



On-Campus Course Syllabus
OTS 350 L00.A
OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUNDS
Fall 2018

Class Information

Day and Time: Thursday 4:15-6:45

Room Number: E 201

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Kevin Warstler

Instructor Email: kwarstler@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 214.818.1331

Instructor Office Hours: Mon. 1-4/Tues. 10:30-11 & 4-6/Wed. 1-4

Instructor Name: Kirk Spencer

Instructor Email: kspencer@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 469.834.5211 (please text first)

Instructor Office Hours: Tues 10:30 to 11:00am, Thurs 10:30 to 11:00am & 12:00 to 4:00pm

Course Description and Prerequisites

An advanced intensive study of the historical, cultural, social, and literary contexts of the Old Testament. This course will explore discoveries in the Ancient Near East from the Stone Age to the Iron Age through the art, literature and history of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Canaan and how they compare with that of Israel.

Course Objectives

- A. Know and give the location and history of major geographic features, people groups, cities, civilizations and archeological sites in the Bible lands related to Old Testament history and literature;
- B. Know and organize the dates of major events of the ancient Near East, especially those that relate to Old Testament history and literature;
- C. Describe and interact with significant archeological discoveries and the content of ancient texts in their historical and cultural context in order to understand the concepts and world views of that particular time and place;
- D. Evaluate supposed parallels between ancient texts and the Old Testament and articulate your thoughts on the nature and significance of the parallelisms;
- E. Examine and evaluate an ancient Near Eastern Textbook.

Required Textbooks

- A. Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan E. Beyer. *Readings from the Ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. (978-0801022920)
- B. Spencer, Kirk. "Ancient of Days: an Orientation in the Ancient World," 2008. Unpublished Manuscript.
- C. Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006. (978-0801027505)

Course Requirements and Assignments

A. Reading Assignments:

Ancient of Days

As you read through and study *The Ancient of Days*, mark-up the text in whatever system you want (underlining, drawing boxes, stars, brackets etc.) and also annotate the text by writing notes, ideas and comments in the margins. Mark-up and annotation is especially important in the literary interlude portions of the manuscripts which deal with primary texts because very few exam questions will come from these sections. Marking up and annotating a text will document that you have read all of the material. Let me put it another way: I want to give you an easy grade for simply reading the manuscript. As you mark-up and annotate the text, you are attempting to convince me that you have done a close reading of the text in preparation for the exams. At the end of the semester, I will collect your manuscript and look through them to determine how thoroughly you have read the material based upon your mark-up and annotations.

Ancient Near East

You are responsible to read John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* in its entirety by the week before finals week. The Walton texts should also be annotated to document a close reading.

A reading grade will be assigned, based upon the quality and amount of annotations. Your reading grade will determine 5% of your final grade.

[These two annotated reading assignments (Spencer and Walton) should provide a course grade which will help elevate your class average. However, if you do not apply effort, then it will backfire and will pull down your class average. Please write your name on the texts to make it easier to return.]

Journal Articles

Class discussion will also include familiarity with landmark journal articles on the significance of each of the primary texts studied as part of the course.

(Readings for each week from Spencer's "The Ancient of Days," and Arnold and Beyer's, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, as well as journal articles is supplied in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.)

B. Maps and Timeline

Three map and one timeline project will be given during the first half of the semester. You will have access to a Nation Map, a City Map and an Israel Map, as well as a Time Map (or Timeline) on Canvas. It is important that you review and memorize these maps and take the test over them (also found on Canvas). You will be allowed to take these tests more than one time and only the highest grade will be recorded.

C. Exams

Five exams will be taken during the semester over the assigned readings and class discussion. Exams will be taken over: The Stone Age, Mesopotamia, Egypt, The Promised Land (Israel) and The Monarchy and Exile. The exams will include questions taken primarily from your readings in "Ancient of Days." However there will be questions from the lecture and discussion. Descriptions of the types of questions and the amount of time given to take the tests are given in the Test Description section of each test as seen on Canvas.

D. Comprehensive Final Exam

There will be a comprehensive final exam taken on Canvas. All the questions on this final exam will be taken from questions presented on the previous exams. Because you will access to all the questions on previous tests to help you prepare for the final, you should be able to do well on this exam.

E. Class Participation

Since class participation is vital to learning, absences should be taken only when absolutely necessary. Granting of excused absences is permitted at the discretion of the professor.

Three instances of either being tardy to class, or departing before the end of class will be considered one absence. You will receive a participation grade based upon attendance and informed participation in class discussion. The participation grade will be reduced by four points for each unexcused absence.

Discussion is based on the amount and quality of questions asked and comments made during classroom discussions.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Online Exam Protocol:

Exams will be timed tests with primarily multiple choice and matching questions. The student should take the exam as quickly as possible from memory. With the time remaining, after the exam is completed, you can check and change any answers by searching the manuscript and notes you have taken. While you can use the

manuscript and your notes in this search, you cannot use any other sources. Each of these exams can only be taken once.

(Keep in mind that the maps and timeline tests are different. While they are also timed, you cannot use your map or timeline to take the tests, they are to be done from memory, however, unlike the exams, you can take the maps and timeline tests multiple times.)

Here is a list of activities which will be considered cheating:

- Talking to someone about the exam to give or get information about the content of the exam.
- Using the course manuscripts or lecture notes to find the answer to a question before you have completed the entire exam. (Although these sources can be used to find answers in an “open-book” format after you have completed the entire exam and still have remaining time.)
- Using any other source material other than the course manuscripts and lecture notes to look up answers while taking the exam.
- Letting someone else take the exam for you.
- Taking the exam for someone else.

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students’ ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

Grading:

Relative Weight of Grades

Reading	10%
Participation	10%
Map Tests	30%
Time Line Test	10%
Exams	30%
Final Exam	10%

Grading Scale

A	97-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	93-96	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	91-92	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	88-90	3.0 grade points per semester hour

B-	86-87	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	83-85	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	80-82	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	78-79	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	75-77	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	72-74	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	70-71	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-69	0.0 grade points per semester hour

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their professors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar’s Office. The “I” must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the grade was assigned, or the “I” will become an “F.”

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students’ institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of

the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor at the beginning of the course, or if a student has a learning disability, please inform the professor so assistance can be provided.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the professor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Support

Canvas and CAMS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and CAMS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with CAMS should contact the Campus Software Manager at bstifle@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students Jeff Campbell, at jcampbell@criswell.edu.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, go to the library website, or email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu.

Writing Center: Students are encouraged to consult with writing tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence by practicing techniques of clear and effective writing. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Writing Center located on the first floor near the Computer Lab, or they can schedule an appointment by emailing writingcenter@criswell.edu or calling 214.818.1373.


~~~~~[Take Timeline Test]~~~~~

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**MESOPOTAMIA**

**Week 5 (September 17-21)**

Earliest Civilizations

Mesopotamian Creation Stories

Sacred Space & Sacred Texts

Read Mesopotamia Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.28-97)

Read carefully for discussion "The Gilgamesh Epic" and flood stories (Spencer AofD pp. 55-77)

Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 1, #5, pp. 21-31, and Chapter 2, #13, p. 71.

~~~~~[Take Stone Age Exam]~~~~~

Week 6 (September 24-28)

Sumer to Old Babylon

Mesopotamian Creation and Flood Stories

Study Mesopotamia Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.28-97)

Read Pritchard, "Mesopotamian Legal Documents: Nuzi Akkadian," pp. 187-190.

Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 3, #14-16, pp. 72-74, Chapter 5, #21-26, pp. 96-103, and Chapter 6, #27-33, pp. 104-117.

Read Exodus 21:15, 22-25, 28-32; Leviticus 24:19-20; and Deuteronomy 19:21. Compare these laws to those of Hammurabi (or Hammurapi).

EGYPT

Week 7 (October 1-5)

Old and Middle Kingdom

Hieroglyphics, Mummies & Pyramids

Covenants and Law Codes

Read Egypt Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.98-148)
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 1, #8-10, pp. 62-65, Chapter 10,
#50, p. 160, Chapter 11, #55, pp. 166-168, and Chapter 15, #72-
73, pp. 194-197.

~~~~~[Take Mesopotamia Exam]~~~~~

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**Week 8 (October 8-12)**

New Kingdom  
Akhenaton & Tutankhamen

Egyptian Creation Stories and Amarna Period

Study Egypt Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.98-148)  
Study Israel Map  
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 4, #17-20, pp. 75-95.  
Read Pritchard, "The Expulsion of the Hyksos," pp. 226-228.  
(handout)  
Read Pritchard, "The War against the Hyksos," pp. 242-245.  
(handout)

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**Week 9 (October 15-19)**

The Exodus

Epic Literature and Hyksos Texts

Study Egypt Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.98-148)  
Study Israel Map  
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 13, #63-70, pp. 175-191, and  
Chapter 14, #71, 192-193.

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**PROMISED LAND**

**Week 10 (October 22-26)**

Israel: Northern Rift Hittites to Jezreel

Wisdom Literature and Love Poetry

Read Promised Land Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.150-181)  
Learn Israel Map

Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 1, #7, pp. 50-62, and Chapter 10, #51-54, pp. 160-165.

~~~~~[Take Egypt Exam]~~~~~

Week 11 (October 29-November 2)

Israel: Southern Rift Jericho to Aquabah

Canaanite Texts

Study Promised Land (AofD pp.150-181)
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 7, #34-38, pp. 118-133, Chapter 15, #74-78, pp. 197-204, and Chapter 17, #87-89, pp. 218-221.

~~~~~[Take Israel Map Test]~~~~~

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**Week 12 (November 5 - 9)**

Jerusalem

Cultic Texts

Read Exile Chapter (Spencer AofD pp.197-226)  
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 8, #39-43, and Chapter 9, #45-49, 159.  
Read 2 Kings 9-10. This is related to the Shalmaneser III reading (the Black Obelisk) that mentioned Jehu.  
Read 2 Kings 18-19. This is related to Sennacherib's account of the siege of Jerusalem.

~~~~~[Book Reviews Due]~~~~~

~~~~~[Take Promise Land Test]~~~~~

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**EXILE: Assyria, Babylon & Persia**

**Week 13 (November 12 - 16)**

Assyria

Royal Records and Chronicles

Study Exile Chapter (Spencer AofD pp. 197-226)  
Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 8, #44, pp. 147-149, Chapter 16,  
#79-86, pp. 207-217, and Chapter 18, #90-91, pp. 222-226.

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**(November 19 - 23)**

Fall Break & Thanksgiving Holiday

Catch-up on All Testing  
Prepare for Final

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**Week 14 (November 26 – 30)**

Neo-Babylon

Prophetic Texts

Read Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 8, #44, pp. 147-149, and Chapter  
18, #90-91, pp. 222-226.

Read Ezra 1:2-4. This is the biblical account of the decree of  
Cyrus and is related to the Cyrus cylinder text.

~~~~~ **Research Papers Due** ~~~~~

~~~~~ **[Take Exile Exam]** ~~~~~

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**Week 15 (December 3 - 7)**

Persia

Exile and Postexile

Prepare for Final  
Walton Reading Due

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**Week 16 (December 10 - 14)**

Presentations

Finish all outstanding work

**COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM**

**Turn in Marked Manuscripts and Extra Credential Sheet**

## EXTRA CREDIT CREDENTIALS

Students are encouraged to consider “extra credentials.” This is any learning experience related in some way to the culture of the Ancient World. The student can choose any learning experience they wish outside of the classroom related to the course.

Here is a partial list:

- Visiting museums,
- Watching good feature length historical film,
- Reading a good historical novel,
- Attending expert lectures or society meetings on other campuses
- Participating (and organizing) toga/tunic parties with costumes, historical movies and period refreshments.

If the student participates in these learning experiences they should keep record of what they have done and a very brief description of what they have learned. At the end of the course you should turn in a list of these activities to the professors.

## Selected Bibliography

Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan Beyer. *Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Chavalas, Mark W., ed. *Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001-2003.

Hallo, William W., and William Kelly Simpson. *The Ancient Near East: A History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Hess, Richard S. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Kuhrt, Amélie. *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 B.C.* 2 vols. New ed. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Lichteim, Miriam *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. 3 vols. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.

Matthews, Victor H., and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the*

*Ancient Near East*. Third revised expanded ed. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007.

Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Ancient Near East: A New Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Sasson, Jack M., ed. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.

