

# B\*110 Introduction to the Old Testament (3 credit hours)

Horizon College and Seminary, Fall 2009

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## Course Description

This course is a general introduction of the content and theology of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) in light of the ancient near east environment where it originated. Though commonly referred to as "Old," the writings and reflections contained within the Hebrew Bible were in fact quite novel for the ancient Israelites who first read and heard them. Accordingly, this course will seek to unpack the novelty of these texts by reading them in light of the scholarly understanding of the social, religious, and literary dynamics of the Old Testament world and highlighting relevant insights and implications for Christian life, doctrine, and ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given the sheer volume of the collection of material in view, we will not have time to discuss each individual book; however, emphasis will be given to a number of critical texts and general introductory matters (method, structure, author and audience, genre, etc.) that will allow the student to approach the OT with increased competence and understanding.

*Prerequisites:* none

## Course Textbooks

Longman, Tremper and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Holy Bible (RSV or NRSV are good translations)

*Also Recommended:*

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

## Course Objectives

**Cognitive:** by the end of the course students will

- Have a thorough knowledge of the contents and theology of the OT.
- Have a comprehensive understanding of these books in light of their place in the ancient near east.

- Be able to discuss the important theological themes in selected OT books.
- Be able to identify the novel aspects of the OT.
- Be aware of the numerous resources available for the study of the OT.

**Affective:** by the end of the course students will

- Gain an appreciation of the novelty of the OT.
- See new dimensions of the OT previously unrealized

**Conative:** by the end of the course students will

- Be able to read, understand, and discuss selected OT books in a manner that is faithful to the context in which they were written.
- Be able to discuss the contemporary relevance of the OT for the practical endeavours of the church.
- Be able to articulate some important implications of these texts for their own personal lives.

## Course Requirements

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes. Students who miss more than four seventy-five minute classes will forfeit 5% of their course grade for each absence after the fourth.

### **Required Readings**

Students are required to read all portions of the course textbooks as assigned by the instructor. Although no formal grades will be assigned for the completion of these readings, the course texts form a valuable supplement to the class lectures. As such, it is expected that each student will interact with the textbooks in order to better prepare him/herself for meaningful classroom discussion, quizzes, and any related questions that might appear on the final exam.

### **Quizzes (3x10%)**

In place of a midterm exam, students will be required to write three quizzes on dates assigned by the Academic Dean. These quizzes are cumulative in nature and will reflect material from the class lectures and assigned readings up to, but not including, the day of the quiz.

### **Class Presentation on an Assigned OT Book (30%)**

Since the instructor will not be able to cover every OT book, each student will, in consultation with the instructor, select and research one OT book of interest (not covered by the instructor) and present their findings to the class in a concise 10-15 minute presentation. In addition to the oral presentation, each student will distribute a one-page outline of their presentation to the class, and submit their findings to the professor in a well-crafted 4-5 page summary. Issues discussed in the presentation should include:

- The author and audience of the book
- The structure and content of the book
- The occasion surrounding the writing of the book
- What the author hoped to accomplish by writing the book
- The major theological themes in the book
- The contemporary relevance of the book

The breakdown of the assignment is as follows:

- Assignment of OT books (first day of class)
- Outline of presentation (5%; due Oct 7)
- Oral presentation (15%; presented on the date assigned by the instructor)
- Written component (10%; due exactly one week after the oral presentation)

**Final Exam (40%)**

Based on class lectures and assigned textbook readings.

**Bibliography**

A survey of recent important sources for the study of each Old Testament book can be found at the beginning of each chapter in Longman and Dillard’s *An Introduction to the Old Testament*.

**Course Outline**

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Mon Sep 21	General introductory matters	
Wed Sep 23	General introductory matters	L&D ch. 1
Mon Sep 28	Introduction to the Pentateuch; Introduction to Genesis	L&D ch. 2
Wed Sep 30	Primeval History	Gen 1-11; L&D ch. 2
Mon Oct 5	Patriarchs	Gen 12-50; L&D ch. 2
Wed Oct 7	Captivity and Exodus	Ex 1-19; L&D ch. 3
Mon Oct 12 (no class)	Thanksgiving	
Wed Oct 14	Decalogue and its expansion	Ex 20-Deut; L&D chs. 3-6
Mon Oct 19	Introduction to the Former Prophets; Joshua	Joshua; L&D ch. 7
Wed Oct 21	Judges	Judges; L&D ch. 8
Mon Oct 26	Samuel	Samuel; L&D ch. 10

Wed Oct 28	Kings	Kings; L&D ch. 11
Mon Nov 2	Introduction to the Latter Prophets	
Wed Nov 4	Prophets of the Assyrian Period; student presentations	Amos; Hosea; Isa 1-39; Micah; L&D chs. 20, 25, 27, 30
Mon Nov 9	Prophets of the Babylonian Period	Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Isa 40-55; L&D chs. 20, 21, 23
Wed Nov 11 (no class)	Remembrance Day	
Mon Nov 16	Prophets of the Baylonian Period; student presentations	Zephaniah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Obadiah; L&D chs. 28, 31, 32, 33
Wed Nov 18	Prophets of the Persian Period; student presentations	Isa 56-66; Haggai; Zechariah; L&D chs. 20, 34, 35
Mon Nov 23	Prophets of the Persian Period; Student presentations	Malachi; Joel; Jonah; L&D chs. 26, 29, 36
Wed Nov 25	Introduction to the Writings; Psalms	Psalms; L&D ch. 16
Mon Nov 30	Introduction to the Wisodm writings; Proverbs	Proverbs; L&D ch. 17
Wed Dec 2	Job; Ecclesiastes	Job; Ecclesiastes; L&D chs. 15, 18
Mon Dec 7	Other writings; student presentations	Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Lamentations; L&D chs. 9, 14, 22
Wed Dec 9	Other writings; student presentations	Ezra-Nehemiah; Chronicles; Daniel; L&D chs. 12, 13, 24

## Horizon College/University of Saskatchewan Assessment of Student Work

**90-100% [Exceptional]** – a superior performance with consistent strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

**80-89% [Excellent]** – an excellent performance with strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
- a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

**70-79% [Good]** – a good performance with evidence of:

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
- a good understanding of relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a good ability to organize, to analyze and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner.

**60-69% [Satisfactory]** – a generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of:

- an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
- a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
- a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material;
- a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.

**50-59% [Minimal Pass]** – a barely acceptable performance with evidence of:

- a familiarity with the subject material;
- some evidence that analytical skills have been developed;
- some understanding of relevant issues;
- some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner, which are only partially successful.

**Under 50% [Failure]** – an unacceptable performance