Course Description

Surveys books of the Old Testament, with emphasis on historical and prophetic books. Examines the historical and geographical setting and place of the Israelites in the ancient Middle East as background to the writings.

General Course Purpose

To introduce the student to the books of the Old Testament with an emphasis of their role in shaping the history of the Hebrew nation and to examine the Pentateuch, the Historical books, the Wisdom writings, and the Prophetic books by applying critical methodologies to the interpretation of the books of the Old Testament.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

None

Course Objectives

At the completion of the course, the student will be able to examine the theology, history, themes and content of each of the books in the Old Testament. Specifically, the student will be able to:

- Discuss relevant Old Testament terminology such as “patriarch”, “covenant”, “Torah”, “toledoth”, “plague,” “flood,” “united monarchy,” “divided monarchy,” “theophany,” “mitzvah,” “oracle,” “pantheon,” “diaspora,” “prophecy,” “major prophets,” “minor prophets,” etc.
- List the themes, and describe the content, and purposes of the books studied
- Explain the flow of history in the Old Testament, along with the significance of this history
- Identify the important persons, places and things appearing in the Old Testament
- Employ various critical methodologies to the literary genres found in the Old Testament
- Examine what archeology has done for the Old Testament
- Synthesize the ‘big picture’ of the Old Testament to relate the parts to the whole

Major Topics to be Included

Critical attention will be given to the following topics:

- Approaching the Old Testament
- Formation of the Old Testament Scriptures
- Composition of the Pentateuch and the Pentateuch
- Historical Overview of Old Testament Times
- Timeline of Biblical History
- Geography of the Old Testament
- Critical Methodologies
- Historical Books
- Poetic Books
- Wisdom Writings
- Prophetic Books
- Establishment of the United Monarchy
- Divided Monarchy from the late tenth century BCE to the early eighth century BCE
- Diaspora: Jews in Babylon and the Return from Exile
- Restoration: Judah in the late sixth and fifth centuries BCE
- Archaeology of the Old Testament