



McMaster Divinity
College

Old Testament Spirituality



OT 5XH5

This course begins online on January 7

Class meets in person: Friday Feb 22: 9:00am-4:30pm; Saturday Feb 23 9:00am-1:30pm

Course continues online until conclusion on April 10

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Course Description:

This course examines the Old Testament as a key source for Christian spirituality and resource for how Christians may live a faithful life in contemporary society. Emphasis is first placed upon historical dimension of the text with ancient Israelite faith and spiritual practice examined under the rubrics of Creation, Covenant, Cult, Community and Commission. Knowledge of Old Testament spirituality will enable one to put true Christian spirituality in perspective. This course will demonstrate the indebtedness of Christian spirituality to the Old Testament and underscore its significance for contemporary spiritual practice and faith. The course will also reflect upon ways in which contemporary Christian spirituality can be informed, sustained, and nourished by the Old Testament. Furthermore, a foundation of OT spirituality will aid in discernment of truth from error with problematic modern spiritualities

Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To know the place of spirituality in OT theology
- To know the content of OT Creational theology and the significance of the 'goodness of creation' and the image of God for Christian spirituality
- To know the OT covenant texts and their foundational role for a spirituality of interconnectedness and relationship with and dependence upon God
- To understand the OT theological emphasis on community as opposed to modern individualism and the call toward the community of the faith
- To understand the cult of ancient Israel and the significance of its worship and sacrificial system as a means of restoring God's people and allowing a close relationship with God
- To understand the commissioning of Israel to be a kingdom of priests, with a mission of mercy and ministry to the larger world.

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the Old Testament for Christian spirituality today
- To grow closer to God through study of Old Testament spirituality

Doing

- To be able to discuss the relation of OT spirituality with modern discussions of spiritual life and Christian practice
- To be able to interpret relevant OT texts in their original contexts
- To be able to apply OT spirituality to contemporary audiences
- To be able to apply OT spirituality to our own lives

Required Texts:

- Deryck Sherrifs. *The Friendship of the Lord: An Old Testament Spirituality*. (Eugene, OR; Wipf and Stock, 2007).
- Brueggemann, Walter and Walter Brueggemann. *Spirituality of the Psalms*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Lombaard, Christo, *The Old Testament and Christian Spirituality: Theoretical and Practical Essays from a South African Perspective*. Society of Biblical Literature, 2012. Available free online. <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/IVBS-lombaard2012.pdf>

Textbook Purchase:

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 Bookstores, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON M9W 6H3: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Assignments and Schedule

1. 25% - Annotated Bibliography: Due February 1

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to *the spirituality of the Old Testament* and write a 100-150 word annotation for each one. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. **The literature review will be approximately 2,000 words.**

2. Pre-class Discussions (Jan – Feb 21): Online

Due to this being a hybrid course, much of the class discussion will occur online on the Avenue to Learn course website. Students must actively participate in the online discussion and post minimum **one** discussion topic at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues). Student posts must be in regard to the posted lectures / assigned readings that week. As well, to further the online discussion all students must respond to minimum **two posts** every week. Since initial posts will be online in the first part of the week, there will adequate time for all students to respond to posts in a timely manner. Instructions on how to participate in the online classroom will be sent to each student via email before the course begins.

Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

3. In-Class Component (Feb 22–23): At McMaster Divinity College

The on-campus Modules will consist of some in-class lectures, Q&A, presentations, and student presentations. Attendance is mandatory.

Student Led seminar discussion:

As part of the on-campus modules, each DPT student will lead the class in a 30-minute discussion of their research topic based upon their annotated bibliography. Students will introduce the topic to the class and give some of the contours of previous research, commenting on key texts and studies

4. 25% - Critical Literature Review Assignment. Due March 2

A formal paper will be prepared that summarizes the key learnings from the annotated bibliography and provides a cogent foundation for a theology and practice of *the topic of the course*. **The paper will be approximately 3,000 words.**

4. Post-Class Component (Feb 24–Apr 10): Online

A. Online Discussion

In the post-class component students must continue to actively participate in the online discussion but now only need to post **one** discussion topic at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues) and respond to **one other post** each week.

Participation in online discussion is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to participate every week their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

B. 40% - Major Assignment. Due March 23. Approximately 8,000 words.

The paper should include four key sections. First a brief, but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach, second an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?) Third, a consideration of a foundational theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area. Fourth some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and also their ministry beyond the local church).

C. 10% - Class Presentation. Due March 30.

The student will offer a class presentation of their final paper and its findings to the class. Presentations may take one of the following formats:

- i. Video presentation (posted to YouTube or Vimeo)
- ii. PowerPoint along with pdf handout which will be uploaded to Avenue to Learn for the rest of the students to view and read.

***Class presentations will form the basis for the online discussion for the final week of classes.*

College Style for Submission of Written Work

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers to be submitted in electronic format only (a pdf file)—no hardcopies! Email to pevans@mcmaster.ca. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., evans.researchpaper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received before the end of the calendar day on which they are due (i.e., before midnight Eastern Standard Time).

Policy concerning late papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, holidays, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by **April 10** in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

Academic Honesty.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence 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 one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty

~<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

Gender Inclusive language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings 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 and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

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 to and including the first day of class.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Selected Bibliography

- Anderson, Bernhard W., and Steven Bishop. *Contours of Old Testament Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999.
- Beale, G. K. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.
- _____. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997.
- Brueggemann, Walter, and Walter Brueggemann. *Spirituality of the Psalms*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002.
- Ceresko, Anthony R. *Introduction to Old Testament Wisdom: A Spirituality of Liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

- Craghan, John F. *Love and Thunder: A Spirituality of the Old Testament*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1983.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament. Translated by J.A. Baker*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1967.
- Gallares, Judette A. *Images of Faith: Spirituality of Women in the Old Testament*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994.
- Goldingay, John. *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Faith*. Downers Grove, ILL.: InterVarsity, 2006.
- _____. *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel*. Downers Grove, ILL.: InterVarsity, 2003.
- _____. *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Life*. Old Testament Theology. Downers Grove, ILL.: InterVarsity, 2009.
- Graef, Hilda C. *The Light and the Rainbow: A Study in Christian Spirituality from Its Roots in the Old Testament and Its Development through the New Testament and the Fathers to Recent Times*. London: Longmans, 1959.
- Holder, Arthur G. *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*. Blackwell Companions to Religion. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
- House, Paul R. *Old Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, ILL.: InterVarsity, 1998.
- McCarthy, Carmel, and William Riley. *The Old Testament Short Story: Explorations into Narrative Spirituality*. Message of Biblical Spirituality. Wilmington, DE.: M. Glazier, 1986.
- Paul Marie de la, Croix. *Spirituality of the Old Testament*. 3 vols. Cross and Crown Series of Spirituality ;. St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1961.
- Ralph, Margaret Nutting. *The Spirituality of the Psalms: Prayers for All Times*. Adult Faith Formation Library. New London, CT: Twenty-Third, 2015.
- Stuhlmueeller, Carroll, Carol J. Dempsey, and Timothy A. Lenchak. *The Spirituality of the Psalms*. Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical, 2002.