



OT 1 Seminar in OT Hermeneutics & Exegetical Method

Course Syllabus

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Alan D. Ingalls, Th.M., Th.D., מורה

Associate Professor of Old Testament

Office: (570) 585-9373

mailto://aingalls@bbc.edu • http://faculty.bbc.edu/aingalls

Course Description

This course will examine specific issues in Old Testament hermeneutics and exegesis. The application of grammatical, lexical, and historical arguments to Old Testament exegetical problems will be discussed. The use of current literary-critical techniques such as poetics and rhetorical criticism in Old Testament exegesis will be investigated with a special emphasis on developing genre-specific hermeneutical principles. The relationship of the Old Testament to ancient interpretive materials such as the Septuagint, Targums, early Rabbinic literature, and the historical materials of Josephus and Philo, their usefulness, and the principles of their use in Old Testament exegesis will be explored as time permits.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course the student will be able to:

- Understand and explain the key issues involved in Old Testament interpretation.
- Evaluate the genre of biblical texts and apply appropriate hermeneutical methods to them.
- Evaluate grammatical and lexical data and apply appropriate hermeneutical methods to them.
- Evaluate current literary-critical methods and use them selectively and appropriately in Old Testament exegesis.
- Understand the nature of ancient literary remains and their biases and limitations.
- Use ancient literary and material evidence appropriately in Old Testament exegesis.

Course Requirements

The course is divided into *three* chronological parts:

- External residency A (six weeks)
- Internal residency (one week)
- External residency B (six weeks)

For each part, the requirements are given below. These are followed by a section detailing any other requirements.

External Residency "A" Requirements (Jan. 5-Feb. 13)

A. Reading and Critical Analysis

Each week of External Residency "A" (ER^a = Jan. 5-Feb. 13) each student must read the book listed for that week and interact on the course threaded discussion group in accordance with the guidelines established below. This reading constitutes 1767 pages and is regarded as a minimum which will not necessarily constitute superior ("A") work. All books in this syllabus marked with the ☼ symbol are listed on the OT Reading List which will be used for comprehensive exams later in the student's Ph.D. program.

ER^a Week #1 (Jan. 5-9): ☼ Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998. [278 pp.]

ER^a Week #2 (Jan. 12-16): ☼ Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981. [247 pp.]

ER^a Week #3 (Jan. 19-23): ☼ Silva, Moises. *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*. Revised. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. [194 pp.]

ER^a Week #4 (Jan. 26-30): ☼ VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: The Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. [235 pp.]

ER^a Week #5 (Feb. 2-6): ☼ Sandy, D. Brent and Ronald L. Giese, Jr. *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995. [298 pp.]

ER^a Week #6 (Feb. 9-13): ☼ Merrill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987. [515 pp.]

The student must write a **300-to-500-word precis for each assigned book** and must post his precis on the class list serve no later than noon Wednesday of the assigned week. This precis should be included (cut/paste) directly into the threaded discussion message rather than attached. Each precis should be in clear English prose style and should include at the top of the precis the student's name as well as a bibliographic entry with an indication of the pages read. A sample entitled "**Sample Precis**" is available on the Syllabus page of the course website. Late precis will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade for each and every day for which the student is late. Students are encouraged to read from the list of Suggested Works below, and post brief synopses, comments, and questions on those readings as well.

B. Class Interaction

This is a seminar, and class interaction is a crucial part of this course; class interaction will be graded closely. The student must offer interaction at least once each week with at least two of the other students' precis. Interaction might include further insights into the same work examined in the original precis, or insights on the same subject gained by the student from another work, or might even provide a further response to another student's interaction. All interaction should be tactful, kind, and gracious in the true spirit of Christian fellowship and scholarship. The student must understand that this is a minimum and that his grade will be enhanced by going beyond this minimal standard. The guide labeled "**Course Protocols**" which is available on the Syllabus page of the course website provides some guidance in operating in the WebCT environment.

Internal Residency Requirements (Feb. 16-20)

A tentative schedule for the week is posted on the Syllabus page of the course website labeled "**Schedule.**"

A. Research

The student will present to the instructor on the first day of the internal residency a topic for a paper to be written during the second portion of the external residency. The research paper should examine a problem related to the subject of the course. Each student will meet with the instructor during the library time on the first class day for discussion and approval of the topic. With the instructor's approval of the topic, the student should use his library/study time during the internal residency to research his subject as deeply as possible. He should prepare a brief proposal on that subject (2-3 pages) which he must submit on Friday of the internal residency week. This will allow the instructor to "steer" the student's work and help prevent submission of an unacceptable paper during the second external residency period.

B. Class Discussion

Class discussion will focus around the subjects explored during the first portion of the external residency. Each student will be assigned to lead portions of class discussion. Assignments will vary based upon the number of students in the class and will be established the first day of class. Reading or translation assignments may be assigned in class in preparation for the following day's discussions. In addition to being graded on his leading of class segments, the student's grade on class discussion will also include how he interacts throughout the week. Again, all interaction should be tactful, kind, and gracious in the true spirit of Christian fellowship and scholarship. ***This is a seminar course: there are to be no non-participants in the class.***

External Residency "B" Requirements (Mar. 2-Apr. 10)

A. Research Paper

The student will write a research paper on his approved topic 35-45 pages in length. The paper should be formatted in standard thesis form according to the latest edition of Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The 35-page length assumes double-spacing (1" margins, page numbering in the margin, and 10-12 point Times New Roman font or similar), and includes footnotes, but does not include front matter or bibliography. Material that is excessively wordy or contains "fluff" or "filler" will count heavily against the grade. In other words, the paper should be written in clear, concise English style. Further, the paper should exhibit a good understanding of the issues and available sources. The document "**Course Protocols**" located on the Syllabus page of the course website provides some guidance to writing style.

A rough draft of the paper should be posted to the course threaded discussion group **no later than Friday noon of the fourth week** of this external residency.

The final draft of the paper should be submitted by attachment to threaded discussion post (Microsoft Word® format or Rich Text Format) to the instructor **no later than the last day of the class**. Late papers will be subject to a penalty of one letter grade for each and every day late. This research paper may be chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor as one to be delivered in a later Interdisciplinary Seminar.

B. Discussion

Each student is to review briefly the rough drafts of each of the other students' papers and post appropriate and constructive comments to the course threaded discussion group. This interaction should be sent **by Friday noon of the fifth week of this external residency**. In this way, each student will help all the other students in thinking through the research. These requirements should be considered the minimum. There is certainly room for continued interaction during the final weeks of the course.

The student will be expected to send the instructor a **weekly log** by e-mail which gives (1) a log of hours spent on the research project for that week, and (2) a list of any questions which the student wants clarified as he works on the project. (N.B. The student is NOT required to keep or submit a log during the first external residency.)

Course Grading

The grading scale that will be used for the course is the following:

A	96-100
B	88-95
F	87 & Below

The three residency phases have a total maximum score of 1000 total points. The student's percentage grade will be determined by dividing the total number of points possible into the actual number he earns during the course.

The student must remember that for a Ph.D. course, a letter grade of "B" is necessary to pass the course.

The actual points per assignment for the course are given below:

External Residency A	
Precis	240 points (6x40)
Threaded Discussion (Precis)	120 points (12x10) (360 total points)
Internal Residency	
Paper Proposal	100 points
Leading of Discussion	50 points
General Interaction	50 points (200 total points)
External Residency B	
Weekly Email Logs	60 points (6x10)
Research Paper—Rough Draft	100 points
Research Paper—Final Draft	220 points
Threaded Discussion (Research Papers)	60 points (440 total points)

Course Schedule

The course schedule is given below. The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule somewhat based upon the number of students in the class and upon any new developments that take place in this field of study.

External Residency A	
Weeks # 1-6 Jan. 5-Feb. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the assigned book • Post precis of reading on threaded discussion • Interact with precis of other students
Internal Residency	
Monday Feb. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit topic for Research Paper • Receive assignment for Class Discussion • Discussions of Grammatical Interpretation: Grammar and Syntax
Tuesday Feb. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions of Grammatical Interpretation: Lexical Studies

Wednesday Feb. 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions of Rhetorical Interpretation: Prose
Thursday Feb. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of Rhetorical Interpretation: Poetry
Friday Feb. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Proposal for Research Paper Discussion of Historical Interpretation: Israel in the ANE
External Residency B	
Weeks # 1-4 Mar. 2-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post draft of Research Paper by noon on Friday of Week #4 (Mar. 27) E-mail research log/questions to instructor by noon on Friday of each week
Week # 5 Mar. 30-Apr. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post interaction with drafts of other student's papers by noon on Friday of Week #5 (Apr. 3) E-mail research log/questions to instructor by noon Friday (Apr. 3)
Week # 6 Apr. 6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Submits Final Draft of Research Paper no later than the last scheduled day of the class (Apr. 10) E-mail final research log to instructor by noon Friday (Apr. 10)

There will be no requirements for the week of Feb. 23-27 (for the sake of those who might be taking another course that week).

Suggested Works

The following works are suggested for supplemental reading:

☼ Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

☼ _____. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Averbeck, Richard E. et al, eds. *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2003.

☼ Berlin, Adele. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983.

☼ Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Third Ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

_____. *The Authority of the Old Testament*. Carlisle: Paternoster Publishing, 1997. Reprint of UK: Abingdon Press, 1967.

☼ Caird, G. B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Dorsey, David A. *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

----- . *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

☼ Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985.

☼ Kitchen, K. A. *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1966.

----- . *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

☼ Klein, Ralph W. *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: The Septuagint after Qumran*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Ed. Gene M. Tucker. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974.

Kuhrt, Amelie. *The Ancient Near East: 3000-330 BC*. 2 vols. New York: Routledge, 1998.

☼ McCarter, P. Kyle. *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Ed. Gene M. Tucker. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

☼ Silva, Moises. *God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. N.B. This volume is available in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation: Six Volumes in One* (ed. Moises Silva; Grand Rapids: Zondervan) for a very reasonable price.

☼ Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors*. Third Ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 2001.

☼ Tov, Emanuel. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies 3. Ed. Ora Lipschitz and Alexander Rofe. Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1981.

----- . *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Second ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2001.

☼ Watson, Wilfred G. E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*. JSOT Supplement 26. Ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1984.

☼ Westermann, Claus. *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*. Trans. Hugh Clayton White. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.

----- . *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

☼ Wurthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*. Trans. Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.