

Hebrew Bible/Systematic Theology

Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament

Professor	Daniel R. Driver, PhD	Course	Version 1.1.0
Phone	902-425-7051	Meets	Mon–Fri, July 17–28
Email	ddriver@astheology.ns.ca	Time	9:00–12:00 AM
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Hours	Daily, 12:15–12:45 PM	Website	danieldriver.com/courses/

1 Course Description

From the Academic Calendar: What is the relationship of scripture and theology? Some answers to this question start with the Bible, while others begin with Christian doctrine, while still others call for a dialectical movement between canon and creed. However it is approached, the question presents a number of challenges.

To illustrate the problem in general, and to outline some possible solutions, this course highlights a variety of current approaches to the Old Testament as the scripture of the Church. Students will encounter work by an array of biblical and theological specialists who transgress the conventional limits of their disciplines. They will study the views of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and those who disavow religious affiliation. Because the Hebrew Bible is Jewish scripture in the first instance, students will consider why some Jews are not interested in biblical theology, and what it means for the Church to adhere to the Scriptures of Israel. Specific doctrines under consideration include: creation, sin, election, incarnation (the body of God), divine impassibility, Christology, Mariology, law and gospel, death and resurrection, and the afterlife.

2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should develop knowledge of some ways different churches – include the RCC, ACC and UCC – approach the Bible in general, and the Old Testament in particular, as scripture. They should become familiar with a few major narratives about the relationship of Bible and Theology, and with different theories about how to frame knowledge of God (in terms apophatic and kataphatic, for example). They should be able to analyze and evaluate doctrinal claims by biblical scholars and theologians who use the OT as a core theological resource. Students should also develop curiosity about the role of Hebrew scripture in communities beyond the church, including in the academy and especially the synagogue. Their creativity and confidence in expressing their own ideas about the Scriptures of Israel should grow, even as they learn to do so with appropriate humility and charity. Finally, students should experience a process of discovery in dialogue with biblical traditions ancient and strange as they come to terms with their own ways of thinking and speaking about the God of Israel.

3 Required Texts & Materials

The following texts are required. Students are encouraged to purchase their own copies. Library copies that are not already reference works will be placed on a 1-hour reserve.

- [NRSV] M. D. Coogan, ed. *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: NRSV*. 4th ed. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- [Anderson] Gary A. Anderson. *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament: Theology in the Service of Biblical Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- [MacDonald] Neil B. MacDonald. *Metaphysics and the God of Israel: Systematic Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. For those who are unable to find copies of this book for resale, the library's reserve copy should suffice to meet the needs of the class.

An acceptable alternative study Bible is the NJPS: Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). A reference copy is available in the library, and it is well worth consulting.

4 Supplementary Texts

Supplementary readings will be recommended throughout the course. In particular, students are asked to explore relevant church statements about Christian scripture, particularly the Old Testament. Resources from the founding churches of AST include the following.

1. RCC: Roman Catholic Church
 - (a) *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, the encyclical from Pope Pius XII [[overview](#)] (1943)
 - (b) *Dei Verbum*, Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (1965)
 - (c) PBC = Pontifical Biblical Commission: *L'interprétation de la Bible dans l'Église, The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (April 15, 1993)
 - (d) PBC: *Le peuple juif et ses Saintes Écritures dans la Bible chrétienne, The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (May 24, 2001)

2. ACC: Anglican Church of Canada (one of 38 Provinces in the Anglican Communion)
 - (a) Articles VI–VII of *The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* (1562)
 - (b) *The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1886, 1888)
 - (c) Paragraphs 52–62 of *The Windsor Report* [PDF] (18 October 2004)
 - (d) *Bible in the Life of the Church (BILC) Project Report* (2012)
3. UCC: United Church of Canada
 - (a) The UCC requires its ministers to be in “essential agreement” with four doctrinal statements that are “subordinate to the primacy of scripture” (GC 41 2012 - 005):
 - i. *Twenty Articles of Doctrine* (1925)
 - ii. *A Statement of Faith* (1940)
 - iii. *A New Creed* (1968)
 - iv. *A Song of Faith* (2006)
 - (b) *The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture: A Statement of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: UC Publishing House, 1992) [BS 480 U65 1992 – on reserve]
 - (c) See also R. C. Fennell’s series “How Does the United Church Interpret the Bible?” in *Touchstone*, a Canadian journal of theology and heritage:
 - i. *Part I, 1904–1940s: Tradition and Resistance* (26.2 [2008]: 13–24)
 - ii. *Part II, 1950s–1990s: Tradition and Liberation* (26.3 [2008]: 31–42)
 - iii. *Part III: A Song of Faith* (29.2 [2011]: 21–29)

5 Course Outline

We will adhere to the schedule in [Table 1](#) as closely as possible, though the professor reserves the right to adjust it to suit the needs of the class.

§. Topic	Anderson	MacDonald	OT Text	Date
1. Approaches	1	1	1 Sam 4–6	17 July
2. Impassibility	2	2–4	Jonah 1–4	18 July
3. Creation	3	5–6	Gen 1–3	19 July
☞ <i>Articles of Faith due at the start of class four</i>				
4. Original Sin	4		Exod 32–34	20 July
5. Election	5	7–8	Gen 12, 15, 17	21 July
~. No Class: Weekend				22–23 July
6. Christology	6	9	1 Kings 8	24 July
7. Mariology	7		1 Sam 1–2	25 July
8. Faith & Works	8–9	10	Tobit 1–4	26 July
9. Atonement	10	11	Tobit 12–14	27 July
☞ <i>Paper is due at the start of class ten</i>				
10. Accordance			2 Kings 17	28 July
☞ <i>End of Term: Final marks are due to the Registrar</i>				7 Aug.

Table 1: Schedule of Readings

See the AST website for a list of other **important dates**.

6 Evaluation and Grade Structure

1. Before each class, complete the assigned reading and write a one page (250 word) **reading response**. Use the exercise to elaborate, reflect on, test, challenge, or extend an idea from the reading that you find noteworthy. Type your responses, write in complete sentences, and combine those sentences into one or two healthy paragraphs. Due at the start of **each class**, unless it is the first class or another graded assignment is due. Students who submit fewer than 7 responses cannot earn an “A” for the course.
2. On a single sheet of paper, annotate a list of between 7 and 12 essential **articles of faith** that Christians historically derive from Old Testament scripture. For guidance on what counts as “essential” you may consult various catechisms (Catholic, Lutheran), creeds (Apostles’, Nicene, New), and other official documents (Articles, Encyclicals, Statements). In your annotations, cite OT texts that seem to speak to each of the doctrines you select, whether for or against or both. Due at the start of **class four**.
3. A **final paper** allows you to explore one Christian Doctrine of your choice in terms of its relationship to Old Testament scripture. The paper must have a clear thesis and be 2,500 words (ten pages) long. It should interact with the assigned reading and cite at least seven secondary sources in total. Due at the start of the **last class**.

Note that this course is an intensive. Its format is highly condensed. In a two week period students are expected to attend 30 hours of class and to spend a further 50 hours *or more* in independent study. Students are therefore encouraged not to have other major commitments during the course session so that they can have the best chance of success.

The breakdown for the course’s total work is shown in [Table 2](#).

Reading Responses	40%
Annotated Articles	20%
Final Paper	40%

Table 2: Distribution of Grades

AST’s [Academic Calendar](#) provides guidelines and detailed criteria for academic assessment. Marks are assigned by letter grade using these benchmarks. Note that, at AST, a grade of “C” is deemed “Unsatisfactory.”

7 Other Course Policy

Late work will not be accepted, except in genuinely extenuating circumstances.

Essay submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced, and free from error. In this course they should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd Edition (refer to the free, online [Student Supplement](#)). [Plagiarism](#), if [detected](#), will result in failure of the course.

Students should request permission to record a class. If permission is granted, I stipulate that the recording be for personal use only. It may not be shared or distributed.

Finally, as [cognitive psychologists have demonstrated](#), “laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers.” I therefore encourage the conscientious use of laptops, tablets, and other technology in the classroom. Please do your part to foster an environment of open dialogue by honouring the presence of your classmates.