

Old Testament Theology
OT 6306 Course Syllabus, Spring 2010
Austin Graduate School of Theology

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Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 1:00-3:00 P. M.
Thursday: 10:00-12:00 P. M.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance and participation, including in-class projects on theological themes (see below; 25% of grade).
One Mid-term exam (25% of grade)
One Final Exam (25% of grade).
One term paper on an Old Testament Text/Theological Theme, not to exceed 7 pages (25% of grade).

Textbooks:

A Study Bible, such as the Oxford Annotated Study Bible of the NRSV, or other study Bible.
Routledge, Robin. *Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008.
Shipp, R. Mark. *Old Testament Theology Handbook* (course packet available in the bookstore).

Course Goals:

The goals of this course are to 1) cultivate the ability to interpret the text of the Old Testament theologically; 2) to relate these interpretive skills to the life of the Church and discipleship today; and 3) through the lens of theological interpretation of the text, demonstrate the connection between these texts and the practice of ministry.

Course Objectives:

The primary objective for the course is for the student to gain a knowledge of and appreciation for Old Testament theological themes. Second, the student will gain a knowledge of representative Old Testament theologians over the past 250 years. Because Old Testament theology is an attempt to synthesize main currents and major theological principles from the text of the Old Testament, it is helpful for us to survey those who have gone before and analyze the different approaches they have taken to the questions of Old Testament theology. Third, the student will be able to relate these themes and principles to New Testament texts. Finally, the student will be able to relate Old Testament themes to the life of faith and practical ministry today.

Course Format:

The course will primarily have a lecture format, but periodically some time will be spent by students in groups or as individuals working on projects dealing with theological themes to present to the class.

General Comments on the History of the Study of Old Testament Theology:

Old Testament theology as a discipline of study is only roughly 250 years old. Before the advent of Biblical Theology, scripture was used as either a resource for dogmatic, or systematic, theology (i.e., it provided doctrine for the church), or as an apologetic tool for the refutation of error. With the advent of “scientific criticism” in the 1700s in the humanities in general, biblical criticism was also affected. It was soon discovered that it was possible to study the Bible for its own sake, apart from the use which the church makes of it. In this way, it was felt, biblical theology could inform, correct, and enrich the church, rather than simply reflect its doctrine and practices. It was also discovered that the theologies of the Old and the New Testament were not identical and that one could profit from the study of one to the virtual exclusion of the other. While this consensus has reigned for over 200 years, and the study of the testaments has been for the most part discrete, there has been in recent years a greater appreciation for the lines of theological continuity between the testaments.

It is my conviction that one cannot understand the New Testament without understanding its main literary and theological source, the Old Testament. It is also my conviction that Old Testament theology is best served by studying its own contents and meaning in first place, before reading those contents through the lens of the New Testament, church history, or church doctrine (systematic theology). We shall, therefore, approach Old Testament theology on its own merits, but we shall also keep one eye on the New Testament and on Christian theology, because we are not Jews, but Christians. We have a history and a theological heritage, therefore, which must also be a part of the equation as we study the theology of the Old Testament.

General Bibliography: Histories, Critiques, and Methodological Analyses:

- Clements, Ronald. *100 Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976).
Hasel, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4th edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
Hayes, John and Prussner, Frederick. *Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985).
Knight, Douglas and Tucker, Gene, eds. *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters* (Chico: Scholars, 1985).
Ollenburger, Ben. *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
Reventlow, Henning G. *Problems in Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
_____, *Problems in Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).
Rogerson, John. *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

*See main bibliography for a more exhaustive list.

Software, Database, and Internet Resources:

There are several software and database resources which Austin Graduate School of Theology provides which are especially helpful for the graduate student. All students in OT 6301 are expected to become familiar with these resources and utilize them especially in the research and preparation of papers:

Accordance Bible Search software: Computer concordance, Bible, and Bible-related database and search engine. Available on the library computers, or you may elect to use your own Bible search software.

Online Periodicals: Through *EBSCO*, Austin Graduate School has access to over 200 full-text journals on the web. See the librarian for access.

ATLA Database: The American Theological Library Association maintains a massive bibliographic database of theological journals and books. Please use this resource for identifying important books and articles for writing the exegesis paper. See the librarian for training and access to this database.

In addition, there are numerous *Bible* and *Bible-related Internet sites* which may help your research. The *Bible Gateway* is one such site. Please see the librarian for a list of other sites.

Schedule:

1/21:

Introduction.

What is Old Testament Theology?

A Short History of the Study of Old Testament Theology.

Readings:

Routledge 17-80.

Shipp 1-18.

1:28:

The Knowledge of God.

The Knowledge of God in the Old Testament

The Self-revelation of God

The Name of God

Readings:

Routledge 81-84.

Shipp 19-47.

2/4:

The Nature of God.

Monotheism

The Spirit of God in the Old Testament

Project: God's Faithfulness and Love: Heseb

Readings:

Routledge 85-123.

Shipp 48-66.

2/11:

The Nature of God (cont.)

God's Power and Majesty

Project: God's Holiness

Creation

The nature of Creation and Creation Theology
What Does it Mean to be Created in the Image of God (*Imago Dei*)?

Readings:

Routledge 124-146.
Shipp 67-87, 94-104.

2/18:

The Nature of Sin and Suffering

Sin and Rebellion
The Problem of Suffering
Judgment and the Wrath of God
Project: Why Do People Suffer?

Readings:

Routledge 147-158.
Shipp 88-93, 105-115.

2/25:

The Meaning of Covenant

Noah
Abraham
David
Project: The Meaning of Covenant

Readings:

Routledge 159-164.
Shipp 120-130.

3/4:

The Promises to the Patriarchs

The Promises to Abraham and the Other Patriarchs
The Patriarchs in the Prophetic Literature and in the Writings

Readings:

Routledge 165-168.
Shipp 116-119.

3/11:

The Exodus from Egypt

Redemption in the Old Testament
The Exodus Theme in the Old Testament
Project: What Does "Redemption" Mean in the Old Testament?

Readings:

Shipp 137-140.

The Covenant and Law at Sinai

The Covenant at Sinai
The Meaning of Law
Worship in the Old Testament
Project: The Kinds of Sacrifice and Their Meaning in Leviticus

Readings:

Routledge 169-208.
Shipp 141-170.

3/25:

Mid-Term Exam.

The Theology of God's Presence and the Wilderness Wanderings.

The Presence of God in the Old Testament

The Theme of Rebellion/Murmuring in the Wilderness

Readings:

Shipp 131-136.

4/1:

The Theology of Conquest and the Gift of the Land

The Theology of the Promised Land and the Conquest

The Conditional Nature of the Gift of the Land in Deuteronomy

Readings:

Shipp 171-175.

4/8:

The Covenant with David: King and Temple

The Theology of Kingship in Israel

Project: Is Kingship Positive or Negative in Old Testament Theology?

Readings:

Routledge 225-237.

Shipp 176-180.

4/15:

Old Testament Prophecy

The Nature of Prophecy in the Old Testament

The Theology of the Old Testament Prophets

Readings:

Routledge 209-214.

Shipp 181-184.

4/22:

Ethics, the Way of Wisdom, and the Good Life

Ethics and the Good Life in Israel

The Way of Wisdom

Readings:

Routledge 215-24.

Shipp 192-195.

4/29:

The Future Hope of Israel and the Church

The Coming Messiah

God and the Nations

Eschatology and the State of the Dead

Project: Death and the State of the Dead in the Old Testament

Project: Resurrection and Final Judgment in the Old Testament

Readings:

Routledge 261-334.

Shipp 185-191.

5/10-14:

Final Exam week.