

## McMaster Divinity College

### GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

**Course:** Christian Worldview and the Hebrew Scriptures

**Term:** Winter 2014

**Class Schedule:** Tuesdays @ 7:00-9:00pm

**Professor:** Dr. Edward Ho

**Email:** edwardcwho@gmail.com

#### **Course Description**

This course is an orientation to the worldview revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Important concepts related to the formation, transmission and translation of Old Testament texts will be introduced. An overview of ancient Near Eastern thoughts will be given. Attention will also be paid to the contents of individual books of the Old Testament and how they contribute to the worldview embraced by the biblical Israelites.

#### **Course Objectives**

##### **Knowing:**

- To have an introductory knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament.
- To become familiar with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship on the Old Testament.
- To understand the Old Testament in its historical and cultural contexts.

##### **Being:**

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the Old Testament for the Church and society today.
- To be transformed by Christ through study of the Old Testament.

##### **Doing:**

- To be able to articulate the history of ancient Israel.
- To be able to formulate an integrated concept of God based on the Old Testament as a whole.

#### **Required Textbooks**

- Hill, Andrews E. and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thoughts and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- A Bible in a modern critical translation (e.g., NRSV, NJPS, NIV).

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 304 The East Mall, Suite

100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1; phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Course Evaluation**

#### **1. The OT Challenge (25%) – Feb 11.**

This is a short quiz written in class which focuses on four basic topics (see below) as well as a formal essay.

The topics the quiz will cover are:

- The order of books in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament
- The major OT textual traditions
- The major events in the OT
- The major eras of Israel's history

The topic of the short essay is: **“The Importance of Understanding the Background of the Old Testament in Its Interpretation.”**

#### **2. Book Review (25%) – Due Feb 11.**

- 8 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font throughout entire paper.

Read Walton (2006) in its entirety and write an engaging book review. A summary of the main points of the book should not exceed one half of your paper. The rest of your paper should focus on your reflection and your evaluation.

#### **3. Reading (10%) – Due Apr 8.**

Each student is required to read a significant portion of the Old Testament during the semester. Use the log-sheet provided to report the required reading completed.

#### **4. Research Paper (40%) – Due Apr 8.**

- 15 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font throughout entire paper.
- Footnotes must be single-spaced and 10pt Times New Roman font.

After reading Hill-Walton (2009) in its entirety students and the required OT portion, student will write a paper on **“The Portrayal of God and the World in the Old Testament”** interacting with both Hill-Walton (2009) and material covered in the classroom and at least 5 other secondary resources. By way of supplement to these 5 sources, a student may use a maximum of 2 internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of these internet resources. These secondary sources do not include the Bible. Each source listed must be drawn on in the paper and evidenced in the footnotes etc.

The theme(s) covered in the paper must interact with each of the major sections of the Old Testament (Torah, the Prophets and the Writings) and show awareness of the diversity exhibited within the Old Testament while also pointing out continuity and unity.

Your paper must include a statement on the title page stating the percentage of Hill-Walton (2009) read prior to the completion of the paper.

## Course Schedule

Lectures	Textbook Reading	Bible Reading	Assignment
<b>Jan 7</b> – Orientation; Introduction		Read the required portion of the Old Testament throughout the semester	
<b>Jan 14</b> – OT textual traditions	Walton (2006); Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 1, 2, 9, 19, 26		
<b>Jan 21</b> – OT and ANE parallels			
<b>Jan 28</b> – Israelite religions; OT history			
<b>Feb 4</b> – OT history			
<b>Feb 11</b> – OT Challenge			<b>Book Review due Feb 11</b>
<b>Feb 18</b> – Reading Week (NO CLASS)			
<b>Feb 25</b> – The Torah	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 3-8		
<b>Mar 4</b> – The Former Prophets	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 10-12, 14-15		
<b>Mar 11</b> – The Latter Prophets	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 27-29, 31		
<b>Mar 18</b> – The Latter Prophets	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 33-44		
<b>Mar 25</b> – The Writings	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 20-25		
<b>Apr 1</b> – The Writings	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 13, 16-18, 30, 32		
<b>Apr 8</b> – Approaching the NT	Hill-Walton (2009) chs. 45-47		<b>Reading Log and Research Paper due Apr 8</b>

**Academic Dishonesty** – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty located at <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

**Inclusive Language** ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments.

**Sexual Harassment** ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behaviour, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person’s body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

**Disclaimer** ~ This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.