

***“The New Testament lies hidden in the Old
and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”***

St. Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* (2.73)

ANCTI Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures

Winter Term 2023 (01/21 - 03/25)

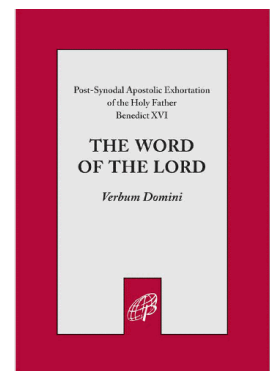
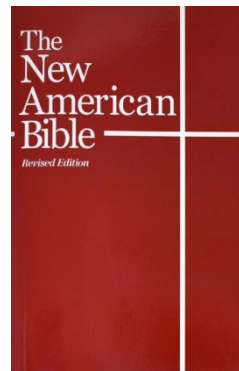
Saturday, 11-12:30

Kerry Walters, Instructor

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Required Texts:

- *Old Testament* (preferably the NARV, NRSV, or Jerusalem; please, no “paraphrase” editions)
- *Verbum Domini (The Word of the Lord)*, online or paperback



Course Description

This course explores the Hebrew scriptures from a variety of historical, literary, and theological angles. But the golden thread that will run through all our investigations is the “canonical” approach that reads the Bible using all the tools of modern exegesis while also celebrating it as the inspired word of God. Although Christians in the Catholic tradition are not textual literalists, we do believe that, as Thomas Aquinas write, *auctor sacrae Scripturae est Deus*, “the author of Sacred Scripture is God.” An essential part of this course will be trying to understand just what that means.

All too often the Hebrew Bible is sadly neglected by Catholics. This is a shame because it’s a treasure trove of poetry, moral and practical wisdom, history, theology and philosophy, and narrative. (Did you know, for example, that there are several novellas and at least one epic in the Old Testament?) So I anticipate that exploring the Hebrew scriptures will be both exciting and edifying, and will certainly deepen appreciation for the biblical tradition that is the Christian worldview’s bedrock.

It’s impossible to cover the Hebrew scriptures thoroughly in just 10 sessions (or in 10 years, for that matter!). So even though students are strongly encouraged to immerse themselves in the entire Old Testament during the course of our explorations, necessity requires that we limit our class discussions to highlights from (1) the Pentateuch, (2) the Historical Books, (3) the Wisdom Literature, and (4) the Prophetic Literature.

At the end of the course, students should have a basic overview of the structure of the Old Testament, its themes and concerns, and its importance for an intellectually and spiritually proper interpretation of the New Testament.

Requirements

- Regular and punctual attendance; students with more than one unexcused absence will be asked to withdraw from the course or risk failure. The initial session (01/21) is absolutely required. So please plan your calendars accordingly.
- Consistent informed participation in class discussions. This means keeping up with the reading AND thinking about it before class.
- 5 short (4-5 page) essays on topics provided by the instructor (80%).
- A final oral examination (20%).

Schedule

Week 1 (01/21)

Interpreting the Old Testament

Required Reading: *Verbum Domini* ("The Word of the Lord"), paragraphs 6-21, 29-47

Week 2 (01/28)

The Pentateuch 1: The Five Cycles of Genesis

Required Reading: Genesis, chapters 1-50

Week 3 (02/04)

The Pentateuch 2: Liberation, Covenant, Law

Required Reading: Exodus, chapters 1-24, 32-34; Deuteronomy, chapter 1-34

Week 4 (02/11)

Historical Writings 1: Conquest & Chaos

Required Reading: Joshua, chapters 1-10, 20, 23-24; Judges, chapters 1-21; Ruth, chapters 1-4

Week 5 (02/18)

Historical Writings 2: Building & Breaking the House of David

Required Reading: 1 & 2 Samuel, entirety; 1 Kings, chapters 1-14

Week 6 (02/25)

Wisdom Literature 1: Songs of David

Required Reading: Psalms 66, 107, 118 (thanksgiving); 22, 38, 89 (lamentation); 45, 72, 89 (royal); 1, 19, 37, 119 (wisdom)

Week 7 (03/04)

Wisdom Literature 2: Dust, Love, Mystery

Required Reading: Ecclesiastes, chapters 1-12; Song of Songs, chapters 1-8; Job, chapters 1-7, 38-42, Epilogue

Week 8 (03/11)

Biblical Novellas: Moral Counsel & Happy Endings

Required Reading: Tobit, Judith, Esther (entirety)

Week 9 (03/18)

The Prophets 1: The One Who Weeps

Required Reading: Jeremiah (entirety)

Week 10 (03/25)

The Prophets 2: Emmanuel & the Suffering Servant

Required Reading: Isaiah, chapters 6-13, 40-66