



Course Syllabus
WYB1008HF – Introduction to the
Old Testament I
Wycliffe College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2022

Instructor Information

Instructor: **Lissa M. Wray Beal**, PhD, Professor of Old Testament
Office Location: tbd
E-mail: lissa.wraybeal@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Mondays, or by email arrangement

Course Identification

Course Number: WYB1008HF
Course Format: *In-person. Limited online synchronous (zoom) option; please check*
Course Name: Introduction to the Old Testament I
Course Location: Wycliffe College
Class Times: Mondays, 2:00-5:00 pm. September 12-December 12
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

Introduction to Old Testament literature, history, and theology, with emphasis on application of, and implications for reading the Old Testament within the church. Focused on the Primary History (Genesis-Kings), and Chronicles, the course traces the text's story-line and attends to difficult questions raised by its subject matter, social and historical location, and presentation. Classes engage students through lectures, small discussion groups, readings, and assignments as listed below.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

The textbooks for this course are available through the U of T Bookstore's website, which offers shipping or in-store pickup for physical texts. Enter your UTORid into the Bookstore's textbook tool at https://uoftbookstore.com/buy_textbooks.asp to get a personalized list of all the textbooks for the courses you're enrolled in.

The textbook is also available from The Graham Library, which has acquired the eBook edition of Hess' *the Old Testament*. Please use the following link

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/lib/utoronto/detail.action?docID=4901264>

- Richard S. Hess, *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. ISBN 9780801037146 (Note this text will also be used for *Introduction to the Old Testament II* in the Winter term).
- Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. ISBN 9780801072758. There is only one e-copy of the book in the Utor library system available to Wycliffe for online reading. Portions only are downloadable.
- A modern translation of the Old Testament is also required, e.g., the *New Revised Standard Version*, the *New International Version (2011)*, *Tanakh: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*.
- Additional readings as noted on the course outline below, and posted to Quercus.

Recommended Books and Resources

- An audio version of the Bible is available for download here: <http://www.bible.is/apps>.
- <https://thebibleproject.com/> This is a crowd-funded project with great video presentations of biblical books and other topics. It will be helpful to watch the video for each biblical book before you read it and the textbook.
- For help in building your OT library see <http://bestcommentaries.com/>. Great guides to classic commentaries include two older works: Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Books for Pastor and Teachers* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) and Charles Spurgeon’s *Commenting and Commentaries: A Reference Guide to Book Buying for Pastors, Students, and Christian Workers* (reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988).
- Check out another great resource www.bibleodyssey.org

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus). Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Wycliffe College

BD Level

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

AREA OF OUTCOME	COURSE OUTCOMES By the end of this course, students will	ACHIEVED THROUGH COURSE ELEMENT This outcome will be achieved through these course elements
IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS	-critically analyze and evaluate a thesis and its presentation	-preparation of a critical book interaction

	-demonstrate basic-degree-level writing skills	-preparation of critical book interaction, inductive study, final paper, and quizzes or reading notes
IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES	-identify the content, structure, and themes of the books of Genesis-2 Kings -discuss and debate explanations of Old Testament violence -identify the basic timeline of events in the Old Testament -identify and evaluate examples of interpretation of Old Testament texts throughout history, including current issues in Old Testament scholarship	-weekly quiz or reading notes on scripture and textbook; inductive study on Genesis; final thematic paper -critical book interaction and seminar -course readings and quizzes/reading notes -quizzes/reading notes on textbook; reading and discussion of premodern and modern examples of biblical interpretation
IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION	-read and analyze a biblical book and suggest ideas for its application for the church today -reflect on the Old Testament presentation of God, and one's personal faith	-inductive study on Genesis -critical book interaction and seminar; course lectures and discussion
IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP	-formulate possible responses to inquiries posed to student regarding Old Testament violence	-critical interaction and seminar

Evaluation

Requirements

- Attendance is mandatory and expected. Consistent lateness or absence can result in penalty up to and including course failure.
- Preparation for each class is also expected, and will enrich in-class discussion and the experience of you and your colleagues. See the course outline for assigned biblical text, textbook, and additional readings.
- All written assignments are due at the beginning of the class hour and submitted on quercus.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense. The minimum penalty for a plagiarized paper is the grade of zero. If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly.

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in five areas:

(1) **Participation** (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions and seminars. A rubric for participation assessment is found at the end of this syllabus.

(2) **Inductive Study of Genesis** (25%; due before class begins September 26, 2022; 7 pages of written work excluding any title or content pages, typed in 12-point font and double spaced with one-inch margins) – For this assignment, simply work with the biblical text. No further engagement of secondary resources is required (such as commentaries, annotated Bibles, textbook). You may use an Atlas or Dictionary for place names or puzzling terms, but make sure to cite it properly. Use the inductive study guideline found at the end of this syllabus.

(3) **Critical Book Interaction** (20%; due before class begins November 14, 2022; 5-6 pages of written work excluding any title or content pages, typed in 12-point font and double space with one-inch margins) – Read Copan's *Is God a Moral Monster?* Then, prepare a critical interaction following the guidelines provided at the end of this syllabus. This work will form the basis for a class seminar on November 10 and therefore NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED.

(4) **Quizzes or Reading Notes** (15%; best 7 of 8 quizzes or reading notes counted). Pick one option and continue with that throughout the term. Option one: there will be weekly quizzes on the readings from the assigned biblical reading and the textbook on the weeks that there is not another assignment due. **The quizzes will be done prior to the class at home.** Option two: prepare reading notes on the textbook for the same weeks as quizzes are given. These should be no more than one page per text book chapter or no less than 1/2 page (typed, single-spaced). Those doing reading notes should also make it a priority to read the assigned Bible readings. Notes on seminar readings are not required.

(5) **Final thematic paper** (30%; due by 2 pm (EST) on December 15; 8-10 pages of written work excluding any title or content pages, typed in 12-point font and double spaced with one-inch margins). – The call of Abram in Gen 12:1-3 is pivotal to Genesis-2 Kings and your paper will investigate its influence. The paper will consist of four sections. In the first section discuss Genesis 12:1-3 and outline the Lord's promises to Abram. In the second section discuss how the passage relates to the rest of Genesis (both before and after the passage). In the third section, discuss how the passage relates to Exodus-Deuteronomy. In the fourth section, discuss how the passage relates to Joshua-2 Kings. The primary purpose of this assignment is to ensure that you have a grasp on Genesis-2 Kings as a whole. You obviously cannot include everything in this paper; look for examples that are typical or especially pertinent. As with the inductive studies, you are not permitted to consult secondary literature.

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Here is my standard policy for late papers: if it is not submitted when due (typically before class begins on the due date unless otherwise stated), you lose 1/3 of a letter grade. If it is not in by 5:00 p.m. that same day, you lose another 1/3 of a letter grade. After that, for each day (or portion thereof) the paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade. After 1 week, late papers need not be handed in, and will receive a "0." As indicated, some assignments will not be accepted late for any reason. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to

have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges:

<https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019> .

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Sept 12

Course introduction; Reading the Bible in the Church
Reading: Ch. 1, “Reading Scripture on the Journey of Faith Seeking Understanding” in *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* by Billings; and “Prologue” in *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story* by Bartholomew and Goheen

Week 2

Sept 19

The Bible: Colliding Worlds
Reading: ch. 2, “The Bible in Real Time and Space,” in *Epic of Eden* by Richter

Week 3

Sept 26

Genesis 1-11: Perfection and Brokenness. **Genesis Inductive Study Due Before Class Begins**
Reading: TOT 1

Week 4

Oct 3

Genesis 12-50: Perfection, Brokenness, and . . . Repair. **Quiz 1 or Reading Notes, Genesis**

Reading: Come prepared to discuss the ways the following commentators draw meaning for readers out of Genesis 12:1-9: "Genesis 12:1-3 The Call and the Promise," and "Genesis 12:4-9 Migration from Haran to Bethel" in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. by Sheridan; and "Genesis 11:27-12:9" in *Story of God: Genesis* by Longman

Oct 10

Thanksgiving Holiday; No class

Week 5

Oct 17

Exodus: Marriage Prep. **Quiz 2 or Reading Notes, Exodus**

Reading: TOT 2

Oct 24

Reading Week; No class

Week 6

Oct 31

Exodus-Leviticus: Provisions for Fellowship. **Quiz 3 or Reading Notes, Leviticus**

Reading: TOT 3

Week 7

Nov 7

Numbers-Deuteronomy: Wilderness and Hope. **Quiz 4 or Reading Notes, Numbers-Deuteronomy.**

Reading: TOT 4-5

Week 8

Nov 14

Joshua: The Problem of Land and Love.

In-Class Discussion of *Moral Monster?* **Critical Book Interaction Due Before Class Begins**

Reading: TOT 6

Week 9

Nov 21

Judges-Ruth: Spiraling Downward and Standing in Faith. **Quiz 5 or Reading Notes, Joshua, Judges and Ruth**

Reading: TOT 7-8; come prepared to discuss ch. 8, "The Levite's Concubine" in *Women of War, Women of Woe* ed. by Taylor and DeGroot; and ch. 5 "Ravish Them and Do to Them Whatever You Want" in *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* by Ackerman.

Week 10

Nov 28

1-2 Samuel: Prophets and Kings. **Quiz 6 or Reading Notes, Samuel**

Reading: TOT 9; ch. 8, "David and the Monarchy," in *The Epic of Eden* by Richter

Week 11

Dec 5

1-2 Kings: A Failed Project? **Quiz 7 or Reading Notes, Kings**
Reading: TOT 10

Week 12

Dec 12

1-2 Chronicles: Tell It Again. **Quiz 8 or Reading Notes, Chronicles**
Reading: TOT 11

Dec 15

Final Paper Due by 2 pm today.

DRAFT

Participation Rubric

CLASS PARTICIPATION Guide and Rubric	5 - Excellent Participation	4 - Good Participation	3 - Average Participation	2 - Below Average Participation	1 - Unacceptable Participation
Class discussion/ Peer interaction/ Pair work	Consistently and actively supports, engages, listens and responds to peers. Takes initiative in interaction. Participates in a meaningful way in class discussions. Stays on task.	Makes a real effort to interact with peers daily but does not take initiative. Some active participation in class discussions. At times deviates from task.	Some effort to interact with peers but does not take initiative. Minimal participation in class discussions. Sometimes deviates from task.	Limited interaction with peers and rarely participates in class discussions and/or does not stay on task.	Virtually no interaction with peers and does not participate in class discussions.
Preparation	Arrives fully prepared at every class session.	Arrives mostly, if not fully, prepared.	Arrives generally prepared.	Preparation is inconsistent.	Rarely or never prepared.
Contributes in a meaningful way	Comments often advance the level and depth of classroom <u>dialogue</u> ; elicits the contributions of others.	Relevant comments are based on assigned material; elicits the contributions of others.	When prepared, (which is most of the time) relevant comments are based on assignments.	When prepared, some relevant comments are based on assignments, some comments not relevant and deviate from assignments.	Class contributions lack relevance or almost never comments.
Attention	Consistently attends to instruction and presentations; does not disrupt others ability to listen. Always pays attention.	Mostly attends to instruction and presentations and does not disrupt others; does not do other work during instruction and pays attention well.	Sometimes attends to instruction and does not disrupt others; does not do other work during instruction and/or pays attention some of the time.	Sometimes disruptive of others during instruction; sometimes does other work during instruction and/or lacks attention sometimes.	Frequently disruptive during instruction and/or does other work during instruction; rarely pays attention.

You may positively affect your participation grade by:

1. Attending class and actively participating in a meaningful way.
2. Preparing for each class.
3. Making effective comments that raise overall level of discussion. (Comments that are off task and disruptive will negatively affect your grade).
4. Assisting and helping other classmates during active class work and staying on task.
5. Asking thoughtful questions that will enhance discussion and engage peers.

6. Asking questions when you don't understand or would like a second explanation. Often there are others that will benefit as well.
7. Listening carefully to, supporting, and engaging your peers in discussion. This will essentially improve other's learning experience and your own.
8. Taking care never to make negative, offensive, and/or disrespectful comments during discussion.
9. Being respectful and kind towards every person in the class.

(With permission for use from Professor Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji, Providence University College)

DRAFT

Preparing an Inductive Study

Use the following headings to organise your paper. Be sure that the amount of space devoted to each section reflects its value. That is, if you state the theme of the book in only two sentences, you will not receive the full 25 marks.

1. Table of contents with captions (10%)

I am looking for appropriateness, conciseness and – to a lesser extent- creativity. (N.B. Don't be constrained by the traditional chapter divisions; remember that they are a late addition to the text and may not always be helpful in outlining the structure of a biblical book).

2. Analysis of the book's structure (35%)

Expand and justify your table of contents. How did you come up with your structure? What are the major sections of the book? How are these sections subdivided? Are the sections of a different literary style (poetry, biographical or sermon material)? Be sure to defend your assessment of the book's structure.

3. Theme of the book (25%)

What is the one central message or theme of the book? How is this theme developed? Be sure that you don't confuse the theme of the book with sub-themes or motifs. Be sure to support your assessment of the theme with evidence from the biblical text.

4. General observations and theological insights (20%)

What are some of the more prominent theological emphases of the book? How are they developed? How do these emphases relate to other books in the Bible?

5. Ideas for preaching or teaching: questions for further study (5%)

How would you preach or teach this book? Provide a brief outline (be specific) and be sure to indicate your intended audience (adult congregation, Sunday school, etc.). Also include a list of questions for further study that emerge from your paper.

Essentials to remember:

1. Grammar, spelling, and style will account for 5% of your grade. Be sure to proof-read your paper carefully before handing it in!
2. **Do not use secondary resources** (textbook, annotated Bible, commentaries etc.) You may use an Atlas or Dictionary for place names or puzzling terms, but make sure to cite it properly.
3. Papers should be typewritten and not more than 7 pages (not including the title page and bibliography), Papers should be double spaced with margins of no less than 1 inch; use a 12 pt font.

How to Prepare a Critical Book Interaction

The following steps will help you prepare a critical interaction with the book. Your interaction should be 5-6 pages, typed, double-spaced:

1. Begin by citing the author's name, book title, and publication information at the top of the page.
2. A critical interaction *is not* a book review and as such, does not include a chapter-by-chapter summation of the book's contents (I know what is in the book; don't use precious space telling me!). Instead, in a paragraph or two, state the author's thesis (i.e., what is the book arguing, or, what is the book attempting to do?) and the method(s) by which the author seeks to pursue that thesis.
3. A critical interaction *is* your discussion of select **key** issues, arguments, or assumptions that the author brings to the book and explores in its pages. Here, you must interact *critically* with them. That is, you must express (dis)agreement of some of these key ideas, and specifically state the nature of your (dis)agreement. Rather than giving a shopping list of many issues and simply a brief notation of agreement or disagreement, a critical interaction should explore that (dis)agreement. For instance: Why do you (dis)agree? Where is the author's argument flawed or helpful? What are its implications? Etc. Remember that no book is perfect, and rarely without merit, so be sure to express both points of disagreement and agreement with the book.
4. Finally, in a last sentence or two, state the main benefit or disservice you think the book brings to its intended audience.