



**STUDY LEVEL:** 800 LEVEL  
**UNIT CODE:** OT805  
**UNIT TITLE:** Overview of the Old Testament  
**TRIMESTER:** Trimester 3, 2025

**LECTURER:** Dr. David Shaw  
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<b>UNIT OVERVIEW:</b>	<p>The module explores the Old Testament together with the major elements contained in its narratives, and main theological themes. It will proceed by focusing on the background of the Bible, overviewing its books and describing their cultural, literary and religious contexts. It will begin with an exploration of the Old Testament by focusing on the structure of the Hebrew Bible with its several forms of literature. After an introductory session, the major sections will be presented, considering main characters, books, theological themes, critical-historical issues, biblical-theological views, and more. The course will also evaluate the theological interpretations of these texts against this cultural background, the theological issues of the Bible and their relevance in moulding Christianity. This analysis will be aware of the degree of interaction, use, and re-use of the Old Testament in the New Testament and its appropriation within Christianity.</p>
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**ACADEMIC DETAILS**

<b>Location in course:</b>	This core unit is an introductory unit offered at Level 800.
<b>Workload</b>	This unit carries 3 credit points. Contact hours for this unit are 2.5 hours/week for 10 weeks. Students are expected to study a further 8.5 hours/week.
<b>Pre-Requisites</b>	None
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery will be via lectures, research assignments, and extra content supplied on Moodle.
<b>Summary of Content</b>	This unit gives a general but cohesive overview of the purpose, contents, and historical background of the Old Testament by identifying different genres and the metanarrative informing the collection of books within the OT canon.
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	By the completion of this unit, the students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Employ foundational theological knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critically discuss the narrative structure and the overarching meta-narrative of the Old Testament.</li> <li>2. Identify and critically discuss key Old Testament passages that explain the meta-narrative's significance in its historical and cultural context.</li> <li>3. Explain the different literary genres found in various Old Testament writings and consider their significance for interpreting the Old Testament today.</li> <li>4. Compare arguments for/against a central theological theme informing the Old Testament as a whole.</li> </ul> </li> <li>B. Describe a practical context to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine how well believers integrate the overarching story of the Old Testament with that of the New Testament.</li> </ul> </li> <li>C. Develop and employ practical methods and actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate the overarching story, major themes and ongoing significance of the OT.</li> </ul> </li> <li>D. Engage in critical personal reflection to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Challenge personal and community perceptions surrounding the view of God as developed in the Old Testament.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Requirements to complete</b>	To successfully complete this unit students must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) lodge all assessments that are required for this unit, and</li> <li>b) obtain a total grade of at least 50% in the unit.</li> </ul>

**LECTURE SYLLABUS**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Reading</b>
1	Intro: OT Story, Background, Theology, and Interpretation	n/a
2	Pentateuch overview; Deuteronomy	Starling, ch. 2; Relevant textbook pages
3	Genesis; Exodus	Relevant textbook pages
4	Historical Books; 1-2 Chronicles	Starling, ch. 4; Relevant textbook pages
5	Judges; 1-2 Samuel	Relevant textbook pages
6	Poetry/Wisdom; Psalms	Starling, chs. 1, 5; Relevant textbook pages
7	Ecclesiastes; Proverbs	Relevant textbook pages
8	Prophets; Zechariah	Starling, ch. 6; Relevant textbook pages
9	Isaiah; Jonah	Relevant textbook pages
10	The Writings; Nehemiah; Esther	Starling ch. 3; Relevant textbook pages

**ASSESSMENTS SUMMARY**

<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>When assessed</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Learning outcomes Assessed</b>
Critical Lecture Reflections	Week 4, 11	30%	D1
Essay	Week 8	35%	A1; A2; A3; A4; B1
Book chapter summary and application	Week 11	35%	B1; C1

## ASSESSMENT ITEMS

<p><b>1. Critical Lecture Reflections</b> Carries 30% of the total grade.</p>	<p>For weeks 1–10, pick something from the lecture that captures your imagination in some way: this may be a “lightbulb moment”; something difficult to understand; or a point of application from what you’ve learned, and take 200 words to articulate that point and why it matters to you.</p> <p><b>Part 1 Due:</b> Friday of Week 4 (for sessions 1-4) <b>Part 2 Due:</b> Friday of Week 11 (for sessions 5–10)</p> <p><b>Word Count:</b> 200 words per week (+/-10%); 1,000 words in week 5; 1,000 words in week 11.</p> <p><b>References:</b> Anything from a relevant biblical text or secondary source (incl. lecture material), must be cited according to PBC standards.</p>
<p><b>2. ESSAY</b> (Carries 35% of the total grade).</p>	<p>Explore the concept of covenant in the Old Testament by comparing and contrasting the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. Your essay should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition(s) of covenant</li> <li>• Accurate summaries of both the Abrahamic (Gen 12, 15, 17) and Mosaic Covenants (Exod 19–24)</li> <li>• How the covenants are similar and different to one another</li> <li>• How the covenants find fulfilment (or remain to be fulfilled!?) in the wider biblical narrative (both OT and NT).</li> </ul> <p><b>Word Count:</b> 1,500 words. <b>Referencing:</b> Min of 9 sources, incl. 2 journal articles. <b>Due:</b> Friday of Week 8</p>
<p><b>3. Book chapter summary and application</b> (Carries 35% of the total grade).</p>	<p>Read Starling, <i>Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship</i>, ch. 6 (pp. 81–91), with a view to summarising the contents and applying the principles laid out (see esp. p. 91) to Jeremiah 29:4–14. Pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Jeremiah may draw on earlier biblical material or themes.</li> <li>• How aspects of fulfilment might amplify Jeremiah’s message.</li> <li>• How unfulfilled aspects of Jeremiah’s prophecy fuel hope of a greater fulfilment in the future for contemporary readers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Referencing:</b> Min of 9 sources, incl. Starling and 2 journal articles. <b>Word Count:</b> 1,500 words <b>Due:</b> Friday of Week 11</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All assignments are to be submitted via Moodle by 11:55pm on the day the class is scheduled in the week indicated above, unless specified otherwise.</li> <li>• Presentation must be submitted via Moodle by 11:55pm on the day <b>before</b> the class.</li> <li>• Where evaluation rubrics are required, they will be provided on Moodle in due time before assessment.</li> </ul>	

Students should also have a *working* knowledge of [PBC's Assessment Policies](#) ([www.pbc.wa.edu.au](http://www.pbc.wa.edu.au) and then *Student Portal/Useful Links/Policies & Procedures/Assessment Policies*) to assist in completing this unit.

## Textbooks

Any one of the following is acceptable:

- Arnold, BT & Beyer BE 2015, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Baker Academic.
- House, PR & Mitchell EA 2023, *Old Testament Survey*, B&H Academic.
- Longman, T III & Dillard RB 2006, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Zondervan.
- \*\*\* Walton, JH & Hill AE 2013, *Old Testament Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Zondervan.  
Available on DTL2. \*\*\*
- Walton, JH & Hill AE 2009, *A Survey of the Old Testament* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Zondervan.
- Various authors: *Exploring the Old Testament* vol's 1–4 (Pentateuch, History, Psalms & Wisdom, Prophets).

The lecturer will refer most often to Walton & Hill 2013, *Old Testament Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Zondervan.

## Other Required Reading

- Starling, DI 2016, *Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship: How the Bible Shapes Our Interpretive Habits and Practices*, Baker Academic, (PDF's of ch's 1–6, to be provided by the lecturer).

## Further Recommended Readings

- Brueggemann, W 2002, *Spirituality of the Psalms*, Fortress Press.
- Dorsey, DA 2004, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*, Baker Academic.
- Goldingay, J 2010, *Key Questions about Christian Faith: Old Testament Answers*, Baker Academic.
- — 2011, *Key Questions about Biblical Interpretation: Old Testament Answers*, Baker Academic.
- Ryken, L 2008, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Baker.
- Walsh, JT 2009, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation*, Westminster John Knox Press.