

COURSE SYLLABUS

OT509: The Christian and Old Testament Theology

Course Lecturer: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., PhD

President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell 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

This course examines the foundational theology of the Old Testament as applied to the New Testament and the Church. It also identifies the focal point for the Old and New Testaments and discusses the continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments concerning: saving faith, the people of God, the Law, worship, atonement, the kingdom of God, the Messiah, and the New Covenant. Throughout the course, Kaiser examines how Old Testament theology is vital to contemporary Christian living.

Course Objectives

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

- Articulate Old Testament theological themes.
- Understand the problematic issues of Old Testament theology.
- Appreciate the significance of the Old Testament for the Church.
- Apply Old Testament theology to life and ministry.

Course Lecturer



Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., PhD

Education:

- Brandeis University, MA and PhD
- Wheaton College, BA and BD

Teaching Career:

- President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Distinguished Colman M. Mockler Professor of Old Testament Studies, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1966-1993)
- Professor of Bible and Archaeology, Wheaton College (1958-1966)
- Leader of more than 20 graduate and undergraduate study tours abroad, while lecturing and preaching at thousands of schools and churches around the globe

Other Career Highlights:

- Advisory Editor, *Christianity Today*
- During his presidency at Gordon-Conwell (1997-2006), theological enrollment increased from 900 to 2,200 students
- Added five PhD programs during his tenure as Academic Dean and Senior Vice President for Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (1980-1993)
- Chairman for the Evangelical Seminary Dean's Council (1982-1993)
- President of the Evangelical Theological Society (1977)
- Regularly consulted for his expertise by several Christian publications and organizations

Publications:

- Author of more than 40 books, including *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, *Recovering the Unity of the Bible*, *Biblical Ethics: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching*, and his magnum opus, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*

Course Texts

Required:

Dyrness, William. *Themes in Old Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979.

Collateral Reading:

The learner will read 1,000 pages from the following list of supplemental textbooks. *At least one book must be read in its entirety.* The reading will be assessed by an annotated bibliography. (See below.)

Hasel, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4th rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

Hubbard, Robert L. Jr., et al. *Studies in Old Testament Theology*. Dallas: Word, 1992.

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

Martens, Elmer A. *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology*. 3rd ed. N. Richland Hills, TX: D & F Scott Publishing, 1997.

Sailhammer, John H. *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Zuck, Roy B., ed. *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.

Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Course Requirements

1. Time: The student must complete the course requirements within a 6-month period unless the particular institution requires the completion of all work within the framework of the semester or quarter. During this time, the student is expected to devote a minimum of 120 hours to the completion of the course.

2. Recorded Lectures: Listen carefully to each of the twenty-four lectures, utilizing the lecture outline (found in the Study Guide) as a guide and the note-taking page for recording thoughts. You should find a quiet environment that limits unnecessary distractions.

Objective: to accumulate course content through active and careful listening.

3. Required Reading/Reports: Annotated Bibliography—all reading will be stipulated and summarized in an annotated bibliography to be turned in upon completion of the course. For each reading, you will list the number of pages and a one-paragraph annotation. Remember, at least one complete book must be read. (See "Course Texts" above.)

Objective: to acquire a deeper, broader knowledge of course content and to demonstrate that knowledge through brief written assignments.

4. Study Questions: Answer the study questions provided after each lecture (located in the Study Guide). The answers to these questions will be turned into your proctor before the final examination. Participating in these questions will better prepare you for the exam and assignments.

Objective: to foster immediate and cognitive interaction with the lecture content and to encourage evaluation of where you stand in relation to that content.

5. Ministry Research Paper: Write a paper (approximately ten pages) on the significance of the Old Testament for ministry in a particular area of your choice. Choose from one of the subjects below, or secure approval from your proctor for an alternative.

Objective: to apply the principles of Old Testament theology to life and ministry.

FORMAT:

- Read the assigned book for the given topic area, and do other reading and research as needed.
- Evaluate the required book's contribution in this area.
- Formulate your personal contribution to the topic based upon further reading, reflection, etc.
- Detail some *specific* ministry plans in this area as a result of your study.

POTENTIAL SUBJECTS:

Worship: David Peterson, *Engaging with God*

OR Andrew Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise*

Ethics: Christopher Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord*

Prayer: Patrick Miller, *They Cried to the Lord*

OR Samuel Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*

Holiness: John Gammie, *Holiness in Israel*

Election: David Novak, *The Election of Israel*

Justice: Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel*

OR Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience*

Anthropology: Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology in the Old Testament*

Theodicy/suffering: Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*

OR Robert Davidson, *The Courage to Doubt*

OR Terence Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*

Environmental stewardship: Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Tending the Garden*

OR Fred Van Dyke, *Redeeming Creation*

General: Christopher Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*

- 6. Evaluation Paper:** Write a brief paper (three to five pages) evaluating Dr. Kaiser's proposal of promise theology in light of all your research in the course. You should suggest strengths and/or weaknesses of Dr. Kaiser's approach, and if you differ with it significantly, you should provide a tentative alternative proposal.

Objective: to articulate Dr. Kaiser's approach in your own words, and to critique that approach in light of the Scriptures.

7. 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.

- 8. Final Exam:** At the end of the course, you will participate in a final exam. The exam will primarily cover Dr. Kaiser's lecture material.

Objective: to reinforce and assess knowledge of lecture content.

Course Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Reading (as assessed by annotated bibliography)	10% of Course Grade
Study Questions	15% of Course Grade
Ministry Research Paper	25% of Course Grade
Promise Theology Evaluation Paper	20% of Course Grade
Spiritual Formation Project	10% of Course Grade
Final Exam	20% of Course Grade
Total	100%

Student Name: _____ Course: _____ 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

The Old Testament as the Christian Problem

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Old Testament Theology

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The Significance of the Old Testament

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