

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

OT-720 Lynn Jost, Ph.D.
3 Units/ Office: 559-452-1791; Home: 559-266-2108 (please call before 10 p.m.)
Spring 2008 Thursday 5:30-8:30 p.m.
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COURSE CONTENT

Students will be challenged to come to grips with the central message of the OT. The class will explore the viability of one particular synthesis of the OT as presented in *God's Design* and compare it to other approaches taken. The course will present an introduction to the history of the discipline and to current trends in theological research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To gain greater familiarity with OT Scripture, especially its theological themes, relating those to the Kingdom of God and the church.
2. To understand the issues, proposed solutions and methodological questions that surround the task of biblical theology, and to discuss those with sharp analysis while maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.
3. To become acquainted with and to assess past attempts at synthesizing the OT.
4. To reflect theologically on personal, social and philosophical issues.
5. To learn the skills of "doing biblical theology" by working with a biblical book.
6. To appreciate the importance of biblical theology for ministry: preaching, teaching, and mission.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Articulate commitment to a biblical theological Christian perspective
 - 2.1 Exegete biblical texts within a design that includes the descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic analytical tasks
 - 2.4 Analyze, synthesize, and engage contemporary church and world issues from a biblical theological perspective
 - 2.4.1 Describe the church as a body of people called to represent God's reign as its community, servant, and messenger in the world
 - 2.4.2 Identify ways in which the institutional church has both shaped and been shaped by society
 - 2.4.3 Analyze contemporary issues including nationalism, social justice, reconciliation, interpersonal relationships, environment and medical questions using a biblical theological paradigm that includes justice, peace, covenant community, and holiness
- 3.1 Describe the *missio Dei* view of church as a people called and sent to represent God's reign as community, servant, and messenger in dialogue with personal and denominational theology/history/sociology of church
- 3.3 Apply biblical theological perspectives in serving and leading in culturally and religiously diverse ministry contexts

TEXT MATERIALS

Required texts:

- Brueggemann, W. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Fortress, 1997. [B]
Martens, E.A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. Bibal, 1998. [M]

ASSIGNMENTS/LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Class Participation

Attendance/participation/interaction in class sessions. There is a grade reduction of 2% for each hour of missed class that is not made up. Students missing more than 12 hours of class risk course failure. Participation will require brief written assignments due at classtime as assigned.

2. Reading (10%)

Close reading is defined as reading for note taking at about 30-40 pages/hour; survey reading grasps the argument (about 60 pages/hour). See the course schedule for reading from Martens, Brueggemann, and Bible; each student is to select one monograph; all other reading is to be chosen according to student interest. Reading for research is included in the total.

Bible	Close reading - 300 chapters (20 chapters per week)		
Textbooks:	Close reading - 600 pp.	Survey reading - 300 pp.	900
Collateral:	Close reading - 400 pp.	Survey reading - 200 pp.	600
Additional:	Close reading - 100 pp.	Survey reading - 100 pp.	200
Periodicals:	Close reading - 25 pp.	Survey reading - 25 pp.	<u>50</u>
		Total	1750

Reading is to aid informed class participation. Students are encouraged to stay current with assigned reading. **An in-progress reading list is due March 20** with a minimum of 600 pages. Comprehensive reading list with annotated bibliography is **due May 15** (includes prior report). Reading list should include author, title, and pages read with summative and comprehensive totals and academic annotation of 25-50 words per item—a bit more for longer readings is permitted.

3. Web Interaction (10%)

The student is to post five Brueggemann reading reports in the “Forum” on the course website. In **Part I** of the Reading Report the student is to (1) summarize key insights and (2) evaluate or analyze by (a) applying to life or ministry or (b) offering criticism (125-175 words). **Part II** of each Reading Report is for identifying at least **two issues** on which the student would like further clarification or discussion. The issues are to be raised in the form of questions with a brief rationale for each question (50-150 words). The Brueggemann reports are due at 5:00 p.m. Feb. 11, Mar. 31, Apr. 7, Apr. 21, May 12. The schedule indicates which pages are to be read for those dates. Students are required to engage/respond to at least two other learners’ postings each posting cycle. The response is meant to further discussion and prepare for class conversation. Each response is to be 70-125 words. The responses are due Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.

Assignments that do not include word counts or do not fit the word limits will lose a minimum of 2 pts. Assignments submitted after the deadlines will not be graded.

4. Class Presentation #1: Monograph research presentation (MRP: 15%)

Students may choose a monograph title before Feb. 5; assignments will be made by the professor on Feb. 7. The student will prepare to engage in an 8-10-minute conversation with professor/classmates regarding the book. The context will be dialogical. Students should be prepared to answer the following questions: 1. What is the thesis of the book? 2. What is the theological perspective of the author? 3. How does this monograph inform the conversation with the corresponding chapter from *God’s Design*? 4. What insights from the book are most helpful for developing your OT theology and for nurturing the church? 5. How do you wish to challenge the

author? The book summary (using the sample Monograph Research rubric) is **due on course website at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday before the assigned class**. A summary of the book that follows the Monograph Research rubric is to be posted on the course website.

5. Class Presentation #2: OT Theology summaries (10%)

Each student team will present a 15-20-minute overview of an assigned OT theology. The team will locate the theologian in the field of OT theology (Barr/Brueggemann/Perdue may be consulted); outline the governing concept of the theology; identify significant supporting information; assess how this theology contributes to the contemporary community; suggest contemporary theological issues for class discussion. Creative presentation will assist classmates in giving attention to the summary. If students have not chosen a theologian, assignments will be made Feb. 7. A summary that follows the Theology Summary rubric is to be posted on the website **Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.**

6. Final Paper (40%)

2800 words minimum; **due May 8 at 1:00 p.m.**

In addition to the customary essay requirements of accuracy, articulation, organization, format and English language usage the essay will be assessed on:

- 1) significance, clarity and focus of the topic or issue,
- 2) use of secondary resources (books *and* periodicals) and textbooks,
- 3) theological ability to weigh arguments or positions,
- 4) succinct style, clear organization, force and persuasiveness of the conclusion,
- 5) use of Chicago-style citations of both quotations and ideas, and
- 6) originality of work.

Dates: 100-word proposal outlining the project due Feb. 28

Final paper due : May 8

Option 1: Canonical theology: Reflecting the perspectives of Martens and Brueggemann, analyze the theology of one of the following: Gen. 12-50, Ruth, Hosea, Amos. Read the biblical text at least two times in order to get a sense of its structure and themes (including God, creation, Israel/Judah, the nations, judgment, salvation, ethics, worship, justice, shalom, wisdom, etc.). Using the theological textbooks as a base, synthesize a theological analysis of the text which includes the context into/from which the biblical text speaks, the basic structure of the text, significant passages for laying out the text's theology, rhetorical strategies of the text, major themes and issues, and relationship to the larger OT theology.

Option 2: Theological topic: Write a paper on a theological topic informed by research which includes the perspectives of Martens and Brueggemann. The approach to and boundaries of the topical research should be defined (e.g., *synchronic study of rest in the Pentateuch* or *diachronic study of justice in the Deuteronomistic History*). Additional topic suggestions: fear, anger, divine emotions, divine jealousy, war.

Students will present a careful summary of the papers (supported by Power Point) on May 15.

7. Testing the Final Paper in the Church (15%)

A. Write and preach one exegetical sermon (20 minutes) OR design and teach one exegetical Bible study (35-40 minutes) from an OT text that applies the **Final Paper** for use in a congregational setting. The sermon should be submitted in manuscript form and with a video recording and two listener evaluations. The Bible study should be complete with lesson objectives, outline of the lesson plan, instructions/report about how much time was to be spent on each part of the lesson, and

exactly what instructions were given and responses were elicited (content). Theological insight within the presentation should be explicit but not intrusively awkward.

B. Analyze the sermon/Bible study. The critique should include (1) review of the theological themes developed; (2) response to the critique of at least 2 listeners/participants; (3) analysis of the presentation of the sermon/study—strengths, areas for improvement, future goals for the presenter. Due May 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Note: A penalty of 15% will apply to all late papers & book reviews. A penalty of 20% will apply to late class presentations. An additional 10% penalty will accrue with each additional week of tardiness.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

1. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, accommodations for disability, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, grading templates, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to your professor or consult the Registrar.
2. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.
3. Student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class (see the Academic Handbook, p. 10). The letter grade conversions follow the MBBS Grading Template: A (100-94%), A- (93-90%), B+ (89-87%), B (86-83%), B (82-80%), C+ (79-77%), C (76-73%), C- (72-70%), and F (69-0%). The performance expectations are as follows: "B" is the baseline that means the student is doing satisfactory work. "B+" or higher grades indicate the student has exceeded the baseline performance standard. "C" grade indicates that the student has not achieved the baseline level.
4. Formatting Specifications. On questions of style and citation form, consult Carole Slade, Form and Style: Research papers, Reports, Theses, 11th Edition. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. The preferred documentation format is parenthetical citation style, either the MLA or APA.

Web Interaction Grading Rubric

CONTENT

- _____ 20 Summarize key insights
- _____ 20 Evaluate or analyze by application or criticism
- _____ 10 Identify two issues for discussion
- _____ 10 Give rationale for questions
- _____ 10 Response #1
- _____ 10 Response #2

STYLE

- _____ 10 Meets criteria of assignment (length, etc.; penalty for postings that exceed maximum)
- _____ 10 Writing style and syntax are clear, proper grammar, spelling; Chicago form for citation

Each week the student is to post a reading report in the “Forum” on the course website. In **Part I** of the Reading Report the student is to (1) identify the source, (2) summarize key insights and (3) evaluate or analyze by (a) applying to life or ministry or (b) offering criticism (125-175 words).

Part II of each Reading Report is for identifying at least **two issues** on which the student would like further clarification or discussion. The issues are to be raised in the form of questions with a several-sentence paragraph of rationale for each question (30-70 words). The weekly post is due Monday at 5:00 p.m.

Class Presentation #1: Monograph Research Grading Rubric

- _____/10 Follows the rubric categories and submits work on time
- _____/20 Analyzes the book’s thesis in a way that is concise, well-defined, complete
- _____/5 Correctly identifies the author’s theological perspective
- _____/5 Engages in discerning dialogue re. connection to corresponding chapter in Martens
- _____/20 Discerns thoughtful insights for developing OT theology
- _____/5 Discerns insights useful for contemporary mission/church life
- _____/5 Evaluates book’s limits/challenges author’s conclusions with fair analysis
- _____/30 Class discussion is informed, precise, concise, energized

Students may choose a monograph title before Feb. 5; assignments will be made by the professor on Feb. 7. The student will prepare to engage in an 8-10-minute conversation with professor/classmates regarding the book. The context will be dialogical. Students should be prepared to answer the following questions: 1. What is the thesis of the book? 2. What is the theological perspective of the author? 3. How does this monograph inform the conversation with the corresponding chapter from *God’s Design*? 4. What insights from the book are most helpful for developing your OT theology and for nurturing the church? 5. How do you wish to challenge the author? The book summary (using the sample Monograph Research rubric) is **due on course website at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday before the assigned class**. A summary of the book that follows the Monograph Research rubric is to be posted on the course website.

Model Monograph Review for “Old Testament Theology,” MBBS, Lynn Jost

Middleton, J. Richard. *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*. Brazos, 2005. 304 pages.

Area: Creation

Thesis: *Image of God* as used in Genesis 1 and the Hebrew Bible shatters ancient and contemporary rhetorical expectations. God is a generous creator, sharing power with humanity and other creatures. God takes the risk of inviting creatures to participate in the creative and historical process. (296-97)

Structural Analysis: Middleton develops his thesis in three parts. In Part 1 he reviews the traditional interpretations of *image of God* and identifies their weak points, lays out his interdisciplinary, subjective hermeneutics of mutuality, then exegetes Genesis 1:27 with careful word studies and intertextual analysis. Part 2 identifies *image of God* in Genesis 1-11 as a subversive ideological critique of ANE mythology, with analysis of Egyptian and especially Mesopotamian literature. Part 3 weighs the possibility that the Hebrew Bible uses the myth of creative violence in Job and the Psalms, then returns to Genesis 1 to reconsider the notion that Genesis 1 establishes a perfectly symmetrical order for creation.

Evaluation: M. has written a book which is smart, accessible to the nonscholar, engaging, yet stretching, demanding, given to meticulous detail and argument. As an online critic says, “Middleton is one of a group of biblical scholars who combine deep grounding in traditional scholarship, profound awareness of the effects of postmodernism on culture and thought, and are unafraid to name openly their faith commitment that informs and shapes their scholarship. . . . Middleton is working to rethink some ancient questions in light of today's intellectual, social and economic contexts.” (“Reviews Written by Wes in Issaqah.” Amazon N.P. Cited 20 July 2006. http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A10QPVDDVWMWY4/ref=cm_cr_auth/104-4585166-6901567?ie=UTF8). The book's strength lies in its postmodern biblical exegesis with careful attention to a biblical subversive approach to imperial ideology. It would be strengthened by stronger, clearer development of the contemporary implications of this reading. M. fills a gap in Martens' theology which neglects both creation and the anthropology of Genesis 1:27.

Helpful Insights: “. . . *imago Dei* refers to humanity's . . . role as God's earthly delegates . . . to extend God's rule on earth through ordinary communal practices of human life.” (60)

God's relationship to creation is illuminated by images of kingship, covenant, kinship, artisanship, one who fashioned the world as a cosmic sanctuary (as the emphasis on sevens substantiates [83]). Human responsibility for creation in God's name is both *representational* and *representative* of God (88) as humans imitate God's creativity (89).

Genesis 1 challenges “the Mesopotamian notion of king as image of a god . . . with the claim that all humanity was made in God's image” (145). “Rather, God granted a royal-priestly identity . . . to all humanity. . . . This democratization . . . [dignifies] the human race with a noble status in the world, analogous to that of royalty in ANE” (204).

Israel's distinctiveness may lie less in theological claims about God's historical action and more in the social order these claims generate (193), resulting in internal debate in Israel (195).

“Genesis 1 constitutes a normative framework by which we may judge all the violence that pervades the rest of the Bible” (269).

Response: I am beginning to move from prioritizing *deliverance* as a theme of OTT to recognizing the priority if not primacy of *creation*. M. also reinforces my growing sense that one faithful reading of the Bible recognizes it as a subversive text that deconstructs imperial ideology. M.'s colleagues Walsh and Keesmaat have written a smart book entitled *Colossians Remixed* which uses a similar strategy but includes more application.

Class Presentation #2: OT Theology Summary Grading Rubric

- _____/10 Identifies the author's theological location with insight, including relationship to other theologians
- _____/10 Outlines the governing concept or theological center clearly, concisely
- _____/10 Reports and analyzes the written organization/structure
- _____/30 Synthesizes significant supporting information, data, detail
- _____/10 Assesses contemporary contribution of theologian
- _____/10 Suggests significant contemporary issues for discussion
- _____/10 Completes work on time, uses time well, engages class appropriately
- _____/10 Distributes summary rubric that is written well and follows guidelines

Each student team will present a 15-minute overview of an assigned OT theology. The team will locate the theologian in the field of OT theology (Barr/Brueggemann/Perdue may be consulted); outline the governing concept of the theology; identify significant supporting information; assess how this theology contributes to the contemporary situation; suggest contemporary theological issues for class discussion. Creative presentation will assist classmates in giving attention to the summary. If students have not chosen a theologian, assignments will be made Feb. 7. A summary that follows the Theology Summary rubric is to be posted on the website **Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.**

One or two page summary should use this format:

Bibliographic entry, student presenters' names

Theologian's location in the field (*denomination, relationship to critical perspectives, etc.*)

Theological center or governing concept (*brief thesis statement—about 40-80 words*)

Structural organization (*may be in outline form*)

Supporting information (*written text, occasional quotation, see monograph sample—125-250 words*)

Assessment (*written text of several sentences including student's personal response—100-150 words*)

Discussion issues (*1-3 sentences; succinct*)

PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Theme	Assignments	Theologians and Monographs
Jan 31	Divine Design Introduction to OT Theology	M: 3-19, 357-69 B: 1-114	
Feb 7	Yhwh is Creator	M: 317-28 Class presentations assigned	Trible, Phyllis. <i>Texts of Terror</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. Smith, Mark. <i>The Memoirs of God</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004. Fretheim, Terence. <i>God and World in the OT</i> . Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.
Feb 14	Ancestral stories	M: 21-33 B: 117-313* B essays and responses due Monday and Wednesday	Moberly, R.W.L. <i>The Old Testament of the Old Testament</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992. Bird, Phyllis. <i>Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997. Schwartz, Regina. <i>The Curse of Cain</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Jacobs, Mignon. <i>Gender, Power, & Persuasion</i> . Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
Feb 21	Yhwh covenants	M: 71-90	OTT: Eichrodt Birch, Bruce. <i>Let Justice Roll Down</i> . Louisville: WJK, 1991. Wright, C.J.H. <i>OT Ethics for the People of God</i> . Downers Grove: IVP, 2004. Mettinger, T.N.D. <i>In Search of God The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.
Feb 28	No Class		
Mar 6	Yhwh is holy Yhwh promises land	M: 91-137	OTT: Von Rad Gammie, John. <i>Holiness in Israel</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989. Gerstenberger, E. <i>Yahweh the Patriarch</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
Mar 13	Yhwh is Warrior	M: 37-70	OTT: Terrien Lind, Millard. <i>Yahweh is a Warrior</i> . Scottsdale: Herald, 1980. Hobbs, T.R. <i>A Time for War</i> . Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989. Brueggemann, Walter. <i>Interpretation and Obedience</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
Mar 20	Yhwh judges	M: 141-68 Reading list	OTT: Gottwald Baloian, Bruce. <i>Anger in the OT</i> . New York: P. Lang, 1992. Janzen, Waldemar. <i>Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach</i> . Louisville: WJK, 1994.

Mar 27	Yhwh anoints	M: 169-91 B: 317-403* B essays and responses due Monday and Wednesday	Sakenfeld, Katharine. <i>Faithfulness in Action</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. Nicholson, Ernest. <i>God and His People</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1986. Patrick, Dale. <i>The Rendering of God</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.
Apr 3	Yhwh rules	M: 193-216 B: 407-564* B essays and responses due	OTT: Childs Ollenburger, Zion, <i>the City of the Great King</i> . Sheffield: JSOT, 1987. Brettler, Marc. <i>God is King</i> . Sheffield: JSOT, 1989.
Apr 10	Fear of Yhwh	M: 217-236	Habel, Norman. <i>The Land is Mine</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995. Rad, Gerhard von. <i>Wisdom in Israel</i> . Nashville: Abingdon, 1972. Lowery, Richard. <i>Sabbath and Jubilee</i> . St. Louis: Chalice, 2000. Whybray, R.N. <i>The Good Life in the Old Testament</i> . London: T & T Clark, 2002.
Apr 17	No Class		
Apr 24	Yhwh suffers	M: 239-79 B: 567-704* B essays and responses due Monday and Wednesday	OTT: Scobie Fretheim, <i>The Suffering of God</i> . Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. Smith-Christopher, Daniel. <i>A Biblical Theology of Exile</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress: 2002. Balantine, Samuel. <i>Prayer in the Hebrew Bible</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
May 1	Yhwh renews	M: 281-313	OTT: Gerstenberger Wright, C.J.H. <i>Knowing the HS through the OT</i> . Downers Grove: IVP, 2006. Gnuse, Robert. <i>No Other Gods</i> . Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
May 8	Yhwh & Jesus	M: 341-55 Final papers and sermon/study due	OTT: Goldingay Enns, Peter. <i>Inspiration and Incarnation</i> . Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. Wright, C.J.H. <i>Knowing Jesus Through the OT</i> . Downers Grove, IVP, 1992.
May 15	Research reports	B: 707-50* B essays and responses due	Final reading report due