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|  | **MTG200.7****Interpreting the Old Testament** |
| **Semester 1, 2024** |



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| Unit Supervisor & Lecturer | Dr Danijel Kevešević (dkevesevic@gmail.com) |
| Delivery | 19th February-3rd June 2024 Mondays, 6 pm-8 pm AESTFully Online  |
| AQF Level | 7 | Credit Points | 6 |

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

This unit examines the formation, content, background, storyline, main themes and literature of the Orthodox Old Testament canon to facilitate its faithful interpretation for and communication to diverse contemporary audiences. Students critically analyse the three worlds of the biblical text, developing an informed theory of interpretation and engaging with the patristic interpretation and contemporary perspectives and methodologies. Special focus is given to the cultivation of methods and skills for reading and communicating the various genres within this corpus.

**PREREQUISITES**

No prerequisites

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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| **ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS TASK THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:** | **RELATED CONTENT** | **RELATED ASSESSMENT** |
| 1. Analyse contemporary issues and perspectives in Old Testament interpretation, with reference to the world behind, within, and in front of the biblical text
 | Lectures 1-13Readings 1-13 | Research Essay |
| 1. Examine the formation, content, background, storyline, main themes and literature of the Protestant Old Testament canon
 | Lectures 1-13Readings 1-13 | Report |
| 1. Critically apply the insights from contextual and comparative studies to the interpretation of various Old Testament genres
 | Lectures 1-13Readings 1-13 | Exegetical Paper |
| 1. Creatively communicate clear and coherent interpretations of various Old Testament genres to diverse audiences
 | Lectures 1-13Readings 1-13 | Multimedia Presentations  |

**CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST OFFERED** (in response to Student Unit Evaluations)

N/A

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Students should purchase:

* Hill, Andrew E., and Walton, John H., A Survey of the Old Testament (3rd edition; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Further resources, including recommended texts, and extended bibliography, are listed on the unit site.

**SEMESTER PROGRAM**

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|  **Date** | **Week** | **Lecture Topic** | **Readings** |
| FEB 19 | 1 | Orientation to the Old Testament  | Eugen J. Pentiuc - The Christian Bible: Unity in Diversity |
| FEB 26 | 2 | The Book of Genesis | St Basil the Great- The Hexameron-Homily I “In the beginning, God made the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1) |
| MAR 4 | 3 | The structure of the Pentateuch and Covenant | Various Fathers on the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34/LXX Jeremiah 38:31-34) |
| MAR 11 | 4 | From Saul to Solomon | Various Fathers on Hannah (1 Kingdoms 1:3-2:10) |
| MAR 18 |  | **Non-teaching week - First week of Great Lent**  |  |
| MAR 25 | 5 | Tabernacle, Temple and Cult | Various Fathers on Solomon and the Dedication of the Temple (3 Kingdoms 8) |
| APR 1 | 6 | The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the Exile | Various Fathers on Elijah and the Priests of Baal (3 Kingdoms 18:19-40) |
| APR 8 | 7 | The Exile and Return | Theodoret of Cyrus on Ezekiel 37 |
| APR 15 | 8 | The Book Psalms | Diodore of Tarsus on Psalm 51 |
| APR 22 | 9 | Prophecy in the Old Testament | Various Fathers on Jeremiah 1:1-5 |
| APR 29 |  | **Non-teaching week - Holy Week** |  |
| MAY 6 |  | **Non-teaching week - Bright week** |  |
| MAY 13 | 10 | The Book of Isaiah | St Cyril of Alexandria on Isaiah 52:13-53:12 |
| MAY 20 | 11 | Wisdom Literature | St John Chrysostom on Job 1:6-11 |
| MAY 27 | 12 | The Book of Tobit | Various Fathers on Tobit 6-8 |
| June 3 | 13 | The Book of Daniel | Various Fathers on the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13–14. |

**ASSESSMENT TASKS**

**Due Dates Summary:**

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| **Assessment** | **Words** | **Value** | **Due Date** |
| 1. Report

Focusing on selected patristic writing, students write a report addressing the formation, content, background, storyline, main themes and literature of the Orthodox Old Testament canon. | (500 words) | 10% | Weeks 2-13 |
| 1. Exegetical Paper

Students engage with the background, storyline and main themes of the Old Testament and employ patristic and contemporary exegetical methods and skills to interpret two Old Testament passages of different genres that address the same theme or issue and present their work in a formal academic paper. A minimum of 6 resources is required, including at least 2 patristic commentaries.  | (1800 words)  | 40% | Week 7 |
| 1. Research Essay

Students explore and assess a contemporary issue and various perspectives in Old Testament interpretation. Students examine and assess the contribution made to understanding the three worlds of the biblical text. At least 6 resources are required.  | (1200 words) | 25% | Week 12 |
| 1. Multimedia presentations x2

Based on their chosen patristic reading (Assessment 1), students develop and creatively deliver 2 multimedia presentations of 10 minutes, each designed for 2 specifically targeted audiences.  | (equiv.750 words x 2) | 25%(12.5% each) | Weeks 2-13 |

**Task Description:**

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| **ASSESSMENT TASK 1****Title of Assessment: Report on a selected patristic reading****10%***Due: Weeks 2-13**500 words* |
| **Instructions**Students are to write a **500-word** report on one of the weekly set patristic readings examining an Old Testament passage and the interpretation of the Church father(s). Students are to submit the report one week after the class has explored it. The report must:* Explore the context of the chosen Old Testament passage
* Address the formation, content, background, storyline, and main themes found in the biblical text
* Summarise the key theological points made by the Church Father(s)
* Briefly summarise how the theology of the text applies to the 2 different, specifically targeted audiences
 |
| **Rationale and Expectations**Students of theology must have a good understanding of how the Fathers of the Church interpreted the Old Testament. This assignment is designed to expose the students to the patristic interpretation and to increase the students' capacity to understand the context, history, and main theological points of the biblical text and the patristic interpretation. This assignment is connected to assignment 4, as students will use their findings to create 2 multimedia presentations to present to 2 specific target audiences.  |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 2****Title of Assessment: Exegetical Paper-The role and characteristics of “Spirit” in Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1-3** **40 %***Due: 12th April 2024-Week 7* *1800 words* |
| **Instructions**Students are to write an **1800-word** exegetical paper on the role and characteristics of “Spirit” as described in Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1-3. Students are to explore the background, storyline and main themes of Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1-3 in connection with “Spirit,” using at least 2 patristic interpretations and at least 1 contemporary exegetical method to interpret the two texts. Students are to compare the role and characteristics of “Spirit” in the two books and summarise their findings. A minimum of 6 resources is required, including at least 2 patristic commentaries. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**Reading the Old Testament can be challenging for various reasons. It requires significant awareness of socio-historical, literary and theological contexts. Students of theology must approach the text astutely, as the same concept and often the same word can mean different things in different contexts. This assignment will challenge the students to explore the word “Spirit” and how it is used in the Book of Genesis and the Book of Ezekiel. It will require students to investigate the role and characteristics of “Spirit” in two different contexts and outline nuanced and well-informed perspectives. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 3****Title of Assessment: Research Essay-Is the ‘Flood story’ in Genesis 6-9 unique to the Old Testament?****25%***Due: 31st May-Week 12* *1200 words* |
| **Instructions**Students are to write a **1200-word** essay exploring the question: Is the ‘Flood story’ in Genesis 6-9 unique to the Old Testament? Students are to examine the theological differences and similarities between the biblical and Ancient Near Eastern flood accounts. Students are to explore the world behind, within, and in front of the biblical text, explore and summarise the interpretation of Church Fathers and compare it to the understanding of contemporary scholars. |
| **Rationale and Expectations**Students of theology are often challenged regarding the creation stories in the Book of Genesis. Contemporary society and perspectives often dismiss the book of Genesis as a “myth.” This assignment will challenge the students to explore the Food myths found in Ancient Near Eastern literature and compare them to the flood account in the Book of Genesis. It will embed in students the need to look at the world behind, within, and in front of the text and combine it with the patristic and contemporary academic interpretation. |
| **ASSESSMENT TASK 4****Title of Assessment** **Multimedia presentations x2****25 % (12.5% each)***Due: Weeks 2-13* *equiv.750 words x 2* |

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| **Instructions**Based on the report (Assessment 1), students produce and creatively deliver two separate 10-minute multimedia presentations designed for two different target audiences of their choosing. Students are encouraged to be creative, innovative and engaging. The examples of the target audiences (but not limited to) are young converts, well-established, non-English speaking parishes, predominantly male or female audiences, people with disabilities, children and young people, etc.  |
| **Rationale and Expectations**Interpreting the Old Testament can quickly become a futile intellectual exercise if it is not applied to the context of the 21st century. This assignment is designed to increase student’s capacity to identify creative, innovative, and engaging ways in which the world and the message of the Old Testament are presented and shared appropriately with a range of contemporary audiences.  |

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Please refer to this Unit’s website tile *Assignments* for further information about assignments, assessment criteria, grading scale, and the process for late submission of assignments.

Refer to the [*Student Academic Toolkit*](https://learn.tabor.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3718)for information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, referencing, formatting, and for relevant links to Tabor and faculty policy. If you are unsure, consult your lecturer or program coordinator for advice.