I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee (aka Iroquois) peoples. Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations in perpetuity, that includes 6 miles (approx. 10 km.) on each side of the Grand River.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the cultural and historical contexts, literary genres, composition, and canonization of the Old Testament. It will investigate the formation of Scripture from ancient traditions and introduce various hermeneutical approaches to biblical material, focusing on their potential contributions to Christian theological interpretation. We will focus more on how one approaches “Studying the Old Testament” than on providing a comprehensive survey of its content. To do so, the course will explore diverse modes of inquiry, provide hands-on experience with resources related to the Bible, and introduce issues related to biblical study and interpretation.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course students will:

• gain insight into the language, content and diversity of material within the OT;
• examine the shape of individual biblical books to consider their interrelationship in Scripture and consider how this informs Christian theological interpretation;
• be introduced to various scholarly approaches to the OT, including issues related to its origin, composition, transmission, and canonization;
• explore hermeneutical issues and challenges (problems and opportunities) involved in interpreting and teaching ancient documents in the 21st century;
• consider how Mennonite scholars in particular have addressed specific issues related to the Old Testament;
• engage in theological reflection to consider the ongoing witness and function of the Old Testament as Scripture for Christian communities of faith; and
• gain first-hand experience with basic tools for biblical study such as concordances, Bible dictionaries and commentaries, as well as multiple Bible versions.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. READING MATERIALS

The following materials are required.

1. The Bible
This is the most important textbook in the course. I will provide a “Reading Guide” for each week’s reading that identifies biblical passages to concentrate on along with questions to guide your reading. Since we will not attempt to survey the content of each biblical book in class, biblical readings will not be exhaustive. **Students with limited background in Old Testament material may require more reading to provide context and ‘connect the dots’ between passages identified in the Reading Guides and discussed in class.**

No one Bible version is required—in fact, having a diversity present will enrich class discussion. However, **paraphrases and Bibles which use a ‘dynamic equivalence’ approach to translation will not be appropriate for this course** (the Message, Good News Bible, Today’s English Version, etc.). If you have a question about this, please ask.

Note: Consider purchasing a different Bible version than that with which you are most familiar, since this often helps to hear material in a new way. Students are also expected to have more than one version available for consultation. Though we will not explore “apocryphal”/“deutero-canonical” books here, consider having at least one Bible that contains this material; “reference” versions and “Study Bibles” are also particularly helpful.

In no particular order, students are welcome to choose from among:
• *Tanakh* (JPS - Jewish Publication society)
• *New American Bible* (NAB), *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) or the older *American Standard Version* (ASV)
• *Common English Bible* (CEB)
• *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) or the older *Jerusalem Bible* (JB)
• *21st Century New King James Version*, or the *New King James Version* (NKJV), or the venerable *Authorized or King James Version* (AV or KJV)
• *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), *Revised Standard Version* (RSV)
• *Revised English Bible* (REB) or the older *New English Bible* (NEB)
• the older New International Version (NIV)
• Net Bible (available free on-line at http://www.bible.org). This can be used for comparison, but students will be expected to bring physical Bibles to class so this will not be sufficient as the only version.

2. TS 610 Course Reader
This collection of articles and book chapters is available for purchase at the UW Bookstore. Secondary readings are identified in the ‘Class Schedule’ below.

Some additional material (newspaper articles, online videos, etc.) may be provided, placed on electronic course reserves (available on-line through the course LEARN site), made available in the library, or circulated by email.
*Auditors: please allow students taking the course for credit the first opportunity to purchase these readers.

3. Additional Recommended Books and Resources (Not Required)
Other Introductions worth consulting include:
• David Carr, An Introduction to the Old Testament
  (primarily historical; imperial contexts and function as sacred text)
• Corrine Carvalho, Encountering Ancient Voices
  (primarily theological; Catholic)
• John J. Collins, A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
  (primarily historical; traditional historical criticism)
• Walter Brueggemann, An Introduction to the Old Testament
  (primarily theological; Reformed Protestant)
• Michael D. Coogan, The Old Testament
  (primarily sociological and literary)
• The Fortress Commentary of the Old Testament and Apocrypha (FCOT)
  (primarily historical and theological; written by a team of specialists)

Joel B. Green, Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture. In previous years I have used this as an additional textbook. An insightful, accessible discussion of major topics related to biblical studies (both OT and NT) and faith.

Michael Harvey’s The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing provides a helpful guide to writing, both re: general style (active vs. passive voice) and the specifics of academic writing (footnotes, bibliography). I strongly encourage you to purchase this or a similar resource early in your program; refer to it consistently. This resource is on reserve in the library.

Re: additional resources, Bible Atlases can be very helpful and concordances are key resources (in my view, every church community should have access

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1 Joel B. Green, Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).
to a concordance and teachers taught how to use them). Strong’s on-line concordance is the most simple and effective for entry level use. I also highly recommend Bible software programs, particularly for those involved in church ministry or further study. Three excellent resources are: BibleWorks, Logos (originally PC) and Accordance (originally Mac).

**N.B.** - While such programs can be helpful, be(a)ware (beware?) of material that comes ‘bundled’ with them. Not all of this is either current or helpful.

### B. ACADEMIC STYLE

Article reviews for this class will use in-text citations, ie: (Suderman, 54). All other papers with references will use bottom of the page footnotes and bibliographies that comply with the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

**In Biblical Studies certain conventions apply when citing biblical documents:**

- Unless written within the flow of the paper, abbreviations consisting of the first three letters of biblical books should be used. Thus: “At the beginning of Genesis...” within a sentence, but (Gen. 1:1-6) as a reference following a sentence.
- Chapters and verses are separated by a colon, while verses within the same chapter are listed with a hyphen when describing a section (Pro. 1:1-7) or separated by commas when speaking of specific verses (Gen. 5:14, 17). Verses from different chapters are separated by a semi-colon (Job 2:1-4; 42:1-6). As noted here, the parentheses should precede ending punctuation.
- Unlike other citations, Bible citations are generally made in (parentheses) within the document itself. During discussions clearly marked as dealing with a specific chapter, abbreviations for verse and verses should be used (v. and vv. respectively). If you provide a list of references (for instance, several other places where the same term is found), these should be placed in a footnote.
- Reference to terms in biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) are placed in *italics*. So, you write peace (English) but shalom (Hebrew).

### C. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Written assignments are due *at the beginning of class*, since they will provide the basis for class discussion on that day. All assignments will conform to the Chicago Manual of Style, with bottom-of-the-page footnotes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Self-Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry Assignment</td>
<td>(DUE: Oct. 18)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Word Assignment</td>
<td>(DUE: Nov. 22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation and Handout Paper</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Article Reviews</td>
<td>(DUE: various)</td>
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Presentation and Handout 5%
Paper 25%

Integrative Paper  Milestone Requirement

D. DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Weekly Reading / Reading Self-Evaluation**
   For this course students will read a significant portion of the Old Testament along with selected secondary material. **Reading Guides** will specify biblical material to read in preparation for each class session along with the secondary readings identified in the syllabus. The Reading Self-Evaluation reflects the importance of this task. *Students will evaluate their own participation, by providing a mark for the degree to which they completed the assigned readings (/5 for both Bible and secondary readings).*

2. **Modes of Inquiry Assignment**
   This assignment will introduce students to a variety of questions being asked and methods employed in commentaries related to the Bible. Students will write a short paper (5-6 pp., 1500-1800 words) that compares and contrasts the approaches of several commentators to the same biblical book.

3. **Key Word Assignment**
   This assignment will explore the ‘semantic range’ and use of a specific term in the Old Testament in order to gain first-hand experience with Bible dictionaries and concordances. Students will write a short paper (4-5 pp., 1200-1500 words), prepare a 1-p. handout (one-sided), and make a 6-8 min. in-class presentation of their findings. *The latter two elements will be peer-evaluated.*

4. **Article Review**
   Each student will choose one substantial article from among those **bolded** in the Class Schedule to introduce during the term. They will provide a 1p. outline (one-sided) and 5-8 minute oral overview to initiate and enhance class discussion. **These presentations will be peer-evaluated.** In the following week students will write a brief critical review of their chosen article (3-4 pp., 900-1200 words). Since the outline will already depict the piece’s structure and argument, the review should concentrate on your response/critique in light of your own thoughts as well as class discussion. Students will choose articles to present early in the term, which will then be discussed on the corresponding day listed in the syllabus. *Variable, but assigned on specific dates.*

5. **Integrative Paper and “Coffee and Conversation”**
   This assignment consists of writing a brief reflection paper (3-4 pp., 900-1200 words) that identifies some of the challenges you encountered in the course. It will provide an opportunity to reflect on your own goals for engaging the OT,
and how this course may inform your future interaction with the Bible and interpreting communities. *These papers will be shared with the others in your conversation group, and are DUE 24 hours before the conversation appointment.*

*Students will also sign up for a “Coffee and Conversation” time slot,* where students will meet with the instructor and a small group to discuss their papers and their experience in the course.

III. CLASS SCHEDULE

Workshop topics will be explored in class. **Names in BOLD** in the “Required Readings” column identify articles you may choose for your article review. **FYI** identifies related resources that are **NOT required reading** but may be of interest.

**Since your uwaterloo email address will be our primary means of communication between classes, make sure to update/forward this immediately.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Topic</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 6 - <strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>dynamic translation vs. formal equivalence; “semantic range;” Translation (versions) as interpretation</td>
<td>Enns, “When the Bible Doesn’t Behave”²</td>
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<td><strong>MODES OF INQUIRY</strong></td>
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<td>‧ a brief history of the Bible</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‧ Some Challenges for interpreting ancient documents (Gen. 1-5)</td>
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<td><strong>Torah (Pentateuch)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meyers, “Everyday Life”³</td>
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<td>Sept. 13 - <strong>Genesis</strong></td>
<td>Women in the OT;</td>
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² Peter Enns, “When the Bible Doesn’t Behave,” in The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture has Made Us Unable to Read It (New York NY, 2014), 4-7.
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<tr>
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</table>
| “In the begin-
ning/When it all be-
gan...” (Genesis 1-11) | Introducing the “Modes of Inquiry” assignment | Suderman, “Created as Male and Female”⁴ |  |
| Covenant, Naming, and Family Matters (Genesis 12-38) | Green, “Methods” is included provides a helpful framework for thinking about various approaches you encounter in this assignment. | [FYI: for an overview of feminist hermeneutics, see: Wacker;⁵ for a longer discussion of patriarchy in the Bible in light of the history of feminism, see Meyers;⁶ for a classic comparison of Hebrew narrative with Greek mythology, see Auerbach.⁷] |  |

**Sept. 20 - Exodus narratives**

- Out of Egypt “with a mighty hand”
- “10 Words” and immediate problems

‘Source Criticism’ and ‘Form Criticism’

Lind, “Warfare and the Exodus”⁸

Suderman, “Remembering the Gospel of the Exodus”⁹

**Sept. 27- Law as “gospel”**

‘Tradition History’ and

Berlin, “Numinous Nomos”¹⁰

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⁹ Derek Suderman, “Remembering the Gospel of the Exodus (a Sermon)” (Wanner Mennonite Church, 2007).

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<td></td>
<td>![How] Might an ‘eye for an eye’ make sense? (Exodus)</td>
<td>![Redaction Criticism’]</td>
<td>Klawans, “Concepts of Purity in the Bible”¹¹</td>
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<td>“You shall be Holy…” (Leviticus)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 4 - Deuteronomy: What is Scripture and how should it function?</td>
<td>![Characteristics of Scripture]</td>
<td>![‘Canonical Criticism’ and (New) ‘Literary Criticism’]</td>
<td>Childs, “Introduction to the Pentateuch” (selection)¹²</td>
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<td></td>
<td>![Covenants and Deuteronomy]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suderman, “Who’ll Be a Witness?”¹³</td>
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<td></td>
<td>![Reading the Torah/Pentateuch as a Whole]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 11 --- BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>![Commentary Assignment Discussion]</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Modes of Inquiry’ DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Former Prophets” / “Historical Books”</td>
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<td>Oct. 18 - Starting Life in the Land; Kingship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>![Differing Views of Entering the ‘Promised Land’ (Joshua; Judges)]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>![From Judges to Kingship (I Samuel)]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 25 – Violence in the Bible and Hermeneutics: Joshua as a ‘Test Case’</td>
<td>Introduction to ‘Key Word Study’</td>
<td>‘the Moabite Stone;'</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FYI - For a classic Mennonite reading on this issue refer to the chapter re: Joshua in Lind; for a “revolutionary” reading of Joshua, see Brueggemann</td>
<td>Warrior, “Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Danger of Reading Joshua: Past and Contemporary Abuses</td>
<td>Yoder, “If Abraham is Our Father”, Direction journal (Seibert intro and conclusion, Wilma Bailey)</td>
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<td>The Danger of Not Reading Joshua...! Abdicating Interpretation</td>
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<td>Seeking the ‘Literal Sense’ of Scripture</td>
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<td>Nov. 1 - II Samuel, I-II Kings (+Chronicles): The Rise and Fall (and Rise?) of the Monarchy</td>
<td>The ‘End’ of History: Biblical history and historical reconstruction</td>
<td>Green, “Rethinking ‘History’ for Theological Interpretation”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of Kings and Prophets (I Kings) and Bumbling towards exile (II Kings)</td>
<td>Alter, “Between Narration and Dialogue”</td>
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<td>‘True’ and ‘False’ Prophecy (biography of Micaiah, Jeremiah)</td>
<td>- FYI: For the contribution of archeology for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ What’s different b/t Kings and Chronicles? (and why?)</td>
<td>studying the Bible, see: King and Stager.(^{21})</td>
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<tr>
<td>((Latter) Prophets)</td>
<td>_[Nov. 8 - Prophets and Prophecy: Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah]</td>
<td>Historical criticism, ‘liberal’/‘conservative’ debates, and the church;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Prophetic Language: Amos</td>
<td>Hays, “Jeremiah, the LXX, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Inerrancy”(^{22})</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Prophetic Messages: Perspectives of ‘Problems’ and ‘Solutions’</td>
<td>Rendtorff, “The Latter Prophets”(^{23}) (skim quickly)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ From an 8th century historical prophet to a biblical prophetic book (Isaiah)</td>
<td>Schultz, “How many Isaiahs Were There and What Does it Matter?”(^{24})</td>
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<td><strong>NOV 15: No Class (BCBC/SBL Meetings)</strong></td>
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<td>- FYI: For a discussion of the merits and drawbacks of historical criticism see Williams.(^{25})</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Writings to NT</td>
<td>Nov. 22 - Psalms</td>
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\(^{22}\) J. Daniel Hays, “Jeremiah, the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Inerrancy: Just What Exactly Do We Mean by the ‘Original Autographs’?” in *Evangelicals & Scripture: Tradition, Authority and Hermeneutics*, ed. Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguelez, and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 133–49.


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</table>
|               | • Psalms and Prayer in the Bible  
  • Syncretism / contextualization  
  • From Psalm Types... to a book of (Jewish and Christian) Scripture | Tips and Implications for Bible Study | Gonzalez, “Authority and Perspective”\(^{26}\)  
Suderman, “Psalms”\(^{27}\)  
Suderman, “Questioning Techniques”\(^{28}\) | ‘Key Word’ Assignment DUE |
| Nov. 29 - Wisdom Literature |   | Tamez, “Ecclesiastes: a Reading from the Periphery”\(^{29}\)  
Suderman, “In Search of Divine Wisdom”\(^{30}\) | - FYI: For an articulate evangelical attempt to tackle the theological implications of ancient precursors to biblical material, see: Enns.\(^{31}\) |
|               | • Optimistic Wisdom (Proverbs)  
  • the questioning of Wisdom (Ecclesiastes; Job) | Tips and Implications for Bible Study, con. | |
| Dec. 4? - Reconstituting a People: Ezra-Neh. to NT | Christians and the OT; | | |
|               | • Post-exilic Period | | |

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\(^{27}\) W. Derek Suderman, “Psalms,” in *Fortress Commentary of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis MN, 2014), 547-51.

\(^{28}\) W. Derek Suderman, “Questioning Techniques for Bible Study” (*Work in progress*).


\(^{31}\) Peter Enns, “The Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” in *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 23–70. This book represents a self-identified “evangelical” scholar tackling difficult but pressing issues. It also demonstrates that these remain contentious issues, having lost his position at Westminster Theological Seminary after writing it.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition to NT</td>
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<td>Brueggemann, “Biblical Authority: A Personal Reflection”(^{33})</td>
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<td>Hauerwas, “Taking the Bible Away from North American Christians”(^{34})</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enns, “My Life, in Brief, and Such as It Is” (^{35})</td>
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