



McMaster Divinity
College



Genesis

OT3XG3

Mondays @ 8:30am-10:20am

Professor. Dr. Paul S. Evans
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Course Description:

This course leads students through a detailed reading of the book of Genesis with a view to its theological, historical and literary interpretation and significance. In order to equip students for interpreting this foundational book we will take into account critical matters & methodologies, ancient Near Eastern parallels and the canonical context of the book as the introduction to the Pentateuch and all of Christian Scripture. We will also focus on several questions throughout our study: What does Genesis say about science and the origins of life on earth? What does Genesis teach concerning the nature of humanity? How does an understanding of Genesis impact our worldview? What does Genesis teach us about God's Covenant(s) with humans? In this course we will examine the literary structure, authorial purpose(s) and theological significance of the book of Genesis, in order to underscore its continuing relevance for the church and society today.

Specializations: Biblical Studies and Pastoral Studies

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.



Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To have a thorough knowledge of the contents and message of Genesis
- To gain familiarity with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship on Genesis
- To gain an introductory knowledge of relevant Ancient Near Eastern Literature: One will read an English translation of the most important extra-biblical documents for a proper understanding of Genesis within its ancient Near Eastern context.

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of Genesis for the Church today
- To grow closer to God through study of Genesis

Doing

- To be able to discuss the relation of Genesis 1-11 to ancient Near Eastern mythology and modern science
- To be able to interpret Genesis in its original contexts
- To be able to apply the message of Genesis to contemporary audiences

Required Texts:

- Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis. Interpretation.* Atlanta: John Knox, 1982.
- John Walton. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

10% - Readings: Students are required to read the textbooks and other assigned readings in full and report on them via an email to the professor by April 10, 2017.

20% - Response Papers: Students will write two 3-4 page papers (10% per paper) responding to both class material and assigned readings on the following topics:

1. The Documentary Hypothesis: due **January 27, 2017**
2. Creation in Genesis and Science: due **February 24, 2017**



30% - Critical Book Review Assignment (6 pages). After reading the Walton textbook (*The Lost World of Genesis One*), students will critically review the work in one paper. This review will present its content, provide a critique and finally give a response that outlines both theological and personal implications. Due **March 17, 2017**. No extensions will be given. See “Book Review Guidelines” below.

40% - Major Assignment

A. Biblical Studies Specializations:

Research Paper (12-15 pages) Due April 3, 2017. No extensions will be given. Papers must be double-spaced, using 12pt Times New Roman font throughout (footnotes should be 10pt Times New Roman font). The bibliography must contain at least 12 items of varied secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, specialized books) including *at least* 3 articles from peer reviewed / refereed journals. *By way of supplement* to these 12 sources, a student may use a *maximum* of 2 internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of the sources chosen. See “Research Paper Evaluation” below.

Research Topic must be approved by your professor.

B. Pastoral Specializations:

There are three (3) options for the major assignment for Pastoral Studies: Choose only one (1) of the following:

1. Exegetical Paper: 12 pages Students will write an exegetical paper on a chosen text from the book of Genesis (your chosen text must be approved by your professor).

Paper must be double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font (footnotes should be 10pt Times New Roman font). The bibliography must contain 12 items of secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, monographs and at least 3 academic articles). Each item must be drawn on and cited in the paper. Students may supplement these 12 sources with 2 internet resources. See “Paper Evaluation” below.

2. Sermon on a passage from Genesis (oral presentation). 20-25 minute video-taped sermon submitted on CD/DVD/USB drive. Beginning with the text of Genesis this sermon will expound a passage, applying it to the contemporary context. The sermon will be delivered orally but include a written paper with an outline. The paper may be a combination of sentence, bullets/point form, paragraphs (it need not be a complete essay of the words you preach). This paper should be grammatically correct and include appropriate citation of sources employed.

3. Sermon on a passage from Genesis (written). 10 pages double-spaced. Beginning with the text of Genesis this sermon will expound a passage, applying it to the contemporary context. The sermon will be an original written composition but written with an aim to oral delivery. The submitted text should include an outline. The sermon must be written as it would be spoken and must *not* be in point form etc. but be a full written manuscript. It is expected it will conform to MDC style guide and be grammatically correct and acknowledge



its sources appropriately (using Endnotes—not footnotes).

College Style for Submission of Written Work

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers to be submitted in electronic format only (a pdf file)—no hardcopies! Email to pevans@mcmaster.ca. If you need a program for creating pdfs go to <http://primopdf.com> or <http://www.pdf995.com> for a free pdf maker. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., [evans.researchpaper.pdf](#)). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm on the day which they are due.

Policy concerning late papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by April 10, 2016 in order to avoid a failing grade in the class. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

Academic Honesty.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the



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integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.



Research Paper Evaluation

Name: _____ Topic: _____

I. The next items are rated according to this scale: 1 = inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = superior.

Bibliographic consciousness	1	2	3	4	5
Range and Use of Sources	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity in Defining Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Strength of Argument	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of Exegetical Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy of Data and Assertions	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis /Critical Thinking	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction (Thesis Statement /Clear Issue)	1	2	3	4	5
Development of Thesis (focus)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Organization/coherence of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if so indicated

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language <input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified essay <input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, Font size, Margins, Page numbers etc. need attention <input type="checkbox"/> Cite primary resources correctly/consistently (e.g., Gen 1:26; Genesis 1; etc) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly <input type="checkbox"/> The paper needs balance <input type="checkbox"/> Follow MacDiv Style guide <input type="checkbox"/> Cite secondary resources correctly/consistently |
|---|--|

III. Comments



Critical Book Review Guideline

Name: _____

I. The Book Review of John Walton *The Lost World of Genesis One* should roughly follow this format:

Summary of Content: 2-3 Pages

Critique of Content 1-2 Pages

Personal Reflection 1-2 Pages

Total=*no more* than 6 pages! Pages 7ff *will not* be read

The following items are rated according to the following scale:

1 = poor/inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good/more than adequate; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent/superior.

Summary of Content (noted key concepts etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Critique (evidence of critical thought)	1	2	3	4	5
Reflective Thought (theological depth, sensitivity)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if checked

- Use inclusive language
- Write a unified review
- Line spacing, Font size, Margins, Page numbers etc. need attention
- Cite primary resources correctly/consistently (e.g., Gen 1:26; Genesis 1; etc)
- The paper is too long/too short
- Edit your paper more thoroughly
- The paper needs balance
- Cite secondary resources correctly/consistently

III. Comments



**For journal articles to assist paper preparation and research, do a subject search of the ATLA Religion database

Useful Internet Sites

- *Bible Gateway* (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>). Online Bibles with search engines.
- *itanakh* ([www.itanakh.org.](http://www.itanakh.org/)) Includes links to many full text articles and useful webpages.
- <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/sitesofinterest.aspx> From the website of the Society of Biblical Literature. Contains links to many useful sites categorized according to subject areas.
- *Dinur Centre for Research in Jewish History* (http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dinur/internetresources/historyresources/biblical_studies.htm) Includes links on creation, flood, patriarchs
- *Internet Ancient History Sourcebook* (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html>). The sections on Human Origins and Mesopotamia include some useful comparative material for Genesis.
- *Links related to Bible & ANE:* (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/%7Ehummm/Resources/Texts/index.html>)