this document.*

Excellence or deficiency in the following areas will increase or decrease the mark assigned:

1. Form and presentation (Note: correct footnote and bibliographic form *must* be used. Either SBL or Chicago style is acceptable, but not MLA/APA).
2. Number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited.
3. Use of the best commentaries on the relevant biblical texts (see below).
4. Thoroughness of historical, grammatical, syntactical, analysis in exegetical discussions.
5. Logical and methodological accuracy and consistency.

6. Use of such foundational sources and tools including: close analysis of all relevant biblical texts, including relevant issues of word meaning, grammar and syntax; specialized studies in ANE history, archaeology, culture and sociology; interaction with major commentaries.
7. Quality and clarity of written English.

Documentation, Style, and Form

1. **Papers must be submitted as pdf documents.** Papers submitted in non-pdf formats (e.g. .doc or .docx) will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted in proper pdf format, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Pdfs must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted for such initial non-pdf submissions.
2. **Papers must be submitted in Chicago or SBL style NOT MLA, (aka author date, e.g. Chan, 2016, 45).** Papers submitted in MLA format will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted in proper Chicago/SBL format, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Apart from the corrections of style (MLA to Chicago/SBL), papers must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted from such papers.

For SBL style Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, comps. *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Second Edition. Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2014 or the document “SBL Manual of Style” on the course page for this course. Please note especially pages 3-5.

For fuller details on correct citation formatting see also <http://libguides.tyndale.ca/citations>. Alternatively, 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 [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#). See the fuller examples and discussion in the “Instructions for Essays” folder.

3. **Papers must use footnotes not endnotes, and include a bibliography.** Papers submitted with endnotes as opposed to footnotes, and/or without a bibliography will be returned to the student. Papers must then be re-submitted with footnotes and bibliography, within 2 days, to assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. Apart from the correction of endnotes to footnotes, and inclusion of the bibliography, papers must be an exact replica of the originally submitted paper. A full letter grade will be deducted from such papers. See the further, important instructions in the document “Essays: Detailed Instructions” in the “Topical Essay Instructions” and/or “Exegetical Essay Instructions” folders on the course page.

Special Note Regarding the Citation of Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

In many instances, you will find important material contained in individual entries in Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias. Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias and an overall editor (or editors), as well as various individual authors write the specific entries. The author's name is found at the end of the entry. When you quote from an entry you must attribute the quote to the author of the entry *not to the editor of the Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia*.

So for example, D. N. Freedman is the overall editor of the Anchor Bible Dictionary, but the author of the entry (or article) on Abraham is Alan R. Millard. When you want to refer to that specific entry (or example) you must cite it by the name of its author, not by the name of the editor of the dictionary as a whole.

Thus:

CORRECT METHOD

In a footnote:

A. R. Millard, "Abraham," *ABD* 1:35-40

In a bibliography:

Millard, Alan R. "Abraham." *ABD* 1:35-40

INCORRECT METHOD:

In a footnote:

D. N. Freedman, "Abraham," *ABD* 1:35-40.

In a bibliography:

Freedman, D. N. "Abraham," *ABD* 1:35-40.

NOTE 2: Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a major problem in contemporary education. As such Tyndale Seminary academic policy stipulates that a paper may be given an F (zero) should it contain plagiarized content. Remember: if you use someone else's words, put them in quotation marks and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone's ideas (i.e. 'covenant is the centre of OT theology') or a fact derived from your reading which is not common knowledge (e.g. 'the territory of Benjamin did not suffer significant destruction during the Babylonian invasions'), you must still cite your source, *even if the words are not put in quotation marks*.

Do not cut entire paragraphs out of books or articles and insert them into your text, (unless it is to illustrate the position of a specific author that you intend to discuss or critique) even if they are footnoted. An essay is *not a series of long quotes strung together*. *Such essays will not*

receive a passing grade. You must attempt to read and assimilate various sources, then attempt to collate, compare, contrast and evaluate them.

Attempting to do your best is far better than copying and failing the assignment and possibly the course, or even worse losing the opportunity to learn new things by doing the assignment. Remember, essays are about you, as a student learner. You do not have to provide the last word on complex subjects.

Plagiarism will be taken extremely seriously and be dealt with according to the Tyndale Student Handbook.

TIPS FOR ESSAY WRITING

Students are *strongly* encouraged to:

1. Read the documents “Tyndale Seminary Research and Writing Manual” and “SBL Manual of Style” on the course page *before* beginning their work.
2. Use the library for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference and periodical collections. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials which NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopaedias and Bible Dictionaries and reference copies of commentaries. During the current COVID pandemic, our amazing librarians are able to scan relevant sections of the resources students require and send them via email. See the Library Home Page, and go to LibAnswers.
3. Similarly, a massive amount of material is available online in downloadable PDF files via the library’s e-resources (especially EBSCO HOST/ATLA and JSTOR). These are easily accessible via the ‘e-resources’ portal on the Library’s homepage or via WorldCat (just enter the topic). There is a gigantic difference in the quality of the resources available through the library’s e resources and the Internet in general. *Remember—only quote qualified experts in the subject you are studying.* Be sure to use scholarly, reputable sources. These are usually found in peer-reviewed series and journals (e.g. scholarly journals such as *Vetus Testamentum*, the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, or the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* or the supplements to these journals, held in the stacks in our library). Other reliable sources include edited commentary series (e.g. New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Anchor Bible Commentaries, Word Biblical Commentaries, etc.) Do not use ‘popular’ level works for the preparation of academic essays. Similarly, do not use academic works that are over 30 years old without assessing how the discussion of the issue under study as progressed since the older publication.

4. When in doubt whether or not to cite a source, err on the side of caution.
5. Practical Suggestions:
 - a. Use the commentaries, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias in the Reference Section of the library. *See note below on choosing the best commentaries.*
 - b. Use the Library's E-Resources (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/>), especially Journal Search (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources/ejournals>) via EBSCOHost, ATLA or JSTOR;
 - c. Use the reference volumes available via the Gale Virtual Reference Library (access via <http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources> and select "G", the once in the Gale site, choose "Religion."). This gives you access to several excellent Encyclopaedias including the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.
 - d. For bibliographies for your subject see the Oxford Bibliographies Online: go to (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources?title=o>) and choose "o") or go directly via the following link: (<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/obo/page/biblical-studies>). These excellent bibliographies will give you an orientation to the subject, and a place to start. Similarly check out the Oxford Biblical Studies Online portlet (just above the Oxford Bibliographies Online portlet).
 - e. Before you start, read an overview of your subject in a major Bible Dictionary or Encyclopaedia, such as the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, the *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* or the *New International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, or the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Also look for overview discussions in the Oxford Bibliographies Online.
 - f. Begin early, and take time to *think and pray about your work*.
 - g. Make sure that you have consulted *at least 15 sources*, and that these sources are listed in *proper bibliographic form* at the end of your paper.
 - h. Make sure your pages are numbered.
 - i. Ask a friend to proofread your work before handing it in.
 - j. *As noted above, NEVER cite the editor of an encyclopaedia or dictionary article as the author of the article. Example: D. N. Freedman is the editor of the Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD), but not the author of its individual entries (articles). ALWAYS cite the name of the author of the article, e.g. A. R. Millard, "Abraham" ABD 1:35-40 (see the SBL Manual of Style for fuller details).*
6. Make use of the Tyndale's Centre for Academic Excellence and Writing Centre's webpages: (www.tyndale.ca/writingcentre) (www.tyndale.ca/academic-excellence). These amazing websites bring together virtually everything you will need for essay writing in this course. It will help you with documentation (i.e. citing your sources) as

well as tips on good style, grammar, punctuation, sharpening your thesis statement, being concise and much more. As well, there are numerous links to other excellent web-based resources for essay writing. Take time to go through each section of this site.

Choosing and Using the Best Commentaries

In your papers, you must always work with commentaries on the biblical passages you are discussing, whether in an exegetical study or a topical/thematic paper.

1. The single most useful tool available for evaluating commentaries, and understanding the differing approaches of each one is:

John F. Evans, *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works*. 10th edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

2. Check out the various Major Commentary Series

- Anchor Bible (AB), moderate orientation, excellent scholarship, broad spectrum
- New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT), excellent scholarship, primarily evangelical
- Word Biblical Commentary (WBC), excellent scholarship broad spectrum-evangelical
- International Critical Commentary (ICC), highly detailed, critical
- New Century Biblical Commentary (NCBC), detailed, critical, broad spectrum
- New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC), evangelical, more popular level
- Hermeneia, broad spectrum, excellent scholarship
- Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC), brief, evangelical, excellent scholarship
- New International Version Application Commentary (NIVAC), evangelical, more popular, written by excellent scholars
- Old Testament Library (OTL), broad spectrum, excellent scholarship
- New American Commentary, (NAC) evangelical
- Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary (JPS), excellent scholarship, faith-based
- Westminster Bible Companion (WBC), popular but still scholarly
- Interpretation (Int), popular but still scholarly
- Continental Commentaries, scholarly, broad spectrum
- Torch Bible Commentaries
- Eerdmans Critical Commentaries (ECC), excellent scholarship, broad spectrum

3. The following multi-volume tool may also be used:

- *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary and Reflections for each book of the Bible, including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books.*

NOTE: do NOT use the Ancient Christian Commentary series for this section of the assignment. Its primary value is for the history of interpretation. While the writers quoted in it do offer valuable insights, much understanding of the ancient interpretive context of these writers is required for understanding their words. Do not use Matthew Henry or Matthew Poole.

FAILURE TO USE THE BEST COMMENTARIES ON THE PASSAGES RELEVANT TO YOUR TOPIC WILL RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF YOUR MARK. IN GENERAL, A MINIMUM OF THREE COMMENTARIES FROM THE SERIES MENTIONED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION ARE NECESSARY TO ATTAIN A GRADE OF B-.

4. The following books (available in either the reference collection or on reserve) can also be extremely helpful in finding and evaluating commentaries:

D. A. Carson. *New Testament Commentary Survey*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007.

John Glynn. *Commentary & Reference Survey: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical and Theological Resources*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007.

John Goldingay, Mark Lau, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*, Madison, WI.: Theological Students Fellowship, 1981.

Tremper Longman III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007.

Douglas K. Stuart. *A Guide to Selecting and Using Bible Commentaries*, Dallas: Word, 1990.

Also check: (1) the introductory sections to major commentaries on the book you are studying and (2) the bibliographies for your subject in Oxford Bibliographies Online: go to (<http://www.tyndale.ca/library/eresources?title=o>) and choose "o"). These excellent bibliographies will give you an orientation to the subject, and a place to start. Similarly check out the Oxford Biblical Studies Online portlet (just above the Oxford Bibliographies Online portlet).

Essential Skills in Writing a Biblical Studies Essay

First, recognize that a large part of writing a biblical studies assignment involves understanding an ancient text (the OT) in the context of the ancient world (ancient Israel and its cultural environment). As such, much of the student's work will involve *studying words and their meanings* (including the *grammatical and syntactical relationships* in which the words are found). Similarly, the student will need to know something about the world in which the words were written. This will involve the *historical, sociological, political, economic, geographic, demographic, and religious context* of the text being studied. It will also likely involve a discussion of the process and stages that may have been involved in the writing of the text. *It is crucial to remember that biblical exegesis must be rooted in demonstrable fact and data. Opinions and assertions abound; however, the question is always to what degree does an*

opinion in print correspond to the 'hard data' (textual, historical) needed to support the assertion being made.

As such the indispensable starting point for a biblical studies assignment is a careful reading and study of the biblical text(s) under consideration. *Beware of moving directly to secondary sources written about the text before immersing yourself again and again in the text itself. Read it over and over again.* Note down any details of the text that are unclear to you and ask questions about them. What do you need to know to really understand what the text is communicating?

Second, try to ascertain what might be most significant for you to know about the context in which the text was written. The specifics of a situation have a profound impact on the way in which we understand the words spoken in that context. Look for works regarding the history and cultural context that characterize the world in which the text was written. Look for any extra-biblical materials (especially ANE texts), which might shed light on the text or issue you are studying.

Third, look for good secondary sources—that is material written about the biblical text or the ancient world. Look for: scholarly commentaries in the major series (AB, WBC, NIVAC, NICOT, Hermeneia, Interpretation, TOTC, NCBC etc., cf. the sources that help with choosing the best commentaries, above); articles in the major Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (Anchor, New Interpreters, Eerdmans, IVP *Dictionary of the Old Testament* series); articles in the major OT scholarly journals (JBL, JSOT, VT, SJOT, ZAW, CBR, CBQ, Bib, etc.); collections of essays (often these are part of a series e.g. JSOT Supplements, VT Supplements, etc.).

Fourth, read with a critical eye. Always be aware that authors may draw inferences from data that may be exaggerated, inaccurate, irrelevant, anachronistic, speculative, or simply wrong. Just because something appears in print does not make it accurate. On the most significant points for your investigation, try to 'test' an author's assertion against the data s/he sets forth to back it up. Reading several authors on the same text or subject will help you to see alternative points of view and the weaknesses in various approaches. Although much of the linguistic and historical data is beyond your competence to assess, try to ascertain which assertions best fit the facts. In writing your essay, demonstrate to your reader that you know the various options available, and which one you choose, and why.

Obviously, this cannot be done at every point in your discussion, *but on the most important points it yields great results.*

Your essay will be evaluated in terms of the following:

- Careful Hebrew exegetical study, especially focusing on word studies, syntactical, structural and historical-cultural analysis
- Depth of thought and reflection.

- Finding and reading good quality secondary sources, and presenting a reflected interpretation and evaluation of them.
- Logic and clarity in expression.
- Good form and presentation, including spelling, grammar and syntax. *Check your paper carefully before handing it in. Don't think that your spell-checker will get it all!*

E. 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.

F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Completion of Exercises in RBH	20 %
Personal Response Paper (Murphy)	10 %
Exegetical Notebook and Psalms Translations	35 %
Paper <u>or</u> Paper and Class Presentation	35 %
Total Grade	100 %

G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

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.

1. Guiding Principle on the Quality of Papers at the Masters Level

Your paper must reflect graduate-level research and writing skills. If your paper could have been written by someone with a basic knowledge of the Bible and without the skills you have learned in this and other courses, *it will not receive a passing grade*. Mere re-statement of the biblical text or sermonizing on the basis of a superficial reading of it does not constitute acceptable, graduate-level work.

2. 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.

Plagiarism is a major problem in contemporary education. As such Tyndale Seminary academic policy stipulates that a paper may be given an F should it contain plagiarized content. Remember: if you use someone else's words, put them in quotation marks and cite the source in a footnote. If you refer to someone's ideas (i.e. 'covenant is the centre of OT theology') or a fact derived from your reading which is not common knowledge (e.g. 'the territory of Benjamin did not suffer significant destruction during the Babylonian invasions'), but the words are not put in quotation marks, you must still cite your source.

Your essay must be your own work. Do not submit a series of paragraphs written by someone else, and strung together. Never cut entire paragraphs out of books or articles and insert them into your text, even if they are footnoted. An essay is *not a series of long quotes strung together*. *Such essays will not receive a passing grade*. You must attempt to read and assimilate various sources, then attempt to collate, compare, contrast and evaluate them. Attempting to do your best, even if it is a feeble first try, is far better than copying and failing the assignment and possibly the course. More importantly failing to do your own work means losing the opportunity to learn new things by doing the assignment. *Remember, essays are about you, as a student learner*. You do not have to provide the last word on complex subjects.

3. E-Mail Submissions

You must submit your papers by e-mail, to me at assignmentsforkessler@yahoo.ca. *Assignments must be submitted as a pdf documents*. Submissions must be received by 11:59 PM on the due date.

4. Marking Standards, Extensions, and Late Grading Policies.

The professor will follow the marking standards as stated in Tyndale's academic policies. Generally speaking, assignments which satisfactorily meet the professor's expectations will receive a B/75%.

Excellence or deficiency in the following areas will increase or decrease the mark assigned:

- Form and presentation (Note: correct bibliographic form must be used. Additional information available on the Tyndale Library's Homepage and the Tyndale Writing

Centre's Homepage).

- Number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited. Generally, a minimum of 13-15 good sources is required to write a B level paper.
- Thoroughness of historical, grammatical, syntactical, exegetical and theological investigation. This includes doing your own Bible study work (word studies, background studies etc., and quoting other ANE primary sources where relevant--e.g. Code of Hammurabi, Gilgamesh Epic, etc.)
- Logical and methodological accuracy and consistency.
- The student's own exegetical interaction with the biblical text; specialized scholarly articles and studies, interaction with major commentaries.
- Quality and clarity of written English.

Late assignments are assessed at **2.0% per day** to a maximum of 3 weeks, after which the paper receives a zero. It is far better to submit your work on time than to take a late penalty.

Days are calculated from the 11:59 pm on the due date.

Extensions are granted **only** in exceptional circumstances. These include illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness or death in the family, etc.

Extensions will NOT be granted for: mission trips, ministry responsibilities, heavy workload in other courses, computer or printer problems, slow reading speed etc. (except where permitted by the accessibility coordinator, see under "Equity of Access" above). *Students are expected to manage their own workloads, and plan adequate time for their assignments.*

Dead Date Policy: According to the Tyndale Academic policy, **no papers may be submitted later than the last day of exam week.** Any requests for extensions beyond this time must be made **directly to the Registrar.** The professor will accept no materials after this date.

5. Attendance

Attendance at class is of vital importance for this course. In accordance with Tyndale Seminary policy, missing more than two classes without reasonable cause such as illness (a medical attestation is required), crisis, severe illness or death in the family, etc., may result in a receiving an F for the course. If a discussion group session is missed without excuse, the student will receive a zero for the session.

6. Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants (or rhesus monkeys) require ethical review and approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; aau@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

H. 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

Please see posting on [Course Page](#).

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)