

# Carey Theological College

## BIBL 501: Introduction to the Old Testament

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April 3 – June 9

3.0 graduate credit hours, 135 hours

Masters level course

*While every effort has been made to be accurate as of January 1, 2017, syllabi produced before the beginning of class are subject to change.*

### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to give you an overview of the background and contents of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, to offer a basic orientation to the field of Old Testament study, and to locate the place of the Old Testament in the life of the Church today.

### Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will:

1. Have a basic but panoramic knowledge of the content and purpose of the major divisions and the books of the Old Testament, including some of their literary characteristics, historical background, theological themes, and their major characters, events, and places.
2. Use the Old Testament more intelligently in your teaching and preaching ministry.
3. Have greater access to study tools and methods introduced in this course.
4. Have a greater appreciation for the Old Testament and be motivated to continue your study of the Old Testament.

### Required Reading

LaSor, William S., David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996. (JRA BS 1140.2. L25 1996, no substitution with first edition).

Additionally, skim the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi before the start of the course even if previously read (note this is not counted in the allocated hours for reading).

### Time Investment

<i>Activity/Assignment</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Assigned Readings	32

Online Participation	30
Short Papers	41
Exegetical and Application Paper	32
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>135</b>

**Please note:** The amount of time taken by students will vary. This information is intended to be used as an approximation for planning purposes.

## Evaluation

<i>Activity/Assignment</i>	%
Online Discussions	15%
Short Papers	45%
Exegetical and Application Paper	40%
<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Assignments

### 1. Assigned Readings (32 hours)

Read assigned chapters from the main textbook before starting each unit.

You must report online if you have read the required reading for the week. I use the percentage of reading to move final grades up or down.

### 2. Online Reading and Discussions (30 hours)

Based on the readings and learning module material (on CONNECT) for that week, you are expected to participate in the online discussions. There will be questions posted each week that will provide the framework for the discussions. Make one initial posting for each discussion topic and provide two brief responses to the postings of other students. Generally, **initial postings should be completed by Wednesday evening of each week and responses by Saturday night**. You will provide a minimum of three postings for each discussion to show your active participation in the course.

**Note:** You cannot post to a unit after midnight of each Saturday.

Your **initial posting** is expected to demonstrate informed interaction with the topic and readings. The length of your initial posting will vary, but 200–250 words should be adequate for an analysis and thoughtful contribution to the discussion. Imagine you are in a classroom and everyone in the group needs to add to a discussion – I am not looking for monologues on the topic, but a sense that you have understood the question, examined the material and gleaned insights. You do not need to add something new to the discussion – but your initial post should feature your own insights, questions, or summary according to the question(s) posted. Do not make personal experience or feelings the central

feature of your post. The professor is looking for critical thinking and thoughtful analytical answers that incorporate what you have learned through your readings and learning modules. Please cite your sources. Please put word count at the bottom of the postings.

Your **responses** to other students' postings need to demonstrate a considered reply. It is not sufficient to simply state that you agree with him/her. You may agree or disagree with what your classmate posts; but in 150–200 words you need to communicate why. Keep your responses short – remember you are reading a lot of them over the course of the term! Encouraging comments in your responses are fine, but they must be a small part of your response (you can email them personally with your personal more pastoral comments). Each discussion is monitored and graded according to the quality of the posting. NOTE: postings that include citations from different sources will receive better grades.

### 3. Short papers (41 hours)

- a. On three of the weeks you will be asked to submit a short paper instead of posting your discussion on-line.
- b. The nature of the questions is similar to the discussion questions, but you will have a chance to demonstrate your ability to think a little more deeply, do some research, and write a formal response. **You must consult a few journal articles and commentaries for each paper** (see bibliography, commentaries and online resources below). They must be cited in your paper as footnotes and bibliography.
- c. Write absolutely no more than 800 words on one of the topics. **The word count must be clearly visible on the cover page of your paper.**

#### Short paper 1: DUE APRIL 18

Check all the options in each unit before deciding which one to choose.

- **Option 1:** “How do you evaluate the so-called Documentary Hypothesis? Do you feel your faith is threatened by such critical theories about the Bible?” Submit your paper by Saturday midnight on the Assignments page.
- **Option 2:** “When you read it for its theology rather than superficially, what is Gen. 1-11, esp. the first 3 chapters, teaching about God, humanity, the created world, and the relationships between the three?”
- **Option 3:** “While Gen 12-50 seems to be a very particular family story, it has universal implications. In the heart of the Abrahamic Covenant is a universal clause. How do you interpret this key covenant and the significance of its promise for us today?”

#### SHORT PAPER 2: DUE MAY 3

Choose only 1 of the options below and identify in your paper which option you have chosen.

- **Option 1:** “Purity and holiness are two key concepts in Leviticus. Do you think Christians today take these concepts seriously enough? Explain your view? In what concrete ways should purity and holiness work themselves out in the Christian’s life?”
- **Option 2:** “How might the book of Numbers be a warning or encouragement for us today? Can people, after having been delivered and redeemed by Christ, forfeit their promise by being disobedient? What are your scriptural and theological bases?”
- **Option 3:** “Pp. 117-18 of the textbook points out that the challenge to interpret and apply ancient scriptural texts to contemporary settings is not a unique problem for us. It was there in the Bible itself. Deuteronomy was not only meaningful for Moses’ listeners, but took on

renewed significance during the late Monarchy, and again after the Exile, and I might add, once more during the late Second-Temple period. How might we read Deuteronomy today with renewed relevance? In other words, what situations in today's world or today's church do you think Deuteronomy has a message for?"

### **SHORT PAPER 3: DUE MAY 16**

Choose only 1 of the options below and identify in your paper which option you have chosen.

- **Option 1:** "Compare the achievements of David with those of Solomon, and then do the same with their sins. Who is the greater king and who is the greater sinner? Why? What does the Bible show as the most significant difference between these two men?"
- **Option 2:** "What were some of the reasons why syncretism and Baal worship were so much more appealing to the Israelites than the worship of Yahweh? Where can forms of these seductions be seen in today's church?"
- **Option 3:** "The kings of Judah lived in the tension between obedience to God and operating by the 'rules of the game' in international politics. How might their experience be instructive for us as we seek to live faithfully in the world with its often ambiguous 'game rules'?"

### **4. Exegetical and Application Paper (32 hours): DUE JUNE 9**

Each student will be required to take a passage from the Old Testament and write a 2500 word paper. 1800–2000 words will be dedicated to exegesis, explaining the meaning of the passage in its original context according to the intention of the original author. 500–700 words will be dedicated to application, showing how this passage should be applied today personally and within the church.

1. Choose a passage and submit it to me for approval.
2. Establish the structure of your passage and use this for headings and subheadings in your paper.
3. In the body of your paper you should:
  - a. Explain how this passage fits into the immediate and greater context of the book (note: this is called examining the literary context).
  - b. Explain the historical situation surrounding this text and its effect on the meaning of the text.
  - c. Explain the meaning of any significant words or concepts in your passage and include any important social or religious background which will help elucidate your passage.
  - d. Include insights from scholars always citing them appropriately.
  - e. In a separate section give the application of the passage to your present context (e.g. personal and the church).
4. Conclusion.

## **Course Schedule**

NOTE: Assigned readings in each unit are from the textbook (LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush). Please read them before starting each unit. The reading assignments are roughly 50–60 pages per unit. Therefore, pace your reading accordingly. Don't be caught off guard and fall behind.

<b>Week 1</b>	April 3-9
Topic/Activity	Unit 1 - Prolegomena to the Study of the Old Testament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it?</li> <li>• How we got it</li> <li>• Why read it?</li> <li>• How to read it</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Chapters 44–49 (pp. 583–640 = 58 pp.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b> LaSor defines revelation as “divine disclosure (lit. uncovering) of truth in the Scriptures” whereas inspiration “relates to the initial human reception of that truth prompted by the divine Spirit”. In light of these definitions and your own church tradition or personal understanding, what is the place of the OT as Scripture? Do you see it as mainly containing shadows of NT fulfillments or laws that no longer apply? What do you think we’ll miss as Christians if don’t have the OT? Note – please be sure to</p>
Assignments Due	Use this time to do your Short Paper #1 assignment.
<b>Week 2</b>	April 10-16
Topic/Activity	UNIT 2 – The Torah (Pentateuch): Genesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and Fall</li> <li>• Primeval History and Patriarchal History</li> <li>• Promise and Covenant</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 1–3
Assignments Due	
<b>Week 3</b>	April 17-23
Topic/Activity	UNIT 3 – The Torah (Pentateuch): Exodus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redemption from Egypt</li> <li>• Life of Moses</li> <li>• Covenant and Law</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 4–5 <p><b>Discussion</b> Respond to the following question. “Two of the central miraculous elements of the Exodus narrative are the ten plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea (Heb. Sea of Reeds). The textbook presents some “natural explanations” for aspects of these two series of miraculous events. Do you think they detract from or add to your appreciation of God’s power in these events?”</p>

Assignments Due	<i>Shore Paper 1 due April 18</i>
<b>Week 4</b>	April 24-30
Topic/Activity	UNIT 4 – The Torah (Pentateuch): Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship and Holiness</li> <li>• Wilderness Wandering</li> <li>• Covenant Renewal</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 6–8
Assignments Due	Use this time to do your Short Paper #2 assignment.
<b>Week 5</b>	May 1-7
Topic/Activity	UNIT 5 – The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conquest and Settlement</li> <li>• Period of the Judges</li> <li>• The Prelude to Monarchy: Samuel and Saul</li> <li>• David and Solomon</li> <li>• Israel and Judah</li> <li>• The Fall and the Exile</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 9–15 <b>Discussion</b> “By now you should have read in the textbook a number of times about the idea of progressive revelation. It basically explains that not everything recorded in the Old Testament is the final word, that sometimes God allowed or even instructed people to do things that seem to run counter to what is taught in the New Testament simply because that’s where they were at. There is a sense of divine accommodation to human limitations and even sin. Does this idea trouble you or help you to make sense of passages that were once puzzling? How far do you think this idea can go without diminishing the authority of the Old Testament?”
Assignments Due	<i>Shore Paper 2 due May 3</i>
<b>Week 6</b>	May 8-14
Topic/Activity	UNIT 6 - The Latter Prophets (Major Prophets): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Nature of Prophecy</li> <li>• The Prophets: Their Contexts, Persons, and Messages</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 16–17, 21–22, 24–25

Assignments Due	Use this time to do your Short Paper #3 assignment.
<b>Week 7</b>	May 15-21
Topic/Activity	UNIT 7 – The Latter Prophets (Twelve Minor Prophets): Hosea–Malachi
Readings/Discussions	<p>Read Chapters 18–20, 23, 26–30</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>When you read Hosea you can't help but feel empathy for him and his tragic marriage. He was probably from the upper classes, an astute writer and fully aware of the political context. Yet he submits to God's will to marry a promiscuous woman. It seems that his compassion for his people reflects God's compassion for His people and the brokenness and pain he has experienced has made him a more compassionate and sensitive spokesperson. Do you think it is fair that God has allowed Hosea to experience this pain and suffering? Do you think it is fair that God has allowed you to experience your pain and suffering? How has your suffering shaped you? More bitter? More compassionate? More confused?</p>
Assignments Due	<i>Short Paper 3 due May 16</i>
<b>Week 8</b>	May 22-28
Topic/Activity	<p>UNIT 8 – The Writings: Lamentations, Psalms, Song of Songs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hebrew Poetry</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	<p>Read Chapters 31–32, 37, 39</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>What insight about how believers should express grief do you find in Lamentations? Similarly, Psalms provides a rich repertoire of material for the expression of worship, lament, anger and many others. Do you think enough room is given for this type of expression in the church today? Consider the songs of worship that are used, the types of sermons preached, the space for prayer and ministry, etc.</p>
Assignments Due	
<b>Week 9</b>	May 29-June 4
Topic/Activity	<p>UNIT 9 – The Writings: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisdom Literature</li> <li>• Forms and Contents</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 33–36
Assignments Due	Those in BIBL 501 use this time to complete your Exegetical and Application Paper. Those in BIBL 103 use this time to complete Short Paper #5.

<b>Week 10</b>	June 5-11
Topic/Activity	UNIT 10 – The Writings: Ruth, Esther, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Daniel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narratives</li> <li>• Apocalyptic Literature</li> </ul>
Readings/Discussions	Read Chapters 38, 40–43
Assignments Due	<i>Exegetical Paper due June 9</i>

## Bibliography

See the extensive bibliographies at the back of LaSor's book. Some more recent survey texts from various perspectives are listed below.

Brueggemann, Walter. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Westminster John Knox, 2003. (JRA BS1140.3 .B78 2003)

Collins. John J. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: With CD-Rom*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. (JRA BS1140.3 .C653 2007 abridgment edition with companion webpages at [www.collinstext.com](http://www.collinstext.com))

Longman, Tremper, and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2nd Ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006. (JRA BS1140.3 .L66 2006 BS1140.2 .D55 1994 1st ed.)

Lucas, Ernest C. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006. (300 p. JRA BS1194.E93 v.3)

McConville, Gordon. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophet*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008. (272p. JRA BS1194.E93 v.4)

Satterthwaite, Philip E. and J. Gordon McConville. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Historical Books*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. (295p. JRA BS1194.E93 v.2)

Wenham, Gordon J. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002. (300 p. JRA BS1194.E93 v.1)

## On-Line Resources

There is a virtual ocean of resources on the internet helpful for the study of the Old Testament. The following is a mere sampling of such resources, each of which may contain some elements helpful to your study in this course and beyond. As with any on-line resources, you should approach these sites with the proper caution and discernment. Their listing here does not represent any kind of endorsement other than the acknowledgement that some useful materials are found in them.

- BibleGateway: <http://www.biblegateway.com/>
- Blue Letter Bible: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.cfm>

especially its “Strong’s Search Tool”: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/freeoffer.cfm#strongs>

- The Society of Biblical Literature’s Research Tools: <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/researchtools.aspx>
- The Society for Old Testament Study: <http://www.sots.ac.uk/resources.html>
- Yale Divinity Library Bibliography: <http://www.library.yale.edu>
- Jin Yang Kim’s Web Resources for OT Studies: <http://otstory.wordpress.com/web-resources-for-ot-studies/>
- Torrey Seland’s Resource Page for Biblical Studies: <http://www.torreys.org/bible/>
- Andreas Kostenberger’s web links for Biblical Studies: <http://www.biblicalfoundations.org>

**ATTENTION:**

The best place to find on-line sources is to use the Allison Library Databases. There are many full text journals that you can download which will provide more than adequate resources for your written assignments. Contact the librarian at Regent College or the Registrar of Carey (Sherman Lau [registrar@carey-edu.ca](mailto:registrar@carey-edu.ca)) for the instructions and passwords to use this resource.

Note: you can limit your search to “full text” journals. This is helpful if you do not have access to a library, but I recommend that you do not do this since you might be able to find the full text by going to the website of the journal.

For example, if you search for “Craig Smith” under Christian Periodical Index (CPI) you will find several articles including “Reaching the Kidderminster Kids” in the Christian History journal. There is no full text on CPI but if you go to the Christian History website ([www.christianhistorymagazine.org](http://www.christianhistorymagazine.org)) you will find the full text article in pdf format (<http://www.christianhistorymagazine.org/index.php/back-issues/89-content-baxter/>).

## Academic Policies

Please see the **Carey Academic Catalog** for more details:

<http://www.carey-edu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Academic-Catalog-2016-2017-FINAL.pdf>

### **Course Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions to fulfil degree requirements. This includes on-line webinars and/or live-streamed portions of courses.

### **Carey Grading Scale**

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for details on the Carey grading scale.

### **Course Withdrawal Policy**

A student who withdraws after the period for which tuition refunds are available within the first half of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. Beyond those dates, they will receive an “F.”

### **Extensions**

Extensions for course work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If an extension will make it impossible for the professor to submit the final grade no later than one month following the final assignment, the student must petition the Registrar’s Office. If the Registrar’s Office grants such a request, the final extension deadlines will be clearly established. Work granted an extension may receive a grade reduction of up to one-third of the final mark.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. Students are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Academic dishonesty is acting in a manner to gain unearned academic credit. Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarizing by misrepresenting the work of another person (in whole or in part) as a student’s own work or failing to give credit for either wording or ideas that belong to another.
- Submitting the same material for credit in more than one course (whether the earlier submission was at Carey or another institution).
- Using unauthorized aids of any sort in examinations, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized recording and use of class lectures.

Penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense. All students are responsible for knowing and practicing academic integrity and must become familiar with the plagiarism student resource at:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>.

### **Gender Language**

As language usage changes, the church must discern where its language must change in order to bear faithful witness to the gospel. Modern English usage has moved away from using masculine terms to refer to groups that include women. Using of such terms in worship, writing, or conversation miscommunicates the invitation of the gospel and the nature of the church. Assignments that don’t conform to the gender language policy will be returned to the student for resubmissions.

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for more details on this policy.