

**Course:** BT706E & EN Advanced OT Synthesis I (Torah)\*  
**Credit:** 3 Semester Hours  
**Semester:** Spring 2021 (Cycle 6)  
**Time:** 6:00–9:00 P. M. Wednesday, May 10–July 2  
**Location:** Calvary University, CABRE 101 and online classroom  
**Instructor:** Joel T. Williamson, Jr., Th.M.  
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\*This is a blended class, meaning that both campus and online students take this class together. Campus students attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. All interaction and assignments for campus and online students are done in the online classroom.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time during the course, but any changes made will only be done after clearly communicating the need for the change and the specific change to be made via in-class announcement and Canvas announcement.

## I. DESCRIPTION

Independent, original biblical-theological analysis and synthesis of the Pentateuch, of each book and the unity, is developed by defining and exploring the contexts of Old Testament Theology, pondering its philosophical underpinnings, evaluating the contributions of some of the more significant Old Testament Theologians, discussing the crucial issues of the discipline, and presenting guidelines for formulating an Old Testament Theology. Both progressive and canonical approaches are examined. Moreover, attention is given to interpretive options for crucial passages and the critical issues of authorship and composition.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- A. General competencies to be achieved.** The basic goal of this course is not just knowledge, but knowhow. “Knowledge is not knowhow until you understand the underlying principles at work and can fit them together into a structure larger than the sum of its parts. Knowhow is learning that enables you to *go do*.”<sup>1</sup> Only when you have knowhow, are you ready to explore the practical implications of a book of the Bible. At the very least, such knowhow involves the following:
1. Ability to distinguish facts essential to correct interpretation and application from those that are peripheral. (PLO’S: 1, 3, and 4; Assignments: A, B, C, and D)

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<sup>1</sup> Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 2014), 158. (The italics are in the original.)

2. Ability to solve interpretive problems with reliable evidence and valid argument. (PLO's: 1, 3, and 4; Assignments: A and B)
3. Ability to use the information found in a text to discover the overall message and purpose intended by the author—what linguists call its “macrostructure.” (PLO's 2, 3, and 4: Assignments: C and D)

**B. Specific competencies to be achieved.** Achieving knowhow is a lifelong beyond the scope of this course. Nevertheless, the course can help you progress toward the goal by honing each of the following skills:

1. **Basic Facts.** You cannot distinguish relevant facts from irrelevant ones until you know what the facts about the book are. For each book covered in this class, you are responsible to identify facts about the book itself (such as its author, original readers, date, and historical setting) as well as facts within it (its dominant theme, purpose, and structure). Unfortunately, to make these identifications, you will often have to wade through scholarly controversy. When that happens, you are expected to choose and defend a side. (PLO's: 2 and 3; Assignments: A and C)
2. **Interpretive Problems.** Every book of the Bible has its share of issues that men of God understand differently, issues that affect the interpretation and application of that book. In this course you will demonstrate your ability to identify the most crucial interpretive, theological, or practical difficulty (or difficulties) in a book and propose and defend your solution to it. (PLO's 3 and 4; Assignments: A, B, and C)
3. **Macrostructures.** No one really understands a book of the Bible until he sees how its major parts work together to express its central message and accomplish its overall purpose. Therefore, you will demonstrate your ability to identify the message and purpose of a book (its macrostructure) and of the Torah as a whole. (PLO's: 2, 3, and 4; Assignments: A, C, and D)

### III. TEXTBOOKS

#### A. Bible

The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

#### B. Other Textbooks

1. Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. [ISBN: 978-0-0810-3998-0; List price: \$29.99]
2. Wolf, Herbert M. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody, 1991. [ISBN: 978-0-8024-4156-0; List price: \$33.99]

### IV. REQUIREMENTS

**Types of Assignments.** It is my conviction that most of the learning and the best of the learning that you will gain from this class will come through the assignments you do. Although they will be used to calculate your course grade, the primary purpose of these assignments is to help you develop knowhow, the ability to extract insight from the Hebrew Bible. Of course, knowhow doesn't just happen; you must

cultivate it, so take out your spade and hoe; the process begins now.

- A. Critical Reviews** (280 points/140 each). You are expected to read and critically review both of the assigned textbooks for this course. (By “critical,” I do not mean that you must disagree or find fault with the author, just that you must evaluate his perspective and arguments.) Each review should briefly summarize the contents of the book, identify any theological or theoretical assumptions that the author brings to his analysis, state what you consider to be its greatest strengths and its greatest weaknesses, and suggest the kind of readers for whom the book would be most helpful. Each should be 10 pages in length.

I will grade these reviews based on the following criteria: 1) accuracy (Are the facts correct?), 2) adequacy (Does the review cover all that it should?) 3) clarity (Is the argument easy to follow and understand?), and 4) mechanics (Does the paper use proper spelling and grammar? Does it have an academic tone?)

- B. Reading Journals** (210 points/30 each). Each week, I will provide one or more articles for you to read before the next class. You will demonstrate that you have done so by writing a one- to two-page journal of your reading. In it, you will note how the article(s) affect your understanding of the issues addressed—listing any questions it has raised and summarizing any insights it has provided.

- C. Macrostructure of a Book** (450 points). The seventh week of the course, you will submit your personal analysis and synthesis of one of the books of the Pentateuch. In 30 pages, you should do all of the following:

1. Identify the basic question (or questions) addressed in your book in the Pentateuch and how the book answers it (or them).
2. Outline the structure of the book’s argument/narrative to at least three levels.
3. Propose a practical—and interpretively sound—application of each book. This application should reflect the message of the entire book, not just a portion of it.

I will grade this paper using essentially the same criteria as the critical reviews based on the following criteria: 1) accuracy (Are the facts correct?), 2) adequacy (Does the overview cover all that it should?) 3) clarity (Is the argument easy to follow and understand?), and 4) mechanics (Does the paper use proper spelling and grammar? Does it have an academic tone?)

- D. Course Overview** (60 points) The last week of the course, you will submit a 5-page paper that summarizes your understanding of the message and purpose (macrostructure) of the Pentateuch as a whole and indicates what each book contributes to it.

I will grade this paper using essentially the same criteria as I use for your other written assignments: accuracy, adequacy, clarity, and mechanics.

**Specific Assignments.** These are the specific assignments for this course listed in the order according to the week in which they are due :

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>Week 1.</b> Introduction to the Torah/Pentateuch | ( 0 points ) |
| <b>Week 2.</b> Genesis 1–11                         | ( 30 points) |
| Journal #1  | ( 30 points) |
| Choice of Book                                      | ( 0 points)  |
| <b>Week 3.</b> Genesis 12–25                        | (170 points) |
| Journal #2  | ( 30 points) |
| Review of Wolf                                      | (140 points) |
| <b>Week 4.</b> Exodus 1–19                          | ( 30 points) |
| Journal #3  | (30 points)  |

|                                  |              |              |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Week 5. Exodus 20–40</b>      |              | (170 points) |
| Journal #4                       | ( 30 points) |              |
| Review of Alexander              | (140 points) |              |
| <b>Week 6. Leviticus 1–27</b>    |              | ( 30 points) |
| Journal #5                       | (30 points)  |              |
| <b>Week 7. Deuteronomy 1–11</b>  |              | (480 points) |
| Journal #6                       | ( 30 points) |              |
| Macrostructure                   | (450 points) |              |
| <b>Week 8. Deuteronomy 12–34</b> |              | ( 90 points) |
| Journal #7                       | ( 30 points) |              |
| Course Overview                  | ( 60 points) |              |

## I. METHODS

### A. Teaching

1. **Lecture.** The primary function of the weekly class sessions is to introduce and explain new material; therefore, I will devote much of each session to lecture. Come to class prepared to take notes and ask questions.
2. **Discussion.** No one ever learned a foreign language merely by taking and reciting lecture notes. Therefore, I will attempt to devote most of the last hour of each class session to discussion of class material and/or assigned reading.

### B. Grading

1. Reviews . . . . . 280 points
2. Journals . . . . . 210 points
3. Macrostructure . . . . . 450 points
4. Course Overview . . . . . 60 points

### C. Calculating the Final Grade

|                 |    |                |    |
|-----------------|----|----------------|----|
| 930–1000 points | A  | 730–769 points | C  |
| 900–929 points  | A- | 700–729 points | C- |
| 870–899 points  | B+ | 670–699 points | D+ |
| 800–829 points  | B- | 630–669 points | D  |
| 770–799 points  | C+ | 0–559 points   | F  |

### D. Academic Issues and Support

- a. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person’s ideas and presenting them as your own.
- b. **Style.** All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.
- c. **Assistance.** The Clark Academic Center ([learning@calvary.edu](mailto:learning@calvary.edu)), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams, and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.

- d. *Disabilities.*** Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator ([aso@calvary.edu](mailto:aso@calvary.edu)) of any disabling condition that may require support.