

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

TITLE: Genesis through Esther

TERM: Fall 2019-2020

PROFESSOR: Ron Tappy

CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: _____
AUDITORS: 1

UNLIMITED X
NO AUDITORS _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the Pentateuch (Torah) and Historical Books (Former Prophets) of the Old Testament with an exploration of factors that gave rise to and helped shaped this material. Attention is given to the specific content of these books, to the various literary genres, to methods used in the interpretation of Scripture (source, form, redaction, literary, socio-cultural, canonical, and rhetorical criticism), and to the applicability of archaeological data in reconstructing the ancient world in which the texts arose. Our goal is to seek a deeper understanding of core theological themes within the Judeo-Christian tradition, how these themes relate, and their significance in the church and world today.

CLASS OBJECTIVES: In this course, students will:

- 1.) engage in a critical introduction to the historical books of the Old Testament (Genesis through Esther);
- 2.) read significant portions of each these books, develop a first-hand knowledge of the basic context of each book, and consider the theological relationships between the various books;
- 3.) become familiar with major figures in the area of biblical studies who, over the last century, have analyzed specific portions of the canon;
- 4.) consider issues related to textual and literary analyses, such as problems of historical and sociological reconstruction, the applicability of various archaeological data to the study of the Bible, and the larger world of Israel's neighbors and their literary traditions (i.e., ancient Israel's cultural context);
- 5.) assess the impact that the various socio-cultural environments and traditions had upon the formation and development of ancient Israel and its literature;
- 6.) develop, through the pursuit of the areas mentioned above, a holistic rather than a narrowly focused approach to the study of the Bible;
- 7.) arrive at an understanding of the message of these writings (a) as it related to the specific historical and cultural phase within which each text was composed and (b) as we may apply it correctly and effectively in our own culture and life circumstances (both personal and communal).

PREREQUISITES: None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/READING:

Primary: Readings from the Old Testament (students may select the translation of their choice)

Secondary (but required):

Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. **First** (2006), **Second** (2011), **Third** (2014), or **Fourth** (2017) Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. (Fourth Edition = ISBN: 978-0190608651)

Marc Z. Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically and Religiously*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. (ISBN-10: 0190218711 or ISBN-13: 978-0190218713)

(miscellaneous articles and book chapters as assigned – available via MYPTS)

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Based on assignments, attendance, and class participation

Three quizzes on contents of Genesis - 2 Kings & lectures; a one-page writing assignment; Final Exam

ATTENDANCE: Required.