



From the Beginning: Reading the book of Genesis

OT5XG5

Times of class meetings: Mondays at 9:00am-10:50am in Fyfe classroom

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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.



Knowing
the word of God



Being
transformed into
Christ's image



Doing
the work of ministry

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

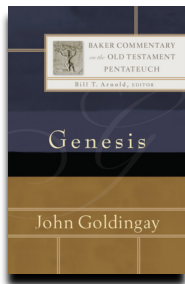
- To embrace the contemporary relevance of Genesis for the Church today
- To grow closer to God through study of Genesis

Doing

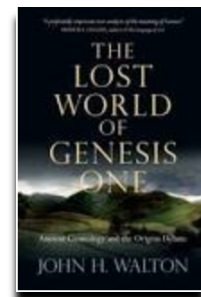
- To be able to discuss the relation of Genesis 1-11 to ancient Near Eastern mythology and modern science
- To be able to interpret Genesis in its original contexts
- To be able to apply the message of Genesis to contemporary audiences

Required Texts:

Goldingay, John. *Genesis*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Pentateuch. Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Academic, 2020.



John Walton. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.



In addition students must WATCH *His Only Son* (*Angel Studios movie. Watch for free <https://www.angel.com/watch/his-only-son>

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.



Course Requirements

I. Classroom Experiences

Participation in classroom experiences is an assumed foundation for this course, if a student fails to participate their final mark will be reduced by one full letter grade (so A becomes B, A- becomes B-).

II. Formal Assignments:

All Papers must be double-spaced, using 12pt Times New Roman font throughout (footnotes should be singled-spaced 10pt Times New Roman font).

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

A. 35% - Annotated Bibliography: Due Apr 5

The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to the student's topic (related to Genesis) and write a 100-150 word annotation for each one. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. **This assignment will be approximately 2,000 words.**

B. 40%- Major Assignment: 25 Pages. Due Mar 29.

The paper should include four key sections. First a brief, but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach, second an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e., why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?) Third, a consideration of a foundational theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area. Fourth some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and also their ministry beyond the local church). The topic of this research must be related to a difficult question(s) about the Old Testament and approved by the professor.

C. 15% - in Class Presentation: Apr 1

DPT students will offer a class presentation of their major assignment and its findings to the class. Presentations should use PowerPoint and leave some time for questions and discussion

*A 2–3 page report showing your research and discussion notes must be handed in following the presentation.

D. 10% - Reflective Paper: 8 Pages. Due: Apr 5.

For this paper students write a reflection on implications of the issues and research covered in the course.



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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers must be in pdf format only and posted to the appropriate place on A2L. Include your last name in the file name of your paper (e.g., evans.paper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm on their due date. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

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 requests 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 the last day of class (April 5) in order to avoid a failing grade in the class. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

Gender Inclusive language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for



which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

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.



COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	Classroom Experiences	Biblical Texts	Assignment due
Jan 8	A. Introductions B. Class overview C. Introduction to Genesis 1	--	--
Jan 15	A. Interpreting Creation Narratives B. The Toledoth of Heaven and Earth	Gen 1–2	--
Jan 22	A. Cain and Abel B. The Toledoth of Adam C. Interpreting the Genealogies	Gen 3–5	--
Jan 29	A. The Sons of God and Daughters of <i>haadam</i> B. The Toledoth of Noah C. Understanding the Flood	Gen 6–9	--
Feb 5	A. The Toledoth of Noah's sons B. The Tower of Babylon C. The Toledoth of Terah	Gen 10–11	--
Feb 12	A. The Call of Abraham B. Abraham and Lot C. Abraham and Melchizedek	Genesis 12–14	--
Feb 19	READING WEEK		
Feb 26	A. Abrahamic Covenant B. Hagar's Story C. Sodom and Gomorrah	Genesis 15–19	--
Mar 4	A. Birth of Isaac B. The Akedah C. Discussion of <i>His Only Son</i>	Gen 20–24 Watch the Movie <i>His Only Son</i> https://www.angel.com/watch/his-only-son	--
Mar 11	A. The Toledoth of Isaac B. Buying & Stealing the Blessing C. Stairway to Heaven	Gen 25–28	--
Mar 18	A. Jacob, Leah, & Rachel B. Wrestling God C. Reunion with Esau	Gen 29–33	--
Mar 25	A. Rape of Dinah B. Promises to Jacob C. The Toledoth of Jacob	Gen 34–37	*Major Assignment Due Mar 29
Apr 1	A. Joseph's Story B. Genesis as a Whole	Gen 38–50	*In Class Presentation on Apr 1 *Annotated Bibliography due Apr 5 *Reflective Paper Due Apr 5



Selected Bibliography

- Alter, Robert, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.
- Athas, George. "Has Lot Lost the Plot? Detail Omission and a Reconsideration of Genesis 19." Pages in *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*. Volume 16, Article 5 DOI:10.5508/jhs.2016.v16.a5 http://jhsonline.org/Articles/article_217.pdf
- Becking, Bob and Susanne Hennecke, *Out of Paradise: Eve and Adam and Their Interpreters*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 30. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2011.
- Bird, Chad L. "Typological Interpretation within the Old Testament: Melchizedekian Typology." *Concordia Journal* 26 (2000): 36-52.
- Bird, Phyllis A. "'Male and Female He Created Them': Genesis 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," Pages 329-361 in *"I Studied Inscriptions before the Flood"*. Edited by Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph, *Treasures Old and New: Essays in the Theology of the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11*. London: T & T Clark, 2011.
- Enns, Peter, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012.
- Evans, Paul S. "Creation, Progress and Calling: Genesis 1-11 as Social Commentary." *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 13 (2011): 67-100.
- Gunkel, Hermann, *Genesis*. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Mercer Library of Biblical Studies. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997.
- Hamilton, Victor P., *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Hamilton, Victor P., *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Heide, Martin. "The Domestication of the Camel." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 42 (2010): 331-382.
- Kapelrud, Arvid S. "Mythological Features in Genesis Chapter 1 and the Author's Intentions."



Vetus Testamentum 24 (1974): 178-186.

Kidner, Derek, *Genesis : An Introduction and Commentary*. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL.: Inter-Varsity, 1977.

Lambert, Wilfred G. "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," Pages 96-113 in *"I Studied Inscriptions before the Flood"*. Edited by Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.

Mann, Thomas W. . "'All the Families of the Earth': The Theological Unity of Genesis." *Interpretation* 45 (1991): 341-353.

Moberly, R. W. L., *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*. Old Testament Theology. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Pinnock, Clark H. "Climbing out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts." *Interpretation* 43 (1989): 143-155.

Skinner, John, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. Icc. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910.

Smith, Gary V. "Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (1977): 307-319.

Trible, Phyllis and Valparaiso University., *Genesis 22 : The Sacrifice of Sarah*. Gross Memorial Lecture ; 1989. Valparaiso, IN: Valparaiso University Press, 1990.

Tsumura, David Toshio, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation*. JSOTSup, 83. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989.

Tsumura, David Toshio. "Genesis and Ancient near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction," Pages 27-57 in *"I Studied Inscriptions before the Flood"*. Edited by Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.

Waltke, Bruce K. and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Walton, John H., *Genesis*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001.

Walton, John H., *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015.

Wenham, Gordon J., *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary 1. Dallas, TX.: Word, 1987.



Wenham, Gordon J. "Method in Pentateuchal Source Criticism." *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991): 84-109.

Wenham, Gordon J., *Genesis 16-50*. Word Biblical Commentary ; v. 2. Dallas, TX.: Word, 1994.

Wenham, Gordon J., *Rethinking Genesis 1-11: Gateway to the Bible*. The Didsbury Lectures 2013. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2015.

Worthing, Mark William. "The Length of a Year in the Patriarchal Narratives: A Proposal." *Lutheran Theological Journal* 33 (1999): 117-123.

Youngblood, Ronald F. "The Abrahamic Covenant: Conditional or Unconditional," Pages 31-46 in *Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J Schultz*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983.