



# Old Testament Theology II: *Latter Prophets and Writings*

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## Syllabus

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**I N S T I T U T E   O F**  
**T H E O L O G I C A L**  
**S T U D I E S**



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# Syllabus

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## Course Rationale

In order to understand and apply any passage of Scripture faithfully, one must begin with the foundational concepts and theology that precede and inform it. In biblical theology, the foundation is laid in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets (Genesis-Kings) and is picked up and further developed in the Latter Prophets and Writings (Job-Malachi). The history, poetry, wisdom and prophecy of these books are essential for fully grasping the meaning and message of Jesus' teaching and our mission in the world today. As one gains the conceptual skills and perspective developed in the Old Testament texts and carried over into the New Testament, one discovers a fuller view of God, pursues a more profound approach to worship, and develops a deeper sense of mission for our contemporary lives.

## Course Overview

In this course, Dr. Richard E. Averbeck introduces the content and theology of Job-Malachi, which pick up and further develop the canonical, historical, and theological foundation laid in Genesis-Kings. More than a survey of the Old Testament, the goal of the course is to work through the books section-by-section, focusing on major passages and their theological connections through all of Scripture (Old *and* New Testament). Special attention is given throughout the course to the significance of these passages for the Church and the Christian life in order to keep the student keenly aware of the need to go beyond a simplistic and mechanistic reading of the text into a deeply implicational reading that expects to be both informed *and impacted* by its message. *(There is no prerequisite for this course. However, this is the second of a two-part series by Dr. Averbeck, and students are referred to part one, Old Testament Theology I: Pentateuch and Former Prophets.)*

## Course Objectives

*Given active participation, upon completion of this course you will be able to:*

1. Understand how the Latter Prophets and Writings fit into the Old Testament canon, and how they contribute to our understanding of faith experience in ancient Israel.
2. Identify the principles and patterns of biblical Hebrew poetry in order to interpret it well.
3. Articulate the nature and principles of biblical worship “in spirit and truth” as illustrated in the Psalms and understand the foundation this lays for Christian worship in the Church today.
4. Explain how the prophetic institution and the prophetic books lay a foundation for the prophetic work of Jesus Christ and how this then lays a foundation for the Church's mission.
5. Describe the relationship between the Holy Spirit's work in the Old and New Testaments and understand its significance for the Church as a body of prophets in the world.
6. Value all of the above as crucial to an ongoing study of the whole canon of Scripture as well as foundational to the way we live our Christian lives and pursue our ministries.

# Syllabus

## Course Lecturer

Dr. Richard E. Averbeck is a revered biblical scholar recognized for his intellectual acumen and practical application of Scripture. Raised on a dairy farm in rural Wisconsin, Dr. Averbeck accepted the Lord as an 18-year old freshman while studying at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. Inspired to learn Hebrew and Greek, Dr. Averbeck transferred to Calvary Bible College to begin his adventure in biblical studies. He is a graduate of Calvary Bible College, Grace Theological Seminary, and Dropsie University (now Annenberg Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania) where he has earned degrees in Biblical Languages & Near Eastern Studies along with an M.A. in Biblical Counseling. Dr. Averbeck was blessed to study under his colleague the well-known psychologist and spiritual director Dr. Larry Crabb, Jr. His background has placed him in a unique position in academia, where he serves as the Director of the Spiritual Formation Forum.



The father of two boys, Dr. Averbeck is widely respected for his expertise in Old Testament theology, biblical criticism, and ancient Near Eastern studies. He was the main editor and a contributor to *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*, and he has written extensive contributions to *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* and others. He has also contributed to *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*, *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, and *The Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, among other publications. Dr. Averbeck is a Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, specializing in Old Testament and Semitic Languages. Prior to this position, he was a professor at both Grace and Dallas Theological Seminaries. Today, he is also a licensed professional counselor in Wisconsin where he and his wife of over thirty years reside. *For more information on Dr. Averbeck and other ITS courses he has produced, go to [www.ITScourses.org](http://www.ITScourses.org).*

### Educational Credentials

- B.A. Calvary Bible College (1974)
- M.Div. Grace Theological Seminary (1977)
- M.A. Grace Theological Seminary (1989)
- Ph.D. Dropsie University (1987)

### Professional Experience

- 1980-1990** Professor and Old Testament Chair for Grace Theological Seminary
- 1989-current** Licensed Professional Counselor
- 1990-1994** Professor Dallas Theological Seminary
- 1994-current** Professor Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
- 1998-2005** Chair of Biblical Law Group, Evangelical Theological Society
- 1998-current** Director of the Spiritual Formation Forum
- 1999-2001** Executive Committee Institute for Biblical Research
- 2003-2006** Ancient Near East Section Chair, American Oriental Society



# Syllabus

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## Course Texts

### Required Texts:

Chisholm, Robert B. Jr. *Handbook on the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Longman, Tremper III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. Third edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Walton, John H. *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*. Revised and Expanded. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

### Recommended Texts:

Dyrness, William. *Themes in Old Testament Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979.

Sandy, D. Brent & Ronald L. Giese, Jr., eds., *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.

VanGemeren, Willem A. "Psalms." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein. Volume 5. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10.3.3.3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. ITS Online Interactivity Forum (see course learning activities) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. Spiritual Formation Project (see course learning activities) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. Learning Community Assignments (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) for the most up-to-date ITS resources.



# Syllabus

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## Course Learning Activities

### Learning Activity #1: Lectures and Reflection Questions

Listen carefully to all twenty-four (24) lectures by Dr. Averbek and work through the accompanying reflection questions. *Please note that the lectures vary in length from 30-60 minutes each (see Learning Schedule or lecture outlines in ITS Learning Guide).* Through this process you will be introduced to Dr. Averbek's approach to biblical theology and to the content of that theology itself as it arises in the Latter Prophets and Writings (Job-Malachi). It is recommended that you listen actively with Bible in hand to look up references when necessary. Your goal here is to acquire a working knowledge of the contents of Job-Malachi and to listen for what God wants to say to you personally and to the Church corporately. The theology contained in this part of the OT builds on the foundation laid in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets (Genesis-Kings) and picked up in the NT.

**NOTE:** Although the lectures are not factored into your course grade, they are foundational to the course, so the Research Paper, Thought Paper and Spiritual Formation Project (see below) all assume you have completed them. In addition, the reflection questions are optional but will help you *process the lecture material in preparation for the Thought Paper and Spiritual Formation Project.*

*Purpose: to accumulate course content through active and careful listening and to cognitively interact with the material and apply it to the Christian life.*

**Using the ITS Learning Guide:** The ITS Learning Guide includes twenty-four lessons with lesson overviews, outcomes, outlines, and reflection questions. This is intended to walk you through the course in a systematic and user-friendly way. Note the following:

- ✓ **Lecture Outlines:** The lecture outlines contain a detailed teaching manuscript with extensive notes and Scripture references. They serve as both a guide to listening/note-taking and also a valuable study and reference tool. ***It is recommended** that you read each lecture outline in full prior to listening to the lecture. This will help you follow along more carefully.*
- ✓ **Reflection Questions:** The reflection questions are not factored into your course grade. However, these questions were written carefully in order to help you process the material and begin to apply it (at least in a preliminary way) to your life of faith. Although you are not required to write answers to every question, *it is recommended that you give them considerable thought and reflection. In addition to your notes, they will become a journal of your thoughts and growth in the course.*
- ✓ **Scripture Quotations:** Several Scripture passages that are central to the discussion at hand are provided in the right margin<sup>1</sup> with Dr. Averbek's emphases and amplification. This will also help you follow the lecture.

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# Syllabus

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## Learning Activity #2: Required Reading

Complete the following and submit a **reading log** listing all completed readings:

1. Read the text of **Job-Malachi** as assigned in each lesson. You should use a modern translation (not a paraphrase), e.g., NASB, NIV, NRSV, etc.
2. Read Tremper Longman III's *How to Read the Psalms* in its entirety. It is recommended that you read this in conjunction with the lessons on the Psalms (3-8).
3. Read Roland Murphy's *The Tree of Life* in its entirety. It is recommended that you read this in conjunction with the lessons on Wisdom Literature (9-11).
4. Read at least **200 pages** from Robert Chisholm's *Handbook on the Prophets*. It is recommended that you read this in conjunction with the lessons on the Prophets (12-24).
5. Read **500 additional pages** from the recommended texts, the readings referenced in the lecture outlines, the course bibliography or other relevant resources. This is your opportunity to pursue topics of interest. Readings completed for your research paper (see below) may count toward this reading requirement. List all completed readings in your reading log.

### NOTE:

- a. If you have **not** read William Dyrness' *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (IVP, 1979) or Sandy and Giese's *Cracking Old Testament Codes* (B & H, 1995), it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with these texts as part of your additional reading.
- b. Walton's text, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, is a valuable reference tool, and the lectures refer to it. However, it may **not** be used toward the required reading.

Purpose: *to supplement the lecture material through active reading of additional works and to pursue student-identified topics of interest.*

## Learning Activity #3: Research Paper

Write an original research paper (**18-20 pages**, double-spaced, excluding footnotes and bibliography) on a theological theme developed from one or more passages in the Latter Prophets and/or Writings (should be approved by your grader/proctor). The paper should be based on and especially focus on the foundational passage(s) in these books but also follow the development of the theme through other parts of the OT into the NT. If you know either of the biblical languages, conduct your exegetical work from these texts. This paper should reflect your ability to do *serious independent research/writing* in the field of OT biblical theology and to *apply that research to ministry and the Christian life.*

In addition to your own exegetical work in the biblical text itself, you should do a bibliographical search to identify and consult at least ten (10) other secondary sources. These could and should include a combination of general reference tools (e.g., Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, word books, etc.), other books that are useful for the topic (e.g., commentaries, historical or theological survey books, specialized books on the topic, etc.), scholarly journal articles, and perhaps even credible



# Syllabus

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internet sites. Substantial footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliography are expected. Format the paper according to your school or institutional guidelines.

*Purpose: to develop exegetical, biblical and theological research and writing skills, to gain an in-depth understanding of one specific theme in OT biblical theology, and to apply that understanding to ministry and the Christian life.*

## Learning Activity #4: Thought Paper

Write a **ten (10) page**, double-spaced “thought paper” reflecting on the content of the course. The paper should have two main sections: The first section should reflect serious thought about the relevance of the Latter Prophets and Writings for the church and the Christian life. The second section should develop the significance of the Latter Prophets and Writings for the ministry(ies) in which you are (or will be) engaged with your family, local church, or community. Seek concrete application of the material to the Christian life, the church or ministry wherever possible.

This paper is to reflect your own *independent thinking and synthesis* of the course reading and lectures. It is a “thought paper”, **not a research paper**, so footnotes and bibliography are not necessary unless you wish to include them for your own purposes. Always tie your thoughts to specific Scripture passages from which you make your point of application to theology, life, and ministry (especially something in the Latter Prophets and Writings, but also extending into the rest of the OT and NT.)

*Purpose: to synthesize the course content and apply it to ministry and the Christian life.*

## Learning Activity #5: ITS Online Interactivity Forum

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to <http://forums.itscourses.org/> to enter the ITS Online Interactivity Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment **after** you have listened to *all* the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

**NOTE: Please read the “Forum Instructions” for details on registering and posting.**

*Purpose: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.*



# Syllabus

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## Learning Activity #6: 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**, ITS 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 at the end of the course. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following

1. **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.
  - a. 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?
  - b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
  - c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).
2. **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:
  - a. 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.



# Syllabus

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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.

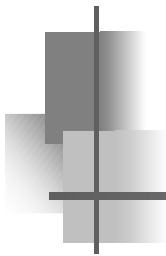
NOTE: **Identify your mentor early in the course**, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- b. 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.

3. **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:
  - a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.



# Syllabus

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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.

*Purpose: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.*

## Course Grading

The grade for the course shall be determined by the following:

Lectures and Reflection Questions	
Required Reading .....	10%
Thought Paper .....	30%
Research Paper .....	35%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum .....	5%
Spiritual Formation Project .....	<u>20%</u>
	100%

**NOTE:** Given the amount of thought and work required in the above assignments, **there is no exam for this course.** Your focus should be on quality research, writing, reflection, synthesis and application.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview 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 ITS 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 their daily lives of faith.

Therefore, students taking ITS 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.