

SYLLABUS
MCS 500: OLD TESTAMENT I
PROMISE, COVENANT, AND PRAISE

Master of Christian Studies
Union University
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Summer Session, 2008 (June 3-July 22)
Tuesday Nights (5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Promise, Covenant, and Praise is an investigation of the theological implications of God's promises that were given to his covenant people, as well as the people's response to God in praise and lament. This course will analyze these themes through the study of the history, background, literary genre, structure, and theology of Genesis through Esther and the Book of Psalms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, each student should have achieved the following objectives in relation to the course:

- a. understanding of the basic hermeneutical skills and tools required for sound exegesis and application of the Old Testament;
- b. knowing the canonization process for the Old Testament;
- c. knowledge of the chronology of Old Testament events;
- d. understanding the foundational significance of Genesis 1-11;
- e. having completely read the text of the Old Testament associated with the biblical books studied in the course (Genesis-Esther and the Book of Psalms);
- f. awareness of the major theological themes associated with the Old Testament books studied;
- g. enhanced ability to relate Old Testament events to contemporary life situations and the spiritual formation of born-again believers; and
- h. the further exercise and development of research and communicative skills.

TEXTBOOKS

Hamilton, Victor P. Handbook on the Pentateuch. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

_____. Handbook on the Historical Books. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are encouraged to re-read the section entitled “Academic Integrity” on page 21 of the *2007-2008 Graduate Academic Catalogue* for Union University as the guidelines presented, therein, will be enforced in this course.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend each class period for the full duration of the class. As a roll call will be staged at the beginning of each class, it is the responsibility of each student—who arrives for class after the roll call has been completed—to consult with the Instructor to ensure that the Instructor has record of his/her presence. Students should also be aware that tardiness and absences will impact the Instructor’s assessment of the student’s participation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are expected to read the books of the Old Testament—associated with this course (Genesis-Esther and the Book of Psalms)—in their entirety, in accordance with the Tentative Course Schedule provided in this syllabus, and from the translation of the student’s choice. This reading is considered to be preparatory for further instruction and discussion; therefore, the Instructor reserves the right to engage students in impromptu exercises during any class period and in relation to the biblical readings assigned for that class period. Such exercises will also factor into the Instructor’s final assessment of the student’s class participation.
2. Students are expected to read textbook assignments in accordance with the Tentative Course Schedule provided in this syllabus. As with the readings from the Old Testament, these readings are considered to be essential for instructional and other class participation purposes; therefore, they—too—will be subject to impromptu exercises that factor into the class participation assessment.
3. For the second through the seventh class periods (June 10 through July 15), students will be expected to develop a Reflective-Application Summary for each class period. These summaries will provide opportunities for students to take Old Testament periscope—related to this course—and demonstrate the application of passage interpretations to current events, controversial issues, or spiritual formation. The guidelines for these summaries are provided below.

- a. Each summary should be type-written (12-font), double-spaced, four to six pages in length, and in Microsoft Word document format. The student's name and the date of the class period for which the summary is submitted should be in the upper, right-hand corner of the summary.
- b. The summary should involve at least one pericope associated with the Old Testament textual reading assigned for the class period during which the summary is submitted; but only one summary—for the entire term—may be done from the book of Psalms
- c. All summaries must be submitted to the Instructor *via* the email address provided by the Instructor at the top of this syllabus, unless the Instructor provides the class with another email address. No paper submissions will be accepted by the Instructor; and all submissions must be transmitted no later than 5:30 p.m. of the evening of the class. On the subject line of the electronic submission, the student should place:

“RAS”

The Instructor will redirect an email message indicating receipt of the submission no later than twenty-four (24) hours after electronic submission.

- d. Summary content should be presented in narrative form and include:
 - (1) a subject title that addresses the controversial subject, current event, or issue pertinent to spiritual formation;
 - (2) presentation of the significance of the issue;
 - (3) citation of the biblical passage(s) selected;
 - (4) the historical context of the biblical passage;
 - (5) the interpretive relationship between the issue and the passage;
 - and
 - (6) application conclusions.
 - e. Grading criteria for the summaries will be as follows:
 - (1) adherence to summary guidelines (15%)
 - (2) issue selection and passage selections (15%)
 - (3) historical/contextual discussion (15%)
 - (4) interpretive application (15%)
 - (5) argument (25%)
 - (6) grammar and style (15%)
4. On the first day of class, the Instructor will provide students with the directions for access to an online bulletin board developed exclusively for this class. In addition to the Reflection-Application Summaries, students shall be required to post a one-to-two paragraph abstract of their Reflection-Application summaries. These post are due at the same time that the Reflection-Application summaries are due.

Each week, prior to the third through eighth class periods (June 17-July 22) each student should also post at least one response to at least one other class members summary abstract. Response paragraphs should be at least a paragraph in length.

The class will also discuss, on the first day of class, the possibility of facilitating the exchange of entire Reflection-Application summaries.

5. Students are responsible for all lecture information and supplemental material (handouts, PowerPoint slides, etc.) provided by the Instructor. The final examination will test the student's understanding of such material.
6. The final examination shall be rendered during the final half of the class period on July 23. Information from a final examination "pre-lecture" will be integrated into the final examination exercise.

GRADING

Final grades shall be determined as follows:

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|----------------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation | 20% |
| Reflection-Application Summaries | 30% |
| Final Examination | 50% |

The grading scale for this course is:

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|----------|---|
| 95-100 | A |
| 85-94 | B |
| 75-84 | C |
| 65-74 | D |
| Below 65 | F |

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

| Class Date | Class Discussion | Old Testament Reading Assignment | Textbook Assignment |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| June 3 | Course Introduction; The Basics of Old Testament Hermeneutics; Introduction to the Old Testament | | |
| June 10 | Introduction to the Pentateuch Introduction to Genesis Genesis 1-11 | Genesis 1-11 | Pentateuch (Chs. 1, 2) |
| June 17 | Genesis (Cont'd); Exodus; Introduction to Psalms | Genesis 12-50; Exodus 1-40; Psalm 90 | Pentateuch (Chs. 3-10) |
| June 24 | Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy | Leviticus 1-27; Numbers 1-36; Deuteronomy 1-34 Psalms 1-34 | Pentateuch (Chs. 11-23) |
| July 1 | Introduction to the Historical Books; Joshua Judges | Joshua 1-24 Judges 1-21 Psalms 35-89 | Historical Books (Chs. Joshua; Judges) |
| July 8 | Ruth; 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 1-11 | Ruth 1-4; 1 Samuel 1-31 2 Samuel 1-24 1 Kings 1-11 Psalms 91-124 | Historical Books (Chs. Ruth; 1 Samuel; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11) |
| July 15 | 1 Kings (Cont'd) 2 Kings 1-25 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Esther Ezra Nehemiah | 1 Kings 12-24 2 Kings 1-25 1 Chronicles 1-29 2 Chronicles 1-36 Esther 1-10 Ezra 1-10 Nehemiah 1-13 Psalms 125-150 | Historical Books (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25; 1-2 Chronicles; Ezra-Nehemiah; Esther) |
| July 22 | Pre-Examination Lecture; Final Examination | | |

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Selected Bibliography will be provided, by the Instructor, on the first day of class.