

Northern Texas Northern Louisiana Synod
Parish Lay Mission Academy
Instituto Académico de Laicos

Course Syllabus
Fall 2024

Course: Old Testament/Hebrew Bible
Instructor: Rev. Kendra Mohn, PhD
Dates: September 14, October 12, November 9

Instructor Contact Information:

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Course Descriptions: This course is a (very) broad overview of the diverse texts that make up the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. Students will be introduced to issues and concepts that surround interpretation of these texts, and then engage with selected sections to deepen the application of those concepts.

Course Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the historical contexts, literary forms, and theological perspectives of the Old Testament texts.
- Students will become familiar with the issues and implications of Christians engaging Jewish texts.
- Students will begin to develop their own tools for spoken and written theological interpretations of texts.
- Students will engage one particular text in a focused manner, incorporating the learning from this course.

Course Texts:

1. Bible. Your choice. Preferably a NRSV Study Bible (can be used alongside whatever you personally use). A good option is the Harper Collins Study Bible. ISBN: 0060786841 (\$43 new on Amazon; used, rental, and Kindle versions available)
2. *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. Laurence Boadt. Revised and updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington. New York: Paulist Press, 2012. ISBN: 0809147807 (\$27 on Amazon)

Session I:

- introduction to key concepts and themes of the study of the Old Testament
- nuts and bolts of arrangement and history of the Old Testament as an entity
- brief overview of the history of the people of the Old Testament
- discussion of literature in the Bible and its interpretation

Session II:

- for class, please read Boadt Chapters 6-8 on the Pentateuch (5 is optional if it interests you)
- discussion of readings for class
- presentation and discussion on Chapters 9-10, Law and Conquest

Session III:

- for class, please read Boadt Chapters 12, 14, 15, 23 on the Davidic Monarchy and Wisdom Literature
- discussion of readings for class
- presentation and discussion on Chapters 18-22, Exile and Return

Writing Assignments:

1. On the first day of class, we will do a “free write” where you consider your perspective on the Old Testament. No particular format or content is expected or intended. The point is to get a sense of where you come from and where you are in your engagement with the Old Testament.
2. For our second meeting, October 12, please bring a 1-2 page essay comparing the Creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. (Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25) Reflect on the differences between them. Do you have a preference? Which story has shaped you more? What does the other story contribute that would be missing if you didn’t know it?
3. For our third meeting, November 9, please bring a 1-2 page essay on 2 Samuel 11-12, the story of David/Bathsheba/Uriah/Nathan. What role does this story play in the story of God’s people (i.e. why is this story told)? Who and what does the story focus on? What questions or problems does this raise for you?
4. Choose a text we have discussed in class. Talk about your original understanding of the text (from Sunday School, sermons, or Bible studies). What did it mean to you? Now reflect on this text in light of your experience in this class. Has your interpretation changed? How? What tools or concepts learned in this class will you use going forward to enhance your understanding of other OT texts? This essay will be 3-5 pages, due one month after the end of class (December 9th). These papers can be submitted via email to the instructor or mailed to the instructor’s church, postmarked by the due date. If feedback is desired, a return address must be included.