



## OT602: Introduction to the Old Testament I

Dr. Seth B. Tarrer

### *Course Description*

This is the first of two courses introducing the literature and theology of the Old Testament. We will cover the Pentateuch and the Historical books (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah). This course provides a detailed study of the text, history, and secondary matter in an effort to aid the reader/interpreter in their understanding of both the world from which the Old Testament comes to us as well as its present shape. Students will gain familiarity with the world of the Old Testament through a combination of course lectures, historical surveys, as well as reading the text itself. We will also interact with select ancient and modern readings of the Old Testament.

### *Course Objectives*

At the end of this course students should be able to do the following:

1. articulate an informed historiographical method of approaching the Old Testament;
2. summarize and assess the historical, theological, and contextual content of the Old Testament;
3. explain the importance of major theological motifs of the various books of the Old Testament;
4. assess how the church's interaction with the Old Testament over the centuries has informed Christian theology and ecclesial practice;
5. articulate and integrate a theologically-sensitive understanding of human origins in light of current genetic and earth science

Of course, the ultimate objective of this course is to deepen our love and devotion to the triune God through the study of the first part of our two-testament canon.

### *Contact Information*

Dr. Seth B. Tarrer

Email: [starrer@knoxseminary.edu](mailto:starrer@knoxseminary.edu)

I am available to students whenever they have questions or want to discuss any aspect of this course. My preferred method of contact is by email but I also welcome students to come by my office.

### *Textbooks*

#### **The following books are required for this course:**

1. Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and J. Andrew Dearman. *Introducing the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018. ISBN 9780802867902. Available in print (from \$30, Amazon.com) and on Logos (\$35.99).



2. Mark J. Boda. *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017. ISBN 9780801030895. Available in print (from \$15.63 Amazon.com).
3. An English Bible of your choice (we will use ESV, NRSV, and NASB in class).

### Recommended Supplemental Texts

1. S. Joshua Swamidass, *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019.
2. D. R. Venema and S. McKnight, *Adam and the Genome*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2017.
3. John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015.
4. Darrel R. Falk, *Coming to Peace with Science*, Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2004.

In addition, students will read selections that will be disseminated in class, via PDF, on Knox's eBrary site, or held in reserve in the Knox Library.

### Course Requirements

#### 1. Readings

This course is reading intensive. It is expected that students will have all required reading assignments completed before class. This includes the biblical texts in their assigned entirety! Students will also be prepared to discuss the course readings in class. (corresponds to learning objective 2)

#### 2. Bible Reading Guide

By the end of OT 1 and 2 students will have read the entire OT. A Reading Guide with one question per chapter of the Biblical Book will be provided. Each week students are to answer the questions and submit either electronically or hard copy before class begins. (corresponds to learning objective 1 and 2).

#### 3. Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in discussions. As discussions will focus on the assigned readings, students are also expected to have completed all the readings. Students should be prepared to elaborate on and provide thoughtful analysis of their questions/observations in class discussion. (corresponds to objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4).



#### 4. Exams

There will be two exams in this course, a midterm and a final. (corresponds to objectives 2, 3, and 4)

#### 5. Term Paper

This paper will be **2,000 words** in length (excluding footnotes and bibliography) and will reflect your understanding of **one** of two topics:

- 1) What's in a Name: Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?
- 2) Recent genetic theory and its impact on an orthodox interpretation of Gen 1-3 and the question of the historical and theological Adam and Eve.

The final paper will be informed by peer-reviewed primary and secondary sources (i.e., *not* simply Wikipedia). Please note that this is not strictly a research paper, nor is it simply a reflection paper; it is a combination of the two. Thus, your paper should demonstrate a balance between the information learned in the course, your own analysis, and reflections on why it matters to the church today.

The following guidelines should be followed closely:

- \* Do not exceed the word count.
- \* Check and double-check your paper for proper spelling, grammar, and formatting (Footnotes and citations will conform to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Primary guidelines may be found online via the [Online Turabian Quick Guide](#).
- \* Papers will be composed in MS Word (.doc or .docx) format only and emailed directly to me ([starrer@knoxseminary.edu](mailto:starrer@knoxseminary.edu))
- \* I am available and welcome questions and interaction as you research and write this semester.
- \* Unless an extension is granted, there will be a one-letter-grade reduction for each day late until submitted.

(Corresponds to Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4)

#### *Evaluation*

##### **Assignment**

##### **Percentage of Final Grade**

*Reading Guide Questions*

20%



<i>Midterm Exam (weeks 1-7)</i>	25%
<i>Final Exam (cumulative but focus on weeks 8-13)</i>	25%
<i>Term Paper</i>	30%

### *Extensions & Late Submission*

Since life and ministry don't always cooperate, I'd like to offer some unsolicited thoughts that might pertain to where some of you might find yourself. Completing seminary coursework while doing ministry (part-time or full) is a challenging, refining experience, both academically and personally. It's designed in part to be that way; a crucible. I worked while in seminary and it exposed areas in which I needed growth and sanctification! I don't want this to sound trite or platitudinous, but often it is experiences like the one you're entering into now that can be most greatly used by God to wake us up, as it were, to an area or discipline we lack or are struggling with. I encourage you to ask God's mercy and help, as well as find a group of colleagues to whom you can be accountable for your studies. After all, your theological formation at Knox is for the church, and as such, your engagement and diligence reflect directly upon your call to minister.

Should you require an extension on an assignment, the best policy is permission, not forgiveness. While not all extensions will be granted, we desire to be gracious when we can. I will work with you but that requires communication on your part.

Also, should an assignment be turned late without prior extension, there will be a letter-grade deduction for each day late. See student handbook for more information.

### *Computer Policy*

It is a privilege to use computers in class. They can be a wonderful resource for note-taking and research. They can also be a great hindrance, a temptation, and a distraction. The professor will observe computer use throughout the course. If students are using them for unrelated tasks (email, surfing the web, etc.), their use will be restricted.

Note: you should not try to take down every word uttered by the professor. Doing so precludes critical thinking and interaction with the material.

### *Academic Honesty* (adapted from Dr. Timothy Phillips of Wheaton College)

1. The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others' studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.



2. Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to **any** information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does **not** apply **only** to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does **not** remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.
3. Cheating is the presentation of someone else’s work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.
4. Cheating or plagiarism results in the immediate failure of the entire course. Further disciplinary action may be taken as well. Consult the Knox Student Handbook for more information.



## Course Schedule

**NB:** Below each week's topic are the readings that are to be completed prior to that day's class. Read Hubbard and Dearman's *Introduction to the Old Testament* (hereafter H/D)'s chapter that corresponds to the Biblical book we will be studying in class. Also, Boda's *Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology's* (hereafter Boda) corresponding chapters are indicated as well.

*Week 1* (August 28)

### **Introduction; TaNaKh; Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?**

- H/D Ch. 1 & 2
- Boda 1

*Week 2* (September 4)

### **Genesis 1-11**

- H/D Ch. 3 & 4
- Genesis 1-11
- "Adam, Eve, and the Genome," in Venema, D.R. and McKnight, S., *Adam and the Genome*, 93-110, (Brazos Press) 2017.
- "Genesis 1 Is an Account of Functional Origins, Not Material Origins," in Walton, J.H., *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 35-46, (IVP Academic), 2015.
- "Tracing Lineage by Tracking Genes," in Falk, D.R., *Coming to Peace with Science*, 169-202, (IVP) 2004.

*Week 3* (September 11)

### **Gen 12-50**

- H/D Ch. 5
- Boda 2
- Genesis 12-50

*Week 4* (September 18)

### **Term paper talk; Exodus and the Exodus Event**

- H/D Ch. 6
- Boda 3
- Exodus

*Week 5* (September 25)

### **Leviticus**

- H/D Ch. 7
- Boda 4
- Leviticus

*Week 6* (October 2)

### **Numbers**

- H/D Ch. 8



- Boda 5
- Numbers

*Week 7 (October 9)*

### **Deuteronomy**

- H/D Ch. 9
- Boda 6
- Deuteronomy

### **Fall Break – October 15-19 (no class)**

*Week 8 (October 23)*

### **Midterm Exam (Weeks 1-7); Joshua; conquest and the *herem***

- H/D Ch. 10 & 11
- Joshua

*Week 9 (October 30)*

### **Judges**

- H/D Ch. 12
- Boda 7
- Judges

*Week 10 (November 6)*

### **Samuel**

- H/D Ch. 14
- Boda 8
- 1 & 2 Samuel

*Week 11 (November 13)*

### **1 & 2 Kings**

- H/D Ch. 15
- Boda 9
- 1 & 2 Kings

### **Thanksgiving Nov 22 – no class 11/20**

*Week 12 (November 27)*

### **1 & 2 Chronicles**

- H/D Ch. 16 & 17
- Boda *Appendix*
- 1 & 2 Chronicles



**KNOX**

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**Christ Centered † Gospel Driven † Mission Focused**

---

*Week 13* (December 4)

**Ezra-Nehemiah**

- H/D Ch. 18
- Ezra & Nehemiah
- **Term Paper due**

*Week 14* (December 11)

**Final Exam Due** (remote, cumulative; focus on Weeks 8-13) turned in via email to Dr. Tarrer by 11:59pm EST.