

## **BST 420i The Old Testament**

**Winter 2021**

### **Course Outline**

#### **Class Start Date & End Date and Meeting Time**

##### **Thursday 7:30 – 9:00**

January 14  
January 21  
January 28  
February 4  
February 11  
February 25  
March 4  
March 11  
March 18  
March 25  
April 15  
April 22

##### **Saturday 10:00 – 11:30**

January 16  
January 23  
January 30  
February 6  
February 13  
February 27  
March 6  
March 13  
March 20  
March 27  
April 17  
April 24

No classes Feb 18 - 20;  
April 1- 3;  
April 8 - 10

#### **Class Location**

All classes will be delivered remotely through Zoom

**Instructor:** Debora Rolfes

**Office Hours:** Available by appointment

**Telephone:** 306 966-2893 (office)  
306 227-2113 (cell)

**Email:** Debora.Rolfes@newman.edu

**Skype:** N/A



## Course Description

Part 1: Formation and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures; biblical inspiration, canonicity, textual criticism, hermeneutics, history, geography, and archaeology.

Part 2: Understanding the Old Testament: exegetical studies of selected text from the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, and Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament focusing on salvation history and covenant theology.

## Course Objectives

This course addresses the following goals of the MRE program:

- a) **Theological Instruction** – the program shall offer students instruction in the major areas of Catholic theology
  - a. examine the background of the Old and New Testaments: biblical inspiration, transmission of texts, translations, canonicity, and hermeneutics through the lens of *Nostra Aetate*
  - b. provide the geographical and historical context from which the Old and New Testament texts emerged
  - c. identify the main theological themes of the Old Testament
  - d. examine representative texts under the following categories: author(s), structure, literary genre, exegesis, theological meaning and significance for contemporary biblical scholarship and faith
- c) **Cultural Context** – The program shall foster a capacity to discern and engage the cultural context as it impacts Catholic education
  - a. understand and respect various hermeneutical approaches to reading Old Testament; consider ways to guide students through the maximalism/minimalism quandary
- d) **Personal and Spiritual Formation** – The program shall offer students with opportunities to grow in the spiritual life and in their vocation as Catholic educators and witnesses to the Gospel
  - a. reflect on the personal meaning of one of the covenants
  - b. prepare a collection of personally significant verses
- e) **Integrating Theory and Praxis** – The program shall offer integration of theological knowledge and religious education formation in the professional work of Catholic education
  - a. prepare and share a lesson plan to teach a story from the Old Testament

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the major events of salvation history as told in the Old Testament
2. Describe the four major covenants of the Old Testament
3. Describe the characteristics of the major divisions of the Old Testament
4. Follow a systematic process to do exegesis
5. Adapt material from the Old Testament for a specified teaching purpose

## Course Assignments and Evaluation

### 1. Reading Quizzes (20%) **Dates to be determined**

Every weekend, except the last, we will have a short quiz based on the reading for the weekend. (The quiz on September 16 will cover material from the previous day.) There will be five quizzes in total. I will drop your lowest score and average your four highest marks to arrive at a grade.

Quizzes must be completed in class on the weekend they are assigned. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

### 2. Collection of Old Testament Verses (15%) **Due Week 12 April 24**

Even if we don't read the Old Testament regularly, there are always a few verses that, when we hear them, they remind us that the wisdom and beauty of the scriptures guide our lives. For this assignment, you will collect at least twenty scripture passages from the Old Testament that you find particularly meaningful. Create a format in which you will record each passage along with the following information for each:

- Book and verse
- Translation
- Section of the bible (Pentateuch, History, Prophets, Wisdom)
- Brief note on the historical/political context for the passage

### 3. Research Paper (30%) **Due Week 10 March 25**

A. Pick one of the covenants described by Anderson (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, or Davidic) that you feel strongly about and explain your choice. This paper should demonstrate an academic understanding of the covenantal perspective as well as describe your faith response to it as a "way of symbolizing God's relation to the people and the world" (Anderson 195).

- Describe the major tenets of the covenant
- Examine the biblical passage(s) in which the covenant is first instituted
- Explore the use and evolution of the understanding of that covenant in the Old Testament
- Explain your reaction to the theological viewpoint of that particular covenant. How does an understanding of this covenant enrich your understanding of God?

The first three points will require you to do some research and to synthesize an argument using information from several sources. Be sure to give proper credit to all sources and to provide appropriate and adequate documentation of information quoted, paraphrased, and summarized from source material. Use any documentation system with which you feel comfortable, but be sure to use it correctly and consistently.

### OR

B. Analyze each of the seven Old Testament readings used at the Easter Vigil Mass. Your goal is to trace the development of the Israelite/Jewish understanding of God (who God is, how God acts, what kind of relationship God wants, etc.) through these readings. What does each reading teach about the God of

Israel? In your conclusion, consider how that development paved the way for the Christian belief in the Incarnation and Resurrection.

Aim to average roughly one page per reading, (although some may be closer to two pages and others around half a page).

- Situate each reading in the history of Israel
- Identify which larger unit of the Old Testament (i.e. Pentateuch, History, Prophets, and Wisdom) the reading is from and explain how that identification helps understand the perspective of the text.
- Make use of what you have learned about the historical production (e.g., Genesis 1 as a later piece of writing inserted at the beginning of Scripture as a rejection of the Babylonian creation myth) of the Hebrew Scriptures and refer to research to support your claims about the production of each reading and the meaning you find in it.

Be sure to give proper credit to all sources and to provide appropriate and adequate documentation of information quoted, paraphrased, and summarized from source material. Use any documentation system with which you feel comfortable, but be sure to use it correctly and consistently.

#### 4. Lesson Plan (35%) **Due Week 12 April 24**

Design a lesson for a class of your choice, to teach that God works through human history to reveal God's self as a saving God. The lesson could be part of the curriculum for a class that you currently (or would like to) teach; alternatively, you could design a lesson for a curriculum that has not been developed, but that you believe should be.

In your lesson plan, identify the following:

- the biblical passage(s) that your plan is based on
- audience (ex. grade, expected knowledge, level of interest)
- learning objectives/outcomes
- prerequisite knowledge
- components of the lesson
- materials required
- procedure/teaching method
- evaluation method

Organize the lesson plan in a way that makes most sense for you. Just be sure that the plan is detailed enough that someone else could use it to teach the lesson that you have in mind.

### **Textbooks**

The declaration on the relation of the church to non-Christian religions (Nostra Aetate). 1965. The Holy See. Available at: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)

Anderson, Bernhard W. *Contours of Old Testament Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011

## **Recommended Reading**

Aharoni, Y. *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*. Burns & Oates, 1967.

Alter, R. et al. *A Literary Guide to the Bible*. London: Collins, 1987.

Anderson, B. W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1966.

Brueggemann, W. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Bright, J. *A History of Israel*. London, SCM Press, 1959.

Cahill, T. *The Gifts of the Jews*. New York: Nan A. Talese, 1998.

Childs, B. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1979.

De Vaux, R. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961.

Eichrodt, W. *Theology of the Old Testament Vol 1 & 2*. London, SCM Press. 1961.

Hillel, D. *The Natural History of the Bible*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Matthews, V. H. *The Old Testament, Text and Context*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.

May, H. G. *The Oxford Bible Atlas*. New York: Oxford University press, 1974.

Otto, R. *The Idea of the Holy*. Trans. J. W. Harvey. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959.

Von Rad, G. *Old Testament Theology Vol 1 & 2*. London: SCM Press, 1975.

## **Commentaries and Dictionaries**

Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible

Anchor Bible Dictionary

Cambridge Companion to the Bible

Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

New Jerome Biblical Commentary

Oxford Bible Commentary

Oxford Companion to the Bible

Don't forget the value of Google Scholar when it comes time to do scholarly research.

## Course Schedule

	Readings	Thursday Evening Topics	Saturday Morning Topics
<b>Week One</b> Jan 14 - 16	COTT Ch 5 - 7, pp 37 - 55	Introductions Course Material	Why read the OT? Translations Canons
<b>Week Two</b> Jan 21 - 23	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> <a href="http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html">http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html</a>  COTT Ch 8- 9, pp 56 - 78  Genesis	Hermeneutics (maximalism;minimalism) Church Documents	Documentary Hypothesis Biblical History of Israel Salvation History Covenant
<b>Week Three</b> Jan 28 - 30	COTT Ch 10 - 16, pp 79 - 134	<u>Pentateuch</u> The Story	Covenants: Noahic Gn 9.1-17 Abrahamic Gn 12.1-9 Mosaic Ex 19.1-8 Exegesis
<b>Week Four</b> Feb 4 - 6	COTT Ch 17 – 22, pp 135 - 192	Let's do Exegesis: Creation Gn 1.1-2.4 Adam and Eve Gn 2.5-3.24	Akedah Gn 22.1-19 God's Name Ex 3.1-22 Miriam's Song Ex 15.1-21 Shema Dt 6.4-9
<b>Week Five</b> Feb 11- 13	1 Samuel  COTT Ch 23 – 26, pp 193 - 236	<u>Historical</u> The Story Davidic Covenant 2 Sm 7.1-17	Deuteronomic history vs Chronicles Priestly Writer 2 Ch 13.3 12 Holiness
<b>Week Six</b> Feb 25 - 27		Elijah and Baal 1 Kgs 18. 20-40 Elijah 19. 1- 18 Finding the book 2 Kgs 22.8 – 23.3 Solomon 1 Ch 22.2-19 Conquest of Israel 2 Kgs 17. 5 - 18	Group Work on Paper
<b>Week Seven</b> Mar 4 - 6		<u>Prophets</u> The Story What is a prophet? Jer 20.1- 18 Major and minor prophets Dry Bones Ez 37.1-14	Major Prophets Jeremiah Isaiah Ezekiel

<b>Week Eight</b> Mar 11 - 13	Amos	Minor Prophets	Justice Am 5:21-24 Lawsuit Jer 2.1 – 14 Israel Is 9.1 – 7 Babylon Is 40. 1 – 20 New Creation Is 65. 17-25 Mal. 4. 1 - 5
<b>Week Nine</b> Mar 18 - 20	COTT Ch 27 – 31, pp 237 - 286	<b>Quiz 5</b> <u>Wisdom</u> What is wisdom? God as feminine Theodicy Day of the Lord	Ps 78 Ps 51 Prov 7. 1 - 27 Prov 8. 22 – 36 Ecc 1.1 – 11 Job 38. 1 – 42. 6
<b>Week Ten</b> Mar 25 and 27	COTT Ch 32 – 34, pp 287 - 312	<u>Apocalyptic</u>  <b>Assignment 3 Due</b>	Readings for Easter Vigil
<b>Week Eleven</b> Apr 15 - 17		Men of the OT	Women of the OT
<b>Week Twelve</b> Apr 22 - 24		Children’s Bible Stories	Music inspired by the OT  <b>Assignments 2 and 4 due</b>

## General Academic Information

### Late Submission Policy.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Any assignment more than five days late (without an approved extension) will not be accepted for grading. Extensions are not granted as a matter of course and will only be considered if you have made arrangements with your instructor prior to the due date.

### Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

### Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

### Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade “F” may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the Student Handbook in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

### Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the Student Handbook in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

*NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.*

### Grading System

Undergraduate Studies		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Marginal	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Fail	F	0.0

Graduate Studies		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Fail	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
	F	0.0

### Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

#### *Regulations*

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5" x 11" paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:



1. Kate Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Ahters, eds., "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers" (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

### Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work
- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

### Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

### Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the Student Handbook for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

### Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### Student Accessibility Services:

A student with special needs that could affect their performance in class should contact their professor during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. They should also register with Student Services by contacting Sr. Zoe Bernatsky at 780-392-2450 ext. 2213; email [zoe.bernatsky@newman.edu](mailto:zoe.bernatsky@newman.edu).

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Services, contact Doreen Bloos at 780-392-2450 ext. 2212; Email [doreen.bloos@newman.edu](mailto:doreen.bloos@newman.edu).