

#911 Biblical Introduction  
Western Reformed Seminary (www.wrs.edu)  
Christopher Lensch, S.T.M.  
Pastoral Mentorship Program  
Academic Year 2006-2007

## COURSE INFORMATION

### Course Goal

- To cover the historical, religious, and literary backgrounds of the Bible and its times.
- This will include a look at the relevant history and literature of contemporaneous cultures, from Sumer to Rome. The importance of the geo-topographical situation of the promised land will be sketched as well as the contributions of archaeology in confirming the biblical record.
- The historical development of the biblical canon will be discussed, including theories of and criteria for canonicity. Omission from the canon of apocrypha and pseudepigraphal writings will be considered.
- Higher criticism will be introduced: a brief history of higher criticism, various models of skeptics, with a critique of critical approaches to the Bible.
- Introduction to textual criticism: definition and necessity, the canons (principles) of text criticism, and illustrations. Preservation of the biblical text through centuries in various manuscript traditions and translations.

### Texts

1. Frank E. Gabelein, ed. *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Introductory Articles*, Vol. 1
2. Gleason Archer. *Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Part I
3. Everett Harrison. *Introduction to the New Testament*, Parts I-IV

All readings must be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Assignments

- 1) Reading and Reporting. Following the reading schedule below, produce a three to five page outline of the assigned essay found in the *Expositors Bible Commentary*; supplement your outline with information from the assigned, supplemental reading(s). The outline will be used for class review in June. You may wish to bring your own annotated outline to the June session.

- 2) Essay Quizzes. Once you read each essay and complete its outline, take the relevant, closed-book/closed notes quiz on that essay.
- 3) Final Exam. This exam will be based on the original questions from the quizzes and will be taken the last day of class, June 9, 2007.
- 4) An eight+ page paper due by May 30. (Electronic Submission is OK.) Possible topics are:
  - Compare/contrast Near eastern accounts with the biblical account of the creation or of the flood
  - Compare/contrast Hammurabi's Law Code with that of Moses
  - Develop some of the methods of archaeology; or summarize a listing of some of its major contributions
  - Define and Critique a higher critical method
  - Develop reasons why the apocrypha is sub-canonical
  - Develop the importance of textual criticism
  - The impact of the Bible on cultures of the ages OR the importance of having the Bible in understandable language
  - Your choice...

### Grading

Readings = 20%    Outlines = 30 %    Quizzes = 20%    Paper = 15%    Final = 15%

