



**OT 1A03** Old Testament Literature and History

**Class Schedule.** Monday @ 10:30am-12:20pm

**Professor.** Dr. Paul S. Evans

**Phone.** (905) 525-9140 Ext. 24718

**E-mail.** pevans@mcmaster.ca

**Office.** 236

**Course Description:**

An introduction to the contents of the Old Testament as the first part of the Christian Canon of Scripture. Attention will be paid to the contents of the individual books, their growth and development, the notion of canon, the development of the textual traditions of the Old Testament and the context of the history of ancient Israel.

**Course Objectives**

**Knowing:**

- To have an introductory knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament.
- To become familiar with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship on the Old Testament.
- To understand the Old Testament as Scripture and know its relevance for application today.

**Doing:**

- To be able to draw a basic map of ancient Israel and demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the geography of the ancient Near East.
- To be able to articulate the history of Ancient Israel.
- To complete an in-depth study on a topic in the Old Testament

**Being:**

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the Old Testament for the Church and society today
- To grow closer to God through study of the Old Testament

**Required Textbooks**

- Longman, Tremper and R. B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003.
- A Bible in a modern critical translation (e.g., NRSV, TNIV, NIV, NLT, NASB). *The Tanakh: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985) is recommended.

- Readings posted on the web or handed out in class

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

**Course Evaluation: The assignments and their weights are as follows:**

**1. 25%. The OT Challenge. Due Feb. 7.**

When we have completed the section on historiography and the History of ancient Israel, each student will write the "OT Challenge". This is a short quiz written in class (on Feb. 7, 2010) which focuses on five basic topics (see below) as well as a formal essay (which each student will email to the professor).

*The assigned readings and classroom experiences will prepare you for the OT challenge.*

**The topics the quiz will cover are:**

The major translation techniques

The major eras of Israel's history

The geography of the land of Israel (students will draw a basic map of Israel)

The major people groups

The 39 books of the Old Testament

The **formal essay** will be on the Historiography of ancient Israel and will be written and both emailed (pdf file) and handed in (hard copy) to the professor before class on Feb. 7, 2010. In preparation for this essay students will read Provan-Long-Longman (2003:1-104) and other assigned articles

The essay will be 3 pages and present your view of the historiography of ancient Israel in interaction with assigned readings and will address the following questions:

1. What are the appropriate sources for the construction of the history of ancient Israel?
2. How does one weigh the value of these various sources?
3. What role does one's theology, especially one's view of Scripture, play in the use of these sources and construction of history?
4. How important is history to Christian faith and the character of the Bible?

**2. 35%. Research Paper on the History of Israel. Due Feb. 28. Email pdf file and hand in a hard copy.**

- 15 pgs, double-spaced, 12pt Roman font throughout entire paper. However, footnotes must be single spaced and 10pt Roman font.
- See 'Paper Evaluation' section below

While reading through Provan-Long-Longman (2003) (in its entirety) identify a scholarly issue related to the history of Israel: e.g. dating the Exodus; archaeological evidence for the destruction of Jericho; The kingdom and /or person of David (as history or myth); The Exile (e.g., evidence for the fall of Jerusalem, extent of the exile, the myth of the empty land; the Restoration (e.g., the chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah, the status of the province of Yehud in the early Persian period).

The paper will describe your approach to ancient historiography and present the primary scholarly views on the debated issue and attempt to solve the problem through interacting with the available evidence. The paper must contain a bibliography consisting of *at least 12 items* of varied secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, specialized books and *at least 2 articles from refereed journals*). By way of **supplement** to these 12 sources, a student may use a **maximum of 2** internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of these internet resources. These secondary sources do not include primary sources (the Bible, Josephus, Qumran). Each source listed must be drawn on in the paper and evidenced in the footnotes etc. Your paper must include a statement on the title page stating the percentage of Provan-Long-Longman (2003) read *prior* to the completion of the paper.

- ALL TOPICS MUST BE APPROVED BY YOUR PROFESSOR

**3. 40%. Literature and Theology Paper. Due March 28. Email pdf file and hand in a hard copy.**

- 15 pgs, double-spaced, 12pt Roman font throughout entire paper. However, footnotes must be single spaced and 10pt Roman font.
- See 'Paper Evaluation' section below

After reading Longman-Dillard (2006) and the entire Old Testament students will write a paper on the theology of the Old Testament interacting with both Longman-Dillard (2006) and material covered in the classroom and at least 5 other secondary resources. By way of **supplement** to these 5 sources, a student may use a **maximum of 2** Internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of these Internet resources. These secondary sources do not include primary sources (the Bible, Josephus, Qumran). Each source listed must be drawn on in the paper and evidenced in the footnotes etc.

The theological theme(s) covered in the paper must interact with each of the major sections of the Old Testament (Torah, the Prophets and the Writings) and show awareness of the diversity exhibited within the Old Testament while also

pointing out continuity and unity in this theology. The closing section of the paper (2 pages) must identify preliminary links between this Old Testament theology and the theology of the New Testament and through this the impact on the church today. Your paper must include a statement on the title page stating the percentage of Longman-Dillard read prior to the completion of the paper.

#### **4. Reading the Old Testament**

Each student is to read the entire Old Testament during this semester in order to get a sense of both its content and flow. Each student must send an email stating that they have completed the entire Old Testament by the last day of classes (Saturday, April 8, 2010). As this assignment is an assumed foundation for this course (like class attendance) if a student fails to complete it their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

#### **College Style for Submission of Written Work**

All written work is to be submitted in accordance with the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses, available on the McMaster Divinity College website.

All papers to be submitted in electronic format (a pdf file) as well as hardcopies. Email to pevans@mcmaster.ca. If you need a program for creating pdfs go to <http://primopdf.com> or <http://www.pdf995.com> for a free pdf maker. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., evans.researchpaper.pdf). To avoid late marks hard copies and pdf papers must be received before the beginning of class on the day on which they are due (i.e., before 10:30am).

#### **Policy concerning late papers**

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 1% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by the last day of class in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

#### **Inclusive language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

## Course Schedule

In Class	Outside of Class		
Lectures	Assigned Secondary Reading	Assignment	Bible
Jan. 3 – Intro to Bible	--	--	--
Jan. 10 – Texts and Translations; OT History: Nature of Sources	The “Historiography of Ancient Israel” articles posted on the course website <sup>1</sup> as well as Provan. Long & Longman pages 1-104.		Read entire Old Testament throughout the Semester
Jan. 17 – OT History: Periods of Israel's History: (Survey)			
Jan. 24 – OT History: Periods of Israel's History (Survey cont.)	Be prepared to contribute to class discussion on Feb 1.	Prepare and write 3 page paper on Historiography of Ancient Israel due Feb 7.	
Jan 31 – Historiography and the History of Israel	Provan, Long & Longman pages 107-303		
Feb 7 – <b>QUIZ:</b> OT Challenge OT as Literature: Introduction			
Feb 14 – OT Literature: The Torah / Pentateuch		Prepare and write Historical Paper due Feb. 28	
Feb 21 – NO CLASS	Longman-Dillard chs. 1-6		
Feb 28 – OT Literature: The Former Prophets	The “OT Literature articles: Kings and Chronicles” articles on course website. Longman-Dillard chs. 7-8, 10-11.	Prepare and write Literature and Theology Paper due Mar. 27	
Mar. 7 – OT Literature: The Latter Prophets	Longman-Dillard chs. 20-21, 23, 25-36		
Mar. 14 – OT Literature: The Latter Prophets			
Mar. 21 – OT Literature: The Writings	Longman-Dillard chs. 15-19, 22		
Mar. 28 – OT Literature: The Writings	Longman-Dillard chs. 19, 12-14, 24		
Apr. 4 – OT as History, Literature and Scripture	The “The OT as Canon of the Church” articles on the course website		

<sup>1</sup> These articles are: Baker Dictionary History Article; Baker Dictionary Minimalism Article; Collins, ‘The Bible After Babel’; Davies, ‘The Problem of Biblical Israel.’

## Classroom Behaviour

### **Attendance & Participation**

- Students are expected to be on time to class or ready to give an explanation for their tardiness to the professor.
- Students are also expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance with the professor.
- Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
- All student participation in way of comments or questions must be done without disrespect or ridicule
- Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks.

### Academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ [www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

### Research Aids

For journal articles to assist in research, do a subject search of the [ATLA Religion database](#)

### Useful Internet Sites

- *Bible Gateway* (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>). Online Bibles with search engines.
- *itanakh* ([www.itanakh.org.](http://www.itanakh.org/)) Includes links to many full text articles and useful webpages.
- <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/sitesofinterest.aspx> From the website of the Society of Biblical Literature. Contains links to many useful sites categorized according to subject areas.
- *Dinur Centre for Research in Jewish History* ([http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dinur/internetresources/historyresources/biblical\\_studies.htm](http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dinur/internetresources/historyresources/biblical_studies.htm)) Includes links on creation, flood, patriarchs
- *Internet Ancient History Sourcebook* (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html>). The sections on Human Origins and Mesopotamia include some useful comparative material for Genesis.
- *Links related to Bible & ANE:* (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/%7Ehummm/Resources/Texts/index.html>)

### Disclaimer.

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus has been prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.

This syllabus was modeled on that of Professor Mark Boda, and thanks is expressed to him for permission to use his work.

## Paper Evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

I. The next items are rated according to this scale: 1 = inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = superior.

Bibliographic consciousness	1	2	3	4	5
Range and Use of Sources	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity in Defining Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Strength of Argument	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of Exegetical Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy of Data and Assertions	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis /Critical Thinking	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction (Thesis Statement /Clear Issue)	1	2	3	4	5
Development of Thesis (focus)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Organization/coherence of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

### II. The following need attention if so indicated

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language<br><input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified essay<br><input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, Font size, Margins, Page numbers etc. need attention<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cite primary resources correctly/consistently (e.g., Gen 1:26; Genesis 1; etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short<br><input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly<br><input type="checkbox"/> The paper needs balance<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Cite secondary resources correctly/consistently |
|---|--|

### III. Comments