



Class meets asynchronously online:

- May 2–June 3, 2022

Class meets synchronously online:

- Tuesdays @ 1:00–2:50pm EST (May 3; May 31)

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Course Description:

The “Old Testament” is the Christian term for the collection of Hebrew & Aramaic books that make up the first part of the Christian canon of Scripture which was the collection of books that Jesus and the first Christians recognized as scripture. This course provides an orientation to the Old Testament and investigates the best ways to study these scriptures. This course provides an interpretive framework that is biblically and theologically grounded, spiritually sensitive, critically aware, and practically relevant. Attention will be paid to the contents of individual biblical books, their growth and development, and the historical contexts out of which they emerged (the ancient Near East). Focus will be given to the unity and diversity within the OT canon and important theological themes and motifs. An orientation will be given to key interpretive principles for reading and applying the OT Scriptures as we seek to mine the scriptures and apply them for church and society today.

Specializations: Biblical Studies, Church and Culture, and Pastoral Studies

Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To have an introductory knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament
- To gain familiarity with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship on the Old Testament
- To grasp the content of the Old Testament as a whole
- To understand the Old Testament in its historical contexts

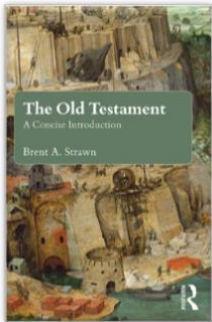
Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the Old Testament scriptures for the Church today
- To grow closer to God through study of his Word
- To be changed through encountering the Old Testament scriptures

Doing

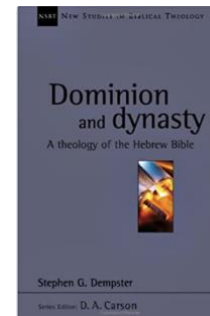
- To be able to interpret the different genres found in the Old Testament
- To be able to articulate the big picture story of the Old Testament
- To be able to apply the message of Old Testament texts to contemporary audiences

Required Textbooks:



Brent A. Strawn. *The Old Testament: A Concise Introduction*. New York; London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

Stephen G. Dempster. *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 15. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003.



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 Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Requirements

I. Synchronous Classroom Experiences (via Zoom conferencing app)

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

Successful classroom experiences depend on student commitment commensurate as how it would be in a face-to-face experience. Just as in a normal physical classroom experience, students are encouraged to take notes, participate in discussion through asking and answering questions, and wear appropriate attire. As much as is possible students should join the Zoom class in a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Please have your video turned on whenever possible. It is best practice to mute your microphone except for when you are intending to speak to the class. Students are encouraged to use digital virtual backgrounds if desired. Tasteful backgrounds can help with the issues of privacy, equity, and prevent distractions for others in the class (e.g., in the case of a family member walking in the background of your video).

***A link to participate via Zoom will be posted in an announcement on Avenue to Learn each week we meet.

1. Tuesday May 3 at 1:00–2:50pm EST

Class will meet virtually via Zoom. Our time together will include introductions and an overview of the class.

2. Tuesday May 31 at 1:00–2:50pm EST

Class will meet virtually via Zoom. In our time together we will share our reflections on course materials

2. Asynchronous Class Discussions- 50% (May 2 – June 3)

Most of the class will take place asynchronously online on the Avenue to Learn course website. Each week students will participate in the online discussion by **posting** responses to **two** discussion questions at the beginning of a week (Sun-Tues). 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.

Posts will involve student reflection on questions raised by the biblical text, the textbooks, or lecture videos for the week.

3. Reading - 10% - Due June 15, 2022

Each student is to complete the assigned readings which includes much of the Old Testament and the textbooks. Students will submit a detailed list of

- the reading that they have completed in the assigned textbooks (including page spreads for partial reading) and assigned articles available through A2L.
- Upload Reading List assignment to the appropriate Assignment Box on A2L.

4. Major Assignment - 40%. Due on June 15, 2022: Length: 12–15 pages

All major assignment papers must follow the MDC Style Guide. Papers should be double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font (footnotes should be single-spaced and 10pt). The major assignment must draw on (and explicitly cite) at least 12 sources within the paper. See “**Major Assignment Evaluation Guidelines**” below.

A. Major Assignments for Biblical Studies Specializations:

There are two (2) options for Biblical Studies: Choose only one (1) of the following:

- i. Research Paper: 12–15 pages** This is especially recommended if you are planning to go on to a research degree or write a thesis in OT (or if you have a particular topic in mind that you wish to write on). The topic of this research must be related to interpreting and applying the OT and approved by the professor.
- ii. Exegetical Paper: 12–15 pages** Students will write an exegetical paper on a chosen text from the OT scriptures (your chosen text must be approved by your professor).

The exegetical paper should include

1. A thesis statement
2. Discussion of the historical and cultural context
3. An exegesis of the passage
4. Discussion of how the passage fits within its broader context
5. Hermeneutical Approach Appropriated
6. Theological reflections and conclusion

B. Major Assignments for Pastoral Specializations:

There are three (3) options for Pastoral Specializations: Choose only one (1) of the following:

- i. Exegetical Paper: 12–15 pages** Students will write an exegetical paper as outlined above
- ii. Sermon on a passage from the OT (oral presentation). 25-30 minute video-taped sermon** uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo.

Beginning with the text of an OT passage studied in this course, this sermon will expound an OT passage, applying it to the contemporary context. The sermon will

be delivered orally but include a written paper with an outline. The paper may be a combination of sentence, bullets/point form, paragraphs (it need not be a complete essay of the words you preach). This paper should be grammatically correct and include appropriate citation of sources employed. See “Paper Evaluation” below.

iii. Sermon on a passage from the OT (written). 10 pages double-spaced.

This is the same assignment as outlined above, except the sermon will be an original written composition instead of delivered orally (but written with an aim to oral delivery). The submitted text should include an outline. The sermon must be written as it would be spoken and must *not* be in point form etc. but be a full written manuscript. It is expected it will conform to MDC style guide and be grammatically correct and acknowledge its sources appropriately (using Endnotes—not footnotes). See “Paper Evaluation” below.

C. Major Assignment for Church and Culture Specializations

There are two (2) options for the major assignment for Church and Culture specializations. Choose only one (1) of the following:

1: Sermon (oral presentation): a video-sermon uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo. Beginning with the biblical text this sermon will expound a passage of the OT a women character from the Old Testament and apply it to the contemporary context. Students must state who their audience is and the sermon must be relevant to the cultural context of the target audience.

The sermon should be 20–30 minutes long and although it will be delivered orally it will include a written paper with an outline. The paper may be a combination of sentence, bullets/point form, paragraphs (it need not be a complete essay of the words you preach). This paper should be grammatically correct and include appropriate citation of sources employed.

2: Interpretation/Application Paper:

Students will select an OT passage, interpret it, and suggest contemporary applications for the church. The paper should include

1. A thesis statement
2. Discussion of the historical and cultural context
3. An exegesis of significant or controversial verses
4. Contemporary theological reflections on the passage
5. Suggestions for applications to the contemporary church, cultural context, missions, evangelism, etc.
6. Conclusion

****Topics and passages must be approved by the professor.**

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/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/> Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers to be submitted in PDF format only. Upload the PDF file to the appropriate assignments folder on Avenue to Learn. 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 EST).

Policy Concerning Late Papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. 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 June 15, 2022 in order to avoid a failing grade in the class. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

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 ~

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

Class Schedule

Wk	Date	Classroom Experiences	Content	Discussion Topics
1	May 2-17	May 3 - Zoom Meeting: 1:00-2:50pm EST	Intro to the Course: OT as Scripture 101	
2	May 8-14	Avenue to Learn asynchronous discussions of readings and lecture video	Torah: Understanding Israel's Law & Covenant for today	Misogynist laws? Inhumane punishments! Sacred Promises
3	May 15- May 21	x Avenue to Learn asynchronous discussions of readings and lecture video	Prophets: Providing Perspective and Purpose	Tall Tales? Violent Battles! God's Kingdom
4	May 22-28	Avenue to Learn asynchronous discussions of readings and lecture video	Prophets: Predicting, Pronouncing & Resisting	Difficult Prophecies? <i>Not</i> about Jesus? All about Jesus!
5	May 29- June 3	May 31 - Zoom Meeting: 1:00-2:50pm EST	Writings: Worship, Wisdom & Real Life	Cursing Enemies? Prosperity Gospel? Pessimistic Scriptures?

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.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION

I. The following items are rated according to this scale: 1 = inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = superior.

Bibliographic consciousness	1 2 3 4 5
Range and Use of Sources	1 2 3 4 5
Clarity in Defining Issues	1 2 3 4 5
Strength of Argument	1 2 3 4 5
Awareness of Exegetical Issues	1 2 3 4 5
Accuracy of Data and Assertions	1 2 3 4 5
Analysis /Critical Thinking	1 2 3 4 5
Introduction (Thesis Statement /Clear Issue)	1 2 3 4 5
Development of Thesis (focus)	1 2 3 4 5
Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1 2 3 4 5
Organization/coherence of ideas	1 2 3 4 5
Grammar/Spelling	1 2 3 4 5
Neatness/Presentation	1 2 3 4 5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if so indicated

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified essay | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, Font size, Margins, Page numbers etc. need attention | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper needs balance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cite primary resources correctly/consistently (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:1; etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cite secondary resources correctly/consistently |

III. Comments

Bibliography

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