

Introduction to the Old Testament

European Nazarene College

School Year:	2022-2023
Dates:	6 February 2023 to 21 April 2023 with an Easter break from 6 April 2 to 12 April.
Learning Centre:	Albania, Tirana
Course Number:	BIB1105
ECTS:	5 ECTS
Language(s) of Course:	Albanian
Delivery Method:	Fully online
Course Time Commitment:	15 hours per week.
Lead Teacher:	Howard Culbertson
Teacher Assistant:	Edlira Xhakollari

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the literature of the Old Testament. It examines the themes, history and literary character of the Old Testament's books and reflects upon the relevance of their messages for contemporary society.

Place in the Curriculum

This course has no prerequisites. When this course is offered for 6 ECTS, in two parts, Introduction to the Old Testament 1 is a prerequisite to Introduction to the Old Testament 2.

Intended Educational Outcomes

This course contributes to reaching the following intended educational outcomes of EuNC's curriculum:

Content	<i>CN1 Bible.</i> Students will know the content and theology of the Old and New Testaments, historical backgrounds and the various kinds of literature, as well as key issues of hermeneutics.
Competency	<i>CP1 Interpretation.</i> Students will be able to interpret and apply Scripture in exegetically and theologically sound ways.
Character	<i>CH1 Integration.</i> Students will be able to apply the knowledge they have received to their personal lives.
Context	<i>CT1 Relevance.</i> Students will be able to communicate the Gospel in relevant ways to the people in a certain context, using sound hermeneutical principles.

Course Objectives

To partially or completely reach the above stated intended educational outcomes, by the end of the course students will be able to ...

1. Name and classify the books of the Old Testament according to the major divisions and genres of literature (supports CN1).
2. Identify the notable people, places and events of the Old Testament story (supports CN1).

3. Place the history of the people of the OT in the wider historical, socio-political and cultural context of the Ancient Near East (supports CN1).
4. Discuss the major themes and prominent stories of the OT Books (supports CN1).
5. Create a narrative of the entire sweep of the Old Testament story from beginning to end (supports CN1).
6. Discuss the main features of each main type of literature in the OT (supports CN1)
7. Demonstrate the ability to use basic resources for Old Testament study (supports CP1)
8. Practice a formational reading of Scripture that enables the student to encounter the Old Testament as the Word of God and apply it to personal and community life (supports CH1 and CT1).
9. Show the ability to do inductive Bible study of an Old Testament passage and apply it to contemporary life (supports CP1 and CT1).

Course Requirements

The following requirements are expected of all students:

1. *Participation.* Faithful participation is expected and essential to benefit from this course. Much of your learning will depend on your participation in class assignments, activities, and discussions. See below under “Class Participation” for the absence policy.

The course will be conducted asynchronously via Moodle. All assignments will be submitted to Moodle forums. To contribute to the aim of creating a learning community, you are required to read all assignments posted by other students and to comment on them. Every week, you must also write at least two substantive response posts of at least 100 words to what other students (or even the professor) have submitted to that week’s Moodle forums. The response posts could also be reflections from conversations you had that week about course content with your pastor, family members or even other church members. Response posts will receive participation credit for the week in which they are submitted to Moodle. (This requirement will help you accomplish course objectives 1-9.) **Due:** The end of each week

2. *Reading.* The textbook and the assigned sections of the Old Testament books need to be read according to the class calendar. (This requirement will help you accomplish course objectives 1-6 and 8-9.)

By Thursday night of each week, you must submit to Moodle a reflection on that week’s reading of at least 150 words. The reflections should be your reactions about the ideas and concepts in the reading rather than a simple summary of the reading content. **Due:** Each Thursday

3. *Lectio Divina.*
Lectio Divina is the historic practice of scripture reading, meditation and prayer that treats Scripture not as texts to be studied, but as the living word. Do the assignment as explained in Appendix 2. (This assignment will help you accomplish course objective 8). **Due:** 19-3
4. *Common Assignment: Final Exam.* (This assignment will help you accomplish course objectives 1-9). See Appendix 3 for the explanations. **Due:** 23-4
5. *Memorization.*
 - A) Memorize the Old Testament books in order. Find someone (pastor, friend or family member) who will attest in writing to the course instructor that you were able to repeat the names of all 39 books in order without any help. This recitation could even be done in a

church service. **Due:** 19-2

- B) Memorize Deuteronomy 6.4-9]. Find someone (pastor, friend, or family member) who will attest in writing to the course instructor that you were able to repeat all six verses without any help. This recitation could even be done in a church service. **Due:** 5-3

(This two-part memorization assignment will help you accomplish course objective 1.)

6. *Inductive Bible Study*. Develop an in-depth Bible study following the steps provided in Appendix 1. The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice in doing inductive Bible study, based on your own careful observation of the text and the use of biblical resources. (This assignment will help you accomplish course objectives 7-9) **Due:** 16-4

Grade Distribution and Learning Hours

Course Requirements	Percentage of final grade	Learning Hours
Participation	10%	30
Reading	15%	77
Lectio Divina	10%	5
Common Assignment: Final Exam	35%	15
Memorization	10%	3
Inductive Bible Study	20%	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>150 hours of study</i>

Textbooks

Bibla e Shenjtë [Published English Title: *The Holy Bible*]

Varughese, Alex, ed., *Duke zbuluar dhiaten e vjeter: Historia dhe besimi* Global Nazarene Publications; Illustrated edition (March 3, 2009) [available on WHDL as well as on OverDrive; also available in printed form through amazon.com and bookdepository.com] [Published English title: *Discovering the Old Testament: Story and Faith*].

Additional Resources

1. Arnold, Bill and Bryan Beyer, *Takimi(Ndeshi)i Dhjatës së Vjetër*, [Published English Title: *Encountering the Old Testament*]
2. Bailey, Waylon and Tom Hudson. *Hap pas hapi ne Dhjaten e Vjeter*. [Published English title: *Step by Step through the Old Testament*] [Gorre library].
3. Jensen, Irving, *Analiza e Jensen-it mbi Dhjatën e Vjetër*, {Published English title: *Analysis of the Old Testament*}
4. MacDonald, William. *Komentari i Bibles per Besimtare*, volumi 1 dhe 2.[Published English title: *Believer's Bible Commentary*] [Gorre library].
5. Mears, Henrietta. *Perse ben fjale Bibla*. [Published English title: *What the Bible is all about*] [Gorre library].
6. Stott, John. *Te kuptosh Biblen*.[Published English title: *Understanding the Bible*] [Gorre library].

Course Calendar

WEEK	SESSION	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
1 Starts 6-2	Syllabus Why Study the OT? How We Got Our Bible How to Study the Bible The Old Testament World	Syllabus Varughese, pp. 8-11 and 14-46 Gen 1-4, 6-9, 11:1-9 Other students' posts	Autobiographical note Reading reflection 1 Two response notes
2 Starts 13-2	Introduction to the Pentateuch Beginnings: Creation and Fall Patriarchs and Covenant	Varughese, pp. 47-85 Genesis. 12, 15-17, 21-22, 24, 27-28 Genesis. 32-33, 37, 39-45, 50 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 2 OT Book Memory Test Two response notes
3 Starts 20-2	Exodus and Law Old Testament Worship and Festivals	Varughese, pp. 86-124 Exodus 1-4, 12-14, 19-20, 24, 32-34; Leviticus 5-6, 16, 18-20, 23; Numbers 9; 13-14; 18,1-24; 22 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 3 Two response notes
4 Starts 27-2	Historical Books: Introduction Conquering the Land The Judges Kings of Israel and Judah	Varughese, pp. 125-161 Joshua 1-3, 6-8, 23-24 Judges 2, 4-7, 14-16; Ruth 1-4 1 Samuel 1-3, 8-10, 15-20 2 Samuel 1-2, 5, 7, 11-12 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 4 Memorization of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Two response notes
5 Starts 6-3	Kings of Israel and Judah Exile and Restoration	Varughese, pp.. 164-200 1 Kings 2-3, 8, 10-12, 18-19 2 Kings 2, 4-5, 17-23, 25 Nehemiah 1-2, 4-5, 8-9 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 5 Two response notes
6 Starts 13-3	Wisdom and Poetic Literature: Introduction Job Psalms	Varughese, pp. 201-231 Job 1-3, 8-10, 38, 40-42; Psalms 1, 8, 19, 22, 27, 37, 46, 51; 84, 96, 103, 110, 121, 126, 137, 139, 150 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 6 Lectio Divina Assignment Two response notes
7 Starts 20-3	Proverbs Ecclesiastes Introduction to the Prophets Isaiah	Varughese, pp. 233-265 Proverbs 1-3, 6-8 Ecclesiastes. 1, 3, 12 Isaiah 1-2, 6-11 Isaiah 40, 42-43, 55 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 7 Two response notes
8 Starts 27-3	Jeremiah Ezekiel and Daniel	Varughese, pp. 266-299 Jeremiah 1-2, 7-8, 18-19, 29-33 Lamentations. 3 Ezekiel 1-3, 33-34 Daniel 1-4, 5-7, 12 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 8 Inductive Bible Study Two response notes
Easter break: 6-4 to 12-4 (Thus 13-16 April are actually belong to Week 8)			

WEEK	SESSION	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
9 Starts 17-4	Amos, Hosea, and Joel Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Obadiah Prophets of the Return	Varughese, pp. 300-336 Amos 1-2, 4-5, 7 Micah 4-7 Habakkuk 1-3 Haggai 1-2 Malachi 1-4 Other students' posts	Reading reflection 9 Two response notes
23-4	Common Assignment: Final Exam due		

The teacher has the right to make changes in the course calendar, and due dates (within the course duration), if necessary.

Academic Integrity

"Honesty in all academic endeavours is vital as an expression of the Christian life. It is required that students at European Nazarene College will not participate in cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words and ideas without giving credit to the original source), fabrication, or other forms of academic dishonesty (for example, working in groups when individual work is required or handing in similar assignments to different courses).

It is the student's responsibility to learn the appropriate methods of citing the sources they have used. Guidelines are provided in ACP1000 EuNC Orientation.

Any student who knowingly assists another student in dishonest behaviour is equally responsible.

Academic dishonesty is a serious ethical violation of academic integrity. The **minimum** penalty for academic dishonesty will be failure of the assignment. At the discretion of the teacher and the LC Committee, more stringent measures may be applied, including failure of the course, academic probation, or academic suspension" (EuNC Academic Catalogue).

Language Proficiency and Academic Style

"As a general rule, 10% of the grade for all written assignments is based upon language use: proficiency in grammar and spelling, as well as the ability to communicate clearly" (EuNC Academic Catalogue).

It is expected that students will follow the academic style adopted by their Learning Centre (please review ACP1000 EuNC Orientation) as they complete written assignments.

Class Participation

"Education at EuNC is more than just learning facts – it is that, but also involves the building of character, deepening one's walk with Christ, and building skills for life and ministry. In order to achieve these goals, students are expected to actively participate in their classes. For in-class courses or those utilizing video conferencing, this means both being in attendance of those sessions and actively being a part of the discussions. For online classes, this means connecting to the course regularly during the week and keeping up with the forums and assignments that have been developed.

If a student is unable to . . . connect to the online component of their course, they need to communicate with the teacher, as much in advance as possible, to explain the reason (illness or other unavoidable circumstances) and make up the work accordingly.

For an online or hybrid course, how often the student needs to connect to the course content each week and what constitutes that (logging in, watching a video, responding to a forum, etc.) will be defined in the specific attendance/participation requirements of the course. This will define the students' attendance/participation expectations.

Penalties may be assigned by the teacher for not meeting attendance/participation expectations. These specific penalties will be indicated in the syllabus." (EuNC Academic Catalogue).

Late Submission of Assignments

All course requirements should be submitted to the proper Moodle forum before the final due date and hour. For work that is submitted late, 10% of the possible grade will be deducted for each day it is late. Thus, any work submitted after 10 days will not be eligible to earn any points.

"The teacher has the freedom to give students extensions if they approach the teacher in time with valid reasons" (EuNC Academic Catalogue).

Intellectual Property

"All teacher-created syllabi are the property of EuNC. Other institutions may use material and components of the courses after permission has been asked of the Rector of EuNC, and with the acknowledgement of EuNC as the source." (EuNC Academic Catalogue)

Course Evaluations

"Part of the requirements for every course is that students complete the student course evaluation. The aggregated student evaluations, as well as course data, may be used by the faculty member, LC administration and/or general administration of EuNC for ongoing assessment of the college" (EuNC Academic Catalogue).

Appendix 1: Inductive Bible Study

The purpose of this assignment is to provide practice in doing inductive Bible study. The term 'inductive' derives from the word 'induction' meaning "the process of deriving general principles from particular facts or instances."¹ This assignment will help you study the Bible's message for today by concentrating on the meaning of the text. The first step is to read the Bible on its own terms. What genre is this book? To whom may it have been speaking, and why? Does it address a particular problem? What does its purpose seem to be? Which theological ideas are presented? These are all questions that could be asked of the text, without turning to secondary sources for answers. This assignment will assist you in learning to carefully read and observe the biblical text in its own context.

Part 1. Select one of the following passages: Genesis 15:1-7; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Joshua 24:14-21; Psalm 51:1-8; Isaiah 6:1-8; Isaiah 55:6-13.

Study the passage inductively, i.e., observing details of the passage itself.

In this exercise, you are trying to discover, "What does the text say and how does it say it?"

1. Begin by reading the passage slowly, out loud. If you have access to another translation, re-read it in that translation.
2. Ask some general questions of the passage:
 - a. What is the setting? For example, who is speaking and who is being addressed? Where is it taking place? What is going on at the time in the life of God's people?
 - b. What type of literature or genre is the text: narrative, poetry, law, teaching, prophecy, etc.?
3. Observe the flow or structure of the passage. If it is a narrative passage, is there a progression of the story's plot? Is there a poetic structure? Does the thought move to a conclusion or climax? Are there connecting words that give you clues as to the relationship of one sentence or thought to another, for example, "therefore" (shows a consequence of what has come before), "but" (shows a contrast), "like" or "as" (shows a comparison), "if" (shows a condition), "in order that" (show a statement of purpose)?
4. Make a list of *observations* based on your reflection on the passage. Look for things like commands to obey, assertions carrying the author's convictions, promises, figurative language, main themes, important words that carry the weight of meaning, repetition of key words or thoughts, narrative features (characters, dialogue, setting, etc.). You will probably not find all of these in any one passage, but carefully observe what you can. Make note of new understandings or whatever stands out to you from the verses. When you have made all the observations you can, go back and try it again. Don't settle for a superficial reading. The more observations, the better.
5. Ask questions of the passage. What issues would you like to know about the passage that would help you understand it better (e.g., background issues, word meanings)?
6. Consider the context of the passage, particularly the verses that appear right before and after it). Does it shed any new light on its meaning for you?
7. Compare several translations (not paraphrases) of the passage and show the significant differences. Check the footnotes in the translations to see if there are any textual issues (i.e. if there are differences between the textual witnesses, like the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, etc.). If you know Hebrew and have access to a Hebrew Bible, check the critical apparatus to find out more about this.

¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/induction>

8. Think about the theological meaning of the text. What is the main message of the passage? What important ideas do you find? What does the passage tell us about God, humanity, sin, salvation, redemption, the church, holy living, etc.?

Listen carefully to the text. Learn as much as you can by your own observation and reflection before looking at biblical commentaries, Bible study books or other outside resources.

Part 2. Write a summary of your findings (1000-1500 words, excluding the bibliography). This should include:

1. Written observations from the inductive study of the passage itself. This should be done before consulting commentaries or any sources other than the Bible text itself.
2. Detailed outline of the Bible study based upon initial observations and the research of the exegetical resources. This outline should have an Introduction, main theological points of the passage and a conclusion applying of the passage to contemporary life.
3. Bibliography with entries for each of the sources you consulted, including all Bible translations used.

Note: If you quote from a source (even a few words), or if you borrow a thought directly from a source you **must** give credit to the source using the Academic Style approved by the Learning Centre. Quotations or borrowed ideas not documented will result in a penalty on your grade (see above, *Academic Integrity*).

Due date: 16 April

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent to Good Work	Adequate to Poor Work	Unsatisfactory Work	Total
Inductive Text Analysis	Deep understanding and analysis of key exegetical and theological issues. Ability to focus on essential issues. Abundant evidence of inductive study.	Basic understanding and analysis of the issues. Sometimes, the analysis gets lost in details. Fair evidence of inductive study.	Reflects inadequate understanding and analysis of the issues. Lack of focus and clarity. Little or no evidence of inductive study.	
Points	50-40	39-30	29-0	
Critical Evaluation	Ability to discern between conflicting interpretations. Informed exegetical decision-making. References to sources are well-embedded in the overall argument.	Some interpretations do not receive a fair evaluation or are not discussed. References to sources do not always flow well in the overall argument.	Lack of critical evaluation. Inappropriate or no use of sources.	
Points	20-16	15-12	11-0	
Synthesis	Shows comprehensive synthesis of the main elements of the paper. Application is relevant and follows out of exegetical work.	Shows some synthesis of the main elements of the paper. Application lacks relevance.	Synthesis of the main elements of the paper is fuzzy or non-existent. Application does not follow from exegetical work.	
Points	20-16	15-12	11-0	

Language Proficiency and Academic Style	1% or less of grammar and/or spelling errors, in relation to word count. Demonstrates ability to communicate clearly. Correct formatting.	2% or less of grammar and/or spelling errors, in relation to word count. Could communicate more clearly. Essentially correct formatting.	More than 2% of grammar and/or spelling errors in relation to word count. Not communicated clearly. Flawed formatting.	
Points	10-8	7-6	5-0	
Total points earned (100 points possible)				

Additional comments:

Appendix 2: Lectio Divina

This is an exercise in *formational reading* of Scripture. It follows a practice of *Lectio Divina* (spiritual reading) that is rooted in the history of the church. The purpose is not to gain information, but to experience transformation.

Choose *one* of the following passages:

- A. Genesis 12.1-7
- B. Exodus 3.1-12
- C. 2 Kings 5.9-17
- D. Psalm 23
- E. Isaiah 61

Instead of “mastering the text,” let the text “master” you. This requires a humble, careful listening to the Word of God and an honest response. It is not essential that you cover the entire passage. Read and meditate in an unhurried way, focusing and lingering as you allow the Word to sink into your heart.

Follow these steps:

1. Prepare your heart

- Relax, release your agenda, and listen.
- Remind yourself that God is present.
- Pray for the Word to *read* you.
- Share your gratitude with God.

2. Hear the Word

- Read slowly, out loud if possible.
- Stop when “arrested.”
- Allow the Word to play in your heart.
- As God speaks, absorb what He is saying to you.

3. Ask, “How has God touched my life?”

- Why is this word for you?
- What is it about your life right now that needs to hear this word?
- How is God catching your attention?
- How does this word make you feel uncomfortable?
- If it is a story, what characters do you identify with? With whom do you not identify? How does the story connect with your life?

4. Is there an invitation for me?

- What is God saying to you?
- What is he asking of you?

5. Write down what you hear God saying to you through his word.

6. Pray

- How do you find yourself praying for yourself? For others?
- Allow your prayers to flow

7. Release your thoughts, feelings, and intentions to God...Rest..

8. Submit to Moodle: 1) What you wrote down under #5 (you do not need to turn in anything you are uncomfortable sharing); and 2) What you learned about the activity of reading Scripture from doing this exercise.

Appendix 3: Common Assignment: Two-Part Final Exam

Part 1: The Story of God and His People.

The first part of your final exam will be in the form of a narrative. You will be asked to recount in writing and from memory the overall flow of the Old Testament story—people, places, events, time frames—from beginning to end. The Old Testament is essentially a collection of great stories. Old Testament participants were storytellers. Contemporary preachers or teachers must be able to creatively tell stories. You will entitle your narrative: “**The Story of God and His People.**” This continuous narrative will be written so it makes sense to people in your own culture. Avoid theological jargon or technical language. Write in common language. It will be up to you what to include and what to leave out. It will be evaluated on the basis of accuracy of content, communication effectiveness, overall flow of the narrative, creativity and language usage.

Part 2: Themes of the Old Testament

The Old Testament story features a number of great theological themes, such as:

<i>Covenant</i>	<i>Redemption</i>	<i>Obedience</i>
<i>Hope</i>	<i>Grace</i>	<i>Sin</i>
<i>Love</i>	<i>Forgiveness</i>	<i>Promise</i>
<i>Faith</i>	<i>Judgment</i>	

Instructions: You are to choose **one** of the above themes, and trace its presence or expression in the Old Testament, drawing from narratives or expressions in the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, and Prophets.

You have 120 minutes to accomplish this exam. The first 60 minutes should be used for your telling of the Old Testament story. The second 60-minute segment should be used for the theme you chose.

You may use a Bible, but no other notes, for the second part of this exam. **The first part must be answered without the use of a Bible.**

The following grading rubric will be used in assessing your work.

Introduction to the Old Testament: Final Exam Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent to Good Work	Adequate to Poor Work	Unsatisfactory Work	Total
<i>Content</i>	The content of the OT story is well understood and accurate, even up to the details.	The content of the OT story is mostly accurately described.	Major misunderstandings of the OT story.	
Total points	30-24	23-18	17-0	
<i>Communication Effectiveness</i>	Story is easy to understand and catches the interest of the target audience.	Story is easy to understand and does somewhat effectively catch the attention.	Story is hard to understand and does not catch the attention.	
Total points	20-16	15-12	11-0	

<i>Flow of the narrative</i>	Elements of the story are thoughtfully interwoven.	Elements of the story mostly flow well into each other.	Abrupt transitions; a thread of thought is hard to discern.	
Total points	10-8	7-6	5-0	
<i>Overall Understanding of OT Theme</i>	Deep understanding of the theme is evident, original insights.	Basic understanding of the theme, demonstrations of things learned in the course.	Understanding of the theme is patchy and/or inaccurate.	
	25-20	19-15	14-0	
<i>Synthesis: Ability to show development of themes through the four parts of the Old Testament</i>	Development goes through all four parts in a satisfactory way.	Development includes all four parts, but some are only briefly or superficially dealt with.	Development leaves out some of the four parts of the OT.	
	15-12	11-9	8-0	
Total Points Earned (100 points possible_				

Additional Comments:

