

COURSE SYLLABUS

OT506: Understanding the Old Testament

Course Lecturer: Bruce K. Waltke, ThD, PhD

Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Knox Theological Seminary

About This Course



This course was originally created through the Institute of Theological Studies in association with the Evangelical Seminary Deans' Council. There are nearly 100 evangelical seminaries of various denominations represented within the council and many continue to use the ITS courses to supplement their curriculum. The lecturers were selected primarily by the Deans' Council as highly recognized scholars in their particular fields of study.

Course Description

The Old Testament is often viewed as antiquated, mysterious, and even irrelevant. In this course, Dr. Waltke shows how Old Testament theology is pivotal to the universal goal of redemptive history: the rule of God and the establishment of God's kingdom in all the earth. The course tracks salvation history as it appears in nearly every book of the Old Testament, and shows the vital relationship of the Old Testament to the New. Throughout the course, Dr. Waltke applies the doctrines of kingdom and salvation to the Christian life.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to do the following:

- Analyze the theological universal goal of the Old Testament as it relates to the theme of salvation history.
- Discuss the books of the Old Testament in light of their contribution to salvation history.
- Develop an awareness of the history surrounding the message of the Old Testament.
- Correlate the salvation history of the Old Testament with the New Testament doctrines of kingdom and salvation.
- Be familiar with the relevant resources on Old Testament theology.
- Value the Old Testament as the key to understanding God's plan for His people.
- Apply the principles from the Law, Prophets, and Writings to life and ministry.

Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Course Lecturer



Bruce K. Waltke, ThD, PhD

Education:

- Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, postdoctoral fellow
- Harvard University, MA and PhD
- Dallas Theological Seminary, ThM and ThD
- Houghton College, AB

Teaching Career:

- Distinguished Professor of Old Testament, Knox Theological Seminary
- Professor Emeritus, Regent College in Vancouver (beginning in 1976)
- Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary (1996-2010)
- Professor, Westminster Theological Seminary (1985-1991)
- Professor, Criswell Bible Institute (1970-1976)
- Professor, Dallas Theological Seminary (1958-1976)
- Visiting professor/guest lecturer at institutions around the globe, including Bethel Seminary, Columbia International University, Covenant Theological Seminary, Denver Seminary, Geneva Bible College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Vancouver School of Theology, Western Seminary, and Wheaton College

Other Career Highlights:

- Recognized as one of the preeminent scholars in Old Testament Studies
- Speaker at numerous Bible conferences across the United States and Canada
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- Campus Crusade for Christ
- Area field supervisor at excavations at Tel Gezer, Israel
- Leader of several field study trips to the Middle East and the classical world
- President, Evangelical Theological Society (1975)
- Helped in the translation and production of over a dozen versions of the Bible, including the *New American Standard Bible*, *The New Geneva Study Bible*, and the *New International Version*
- Honorary member of the committee responsible for *Today's New International Version*

Publications:

- More than 1,000 articles and several books, including *Knowing the Will of God*, *An Old Testament Theology* (which garnered an ECPA Christian Book Award in 2008), and *Genesis*, a book he coauthored with C. J. Fredricks (which won the Gold Medallion Award in 2002)
- The work *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, published by Zondervan in 2000 and edited by J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund, honors Dr. Waltke's countless contributions to Christian scholarship.

Online Professor

If you are taking this course for credit, CUGN will assign one of its faculty members as the online professor for this course. This professor will contact you upon enrollment in the course and will guide your study. Your online professor will be available to you by email and, at set times, by chat room or other real-time technology. Your online professor will do the following in order to stimulate student involvement and facilitate effective learning:

- Evaluate and assign grades to all coursework.
- Provide assistance with technological problems that may occur.
- Answer questions that may arise.
- Issue your final grades.

Course Texts

Because Dr. Waltke does not follow a particular textbook for the lectures, there is flexibility in the reading assignments. Therefore, there are no specific textbooks assigned for the course. The student will read collaterally from texts found in the course bibliography. See the section entitled Course Requirements for details about the required reading.

Academic Honesty

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student’s work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](#) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar’s Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be listened to and/or read throughout the lessons of the course.

- **Audio-based teaching**

The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in audio format. If available, we also provide the option of reading the lesson from a transcript of the audio lecture (found in the course Audio Lecture section).

- **Readings**

Reading from the required textbook(s) is assigned in this syllabus.

Mentor Relationship

Students are required to seek out a mentor with whom they can discuss the spiritual impact of the course on their life. The goal of this process is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

Spiritual Formation Project

Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection through the course's Spiritual Formation Project.

Course Requirements

1. **Time:** The student is required to spend a minimum of 120 hours in this course. All course requirements must be completed within 6 months of enrolling in the course.
2. **Recorded Lectures:** The student is required to listen to all 24 audio lectures recorded by Dr. Bruce K. Waltke.
3. **Reading:** In addition to the lectures, the student is expected to read 1,000 pages from books in the Course Bibliography. The student will report his/her reading at the end of the course. This reading should be reported by title, author, and pages read. Within this reading, at least one *complete* book must be read.
4. **Research Paper:** The student will write a **ten- to twelve-page** research paper on one of the following topics:
 - A. The work of the Spirit in the Old Testament
 - B. The application of the Mosaic Law to the life of the Christian

- C. A synthesis of the various messages of Israel's prophets
- D. The covenants of the Old Testament and their application to the Church
- E. An analysis of Israel comparing/contrasting pre- and post-exile periods

The research for this paper should come from Scripture, the lectures, the readings in the bibliography, and any other sources which shed light on the chosen topic. The paper should not be a personal reflection on the topic; rather, it should report the research done in a given area, particularly noting similarities/differences within the research. The better papers will be those which compare/contrast different opinions in scholarship with a view toward finding common ground in the field of study chosen.

5. **Reflection Paper:** The student will write a **five-page** reflection paper on the concept of "salvation history." In this reflection, the student will define the concept, describe its application to ancient Israel, and then apply the concept to those in the Church.

6. Spiritual Formation Project

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. With this in mind, CUGN includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. Identify your mentor early in the course, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

A. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: Reflect on the course – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

- i. Follow these steps in your reflection:
 - Step 1: What one theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
 - Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
 - Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?
 - Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what specific steps should you take to concretely apply what you have learned?
- ii. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: approximately three pages)

iii. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

B. Community Reflection and Interaction: Interview a mentor – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- i. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is not your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- ii. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

C. Synthesis and Application: Draw your final conclusions – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- i. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- ii. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - What advice did he/she give?
 - How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
- iii. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:

- If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
- In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life. If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it. Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

7. Final Examination: The student will take an exam at the end of the course. The exam will only cover the lectures.

Course Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Lectures and Reading	10% of Course Grade
Research Paper	35% of Course Grade
Reflection Paper	15% of Course Grade
Spiritual Formation Project	15% of Course Grade
Final Examination	25% of Course Grade
Total	100%

Grades will be issued within two weeks of the end of the course.

Student Name: _____ Course: _____ Interview
Date/Time: _____

Guidelines for Mentors

(Students, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student's CUGN coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking CUGN courses are required to complete a final assignment called the "Spiritual Formation Project." This assignment involves two parts: an essay and an interview:

The ESSAY: After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

The INTERVIEW: After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student's growth through interaction with a mature believer.

NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

- You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)
- Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her "Personal Reflection and Evaluation" and prepare to discuss the following:
 1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
 2. Are the student's conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
 3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?
- Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).
- Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – *a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.*

NOTE: If the student's school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.

Course Bibliography

- Arnold, Bill T., and Beyer, Bryan. *Encountering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999).
- Baker, David. *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999).
- Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and its Meaning for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953).
- Dillard, Raymond B. and Longman, Tremper, III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994).
- Dumbrell, William J. *Covenant and Creation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984).
- _____. *The Faith of Israel: Its Expression in the Books of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1988).
- Hill, Andrew E. and Walton, John. *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991).
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1991).
- Martens, E. A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology* (North Richland Hills, Texas: BIBAL Press, 1997).
- Vos, Gerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1948).