

Course Syllabus
God in the Old Testament: A Study in Dialogue
Walter Brueggemann

The course will engage us in exploring the ways God is characterized in the Old Testament.

Our **Learning Goals** include the following:

1. Acquire a sense of the ancient theological conversation under way in the Old Testament.
2. Engage with major themes and major problems in that conversation.
3. Gain discerning access to some textual specificity in the Old Testament.
4. Connect textual specificity to the current conversation among scholars.
5. Reflect on this conversation in relation to the faith and practice of contemporary faith communities.

Our **Final Assignment**, due the last week of class:

Select three texts (full rhetorical units) for different parts of the Old Testament canon that are unfamiliar to you. Study them and articulate from them a characterization of the God of the Old Testament *as though we had only these three texts*.

Texts:

Primary:

Walter Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God: The Heart of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009)

Supplementary Readings (to be put on reserve for the course):

Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005).

Joel S. Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007).

Klaus Koch, *The Prophets: The Assyrian Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

Leo G. Perdue et. al, *Biblical Theology: Introducing the Conversation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009).

D. W. Winnicott, *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1965).

Course Schedule:

Week

1. Locating our study in current interpretive conversation
Read Leo Purdue, *Biblical Theology: Introducing the Conversation*, 55-136

Week

2. God in Dialogue

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 1-17

Focal text: Exodus 32:10-14

3. Israel as God's Partner

Read Joel Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob*

Focal text: Jeremiah 31:31-34

4. Israel's as God's partner

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 19-35

Focal text: Deuteronomy 10:12-22

5. Israel as God's Partner

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 35-56

Focal text: Isaiah 54:4-10

6. Human Persons as God's Partner

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 57-97

Focal text: Psalm 103

7. Human Persons as God's Partner

Read Winnicott, *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, 140-152

Focal text: Psalm 51

8. The Nations as God's Partner

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 99-136

Focal text: Isaiah 47:5-11

9. The Nations as God's Partner

Read Klaus Koch, *The Prophets: The Assyrian Period*, 105-156

Focal text: Isaiah 19:19-25

10. Creation as God's Partner

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 137-160

Focal text: Hosea 4:1-3

11. Creation as God's Partner

Read Fretheim, *God and the World in the Old Testament*, 1-89

Focal text: Psalm 104:24-30

12. Creation as God's Partner

Read Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament*, 91-198

Focal text: Jeremiah 4:23-27

Week

13. The Drama

Read Brueggemann, *An Unsettling God*, 163-176

Focal text: Job 39:19-40:5

14. Jewish and Christian Claims in a World of Secular Liberalism:

The Possibility of Faith and the Problem of the Church