

OT211: Syllabus
September School 2004
August 30 – September 10
M-F 6:30 -10:00 p.m.

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Exposition of Genesis

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An investigation into the book of Genesis, with special emphasis on the nature and theology of Israel's primeval history, and the patriarchal narratives. Emphasis will also be placed on the theological and homiletical value of selected texts.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES :

This course will help each student to:

1. Become familiar with the contents of the book of Genesis.
2. Gain an appreciation for the ways in which the original audience of the book would have understood the message of the book.
3. Comprehend the relevance of the message of Genesis for the present day.
4. Understand the theological themes developed in the book of Genesis, and gain an appreciation for the foundational nature of the book.
5. Appreciate the ways in which Genesis contributes to personal and spiritual formation.
6. Be inspired by the message of Genesis, and be strengthened in one's commitment to the Lord.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

HARTLEY, JOHN E. *Genesis*. New International Biblical Commentary 1. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000. ISBN: 1-56563-211-7

WITTMER, MICHAEL E. *Heaven Is a Place on Earth: Why Everything You Do Matters to God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. ISBN: 0-310-25307-1

Bible. Please ensure you bring a good "word for word" translation with you each evening to class (e.g. English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, Revised Standard Version).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

WENHAM, GORDON J. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary 1. Waco: Word, 1987.

_____. *Genesis 16-50*. Word Biblical Commentary 2. Waco: Word, 1994.

WALTKE, BRUCE K. and CATHI J. FREDRICKS. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

These texts represent some of the best and most recent scholarship on Genesis. You are encouraged to consider purchasing them as the building blocks for your personal library.

ADDITIONAL READING (PROVIDED TO STUDENTS):

SAILHAMER, JOHN H. "Genesis." In *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. L. Ryken and T. Longman, III, 108-20. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

Akkadian Epic of Creation (Enuma Elish)

Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI

Atrahasis

(All selections from HALLO, W. W. AND K. L. YOUNGER, ed. *The Context of Scripture*. Vol. 1, *Canonical Compositions From the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.)

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Class Participation and Reading** (20%): All students are expected to prepare for and participate in the discussions of the material in class. Part of your grade will consist of an evaluation of the amount *and* quality of your participation in the discussions that take place. In addition, you are expected to read the assigned material in accordance with the schedule in the syllabus. You will report your completion of the reading on the reading report form in the syllabus. Please keep track of your reading as you work through the course.
2. **Worksheets** (20%): Students will complete four worksheets based on selected passages or topics. The worksheets will explore pertinent issues related to the interpretation, theology, or contemporary relevance of the selected texts or issues. The worksheets are due on the dates indicated in the course schedule, and will be distributed in class.
3. **Exegetical Paper or Project** (45%): Students will complete an exegetical paper or project on a text from Genesis in accordance with the guidelines provided in this syllabus. The paper may not be one that has been submitted for any other course (e.g. OT 101/111).
4. **Reflection Essay** (15%): It is my conviction that an encounter with God through his word results in a change within us. Therefore, students will write a reflection essay in lieu of a final examination on the last day of class. Further information about the reflection essay will be provided in class.

GRADING

Students are encouraged to elect to be graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to pass, however, a student must receive a score of 80% for his or her work. Anyone who requires or desires a letter grade (A-F) will be granted such, and your work will be graded according to the following scale:

- 95 – 100 = A
- 93 – 94 = A-
- 91 – 92 = B+
- 87 – 90 = B
- 85 – 86 = B-
- 83 – 84 = C+
- 79 – 82 = C
- 77 – 78 = C-
- 75 – 76 = D+
- 72 – 74 = D
- 70 – 71 = D-
- 69 and below = F

In addition to the student *meeting due dates* and *using correct English*, the following will serve as general criteria for grade levels:

A	Excellent work submitted; outstanding evidence of ability to synthesize and utilize course knowledge; initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments; creativity and originality manifested in assignment process and outcomes; positive contributions verbalized in class; and consistency and thoroughness of work submitted.
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B	Good work submitted; substantial evidence of ability to analyze and utilize course knowledge; positive contributions verbalized in class; and consistency and thoroughness of work submitted.
C	Satisfactory performance and thoroughness of work submitted; moderate evidence of ability to utilize knowledge of the subject; and satisfactory class contribution.
D	Poor performance in comprehension of work submitted; and meets minimal credit standard of the professor.
F	Inadequacy of work submitted or performance and attendance in class.

Please note that satisfactory completion of the assigned work does not result in a grade of A. I expect that as graduate students you are all able to complete the assignments satisfactorily. Grades of A are given to work that is consistently outstanding.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Any work that involves plagiarism or cheating will be assigned a grade of “0.” Repeated or especially egregious violations may result in the denial of credit for the course, in accordance with the policy outlined in the current catalog. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, it is up to you to take the initiative to find out.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and on-time class attendance is a necessary part of the learning experience. Meeting the objectives for this course depends heavily on class participation from all students. Absences beyond one class period (or equivalent) will result in a grade reduction, and students who miss more than two classes may not expect to pass the course. Absences will be excused at the professor’s discretion, according to the standards described below regarding late assignments. Please make every effort to attend every class session, and to be on-time.

LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETES

All assignments are to be handed in by the beginning of class on the date indicated on the course schedule. Unless *prior* arrangements are made with the professor, late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is overdue, beginning with the first day. (That is, an assignment turned in after the start of class but on the same day is still penalized 10%. The next 10% is taken off 24 hours after the start of class.) *No assignments will be accepted more than five days late.* Students should take the initiative as much in advance as possible to alert the professor to extenuating circumstances. I am more than willing to take emergencies and crises of various sorts into account. Note, however, that though they often precipitate a crisis or emergency of one kind or another, procrastination, over-scheduling, and over-committing (even in the context of a worthwhile endeavor like ministry) do not constitute a crisis or emergency. Circumstances that a congregation would accept for a pastor’s missing a Sunday sermon would constitute an emergency and crisis for which latitude will be granted.

Please note, as well, that by its very nature, September School is a rigorous academic experience. Much is covered each day, so it is imperative that you keep up with the assigned work. It is expected that students will devote significant time outside of class to the work assigned. Please be sure conflicting demands (such as work, ministry obligations, vacations) do not significantly interfere with your ability to complete the assigned work according to the course schedule.

In accordance with the policy in the current catalog (p. 86), a grade of incomplete is granted only by written contract. Please see the catalog for full details.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please contact me as soon as possible if disability-related accommodations are needed. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are set up through the Office of Disability Services. Contact Kathy McGillivray, Director of Disability Services, at (651) 635-8759.

PO Boxes

Please ensure that your seminary PO box number appears on every assignment you turn in.

AN INVITATION

Please let me know if I can help you in any way. Feel free to stop by my office, or make an appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	COURSE TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
8/30	Course Introduction Introduction to Genesis	Read through Genesis in one sitting, two different times (pre-course assignment)*
8/31	Creation, Cosmology and ANE Parallels	Genesis 1-2 Atrahasis Enuma Elish Worksheet One
9/1	Fall and Corruption	Genesis 3-11 Gilgamesh
9/2	Reversing the Fall: Abraham	Genesis 12-17 Worksheet Two
9/3	Working out the Promise: Isaac	Genesis 18-26 Sailhamer article
9/6	Labor Day – No Class	
9/7	Working out the Promise: Jacob	Genesis 27-35 Worksheet Three
9/8	Working out the Promise: Esau, Jacob & Joseph	Genesis 36-41
9/9	Working out the Promise: To Egypt	Genesis 42-50 Worksheet Four
9/10	Integration and Reflection	<i>Heaven is a Place on Earth</i> Reading Report In-Class Reflection Essay
9/15		Exegetical Paper/Project Due No later than 5:00 p.m.

Important Note:

As preparation for each class session, you are expected to read the material in Hartley's commentary covering that day's texts. This is *in addition* to the reading of the biblical and supplementary material required. This will be included in your reading report.

- * To ensure that you are sufficiently familiar with the contents of Genesis, you will read the entire text of Genesis in one sitting on two different occasions. I recommend that you read the text in two different versions, and preferably two versions representing two different translation approaches (i.e. one "word for word" and one "thought for thought"). Those students whose first language is one other than English may complete these readings in their native language.

GUIDELINES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPER

Research and write an exegetical paper on a text from Genesis. Choose your text carefully; your choice should be manageable to cover in some detail in a project of this size (see below). Please feel free to consult with me prior to embarking on your research. These are the *minimum* requirements:

1. Engage in a thorough analysis of the text in an effort to identify the author's intended meaning. In doing so, you should demonstrate a mastery of the appropriate principles for interpreting biblical texts of this genre. Your defense of the author's meaning should be articulate, and defended with evidence from the text. You should also demonstrate familiarity with the views of others who do not share your views, and be able to counter criticism they would level. Your analysis should further include awareness of the cultural context in which the text was written, and in a final section should address the relevance of the text for a modern audience.
2. Hebrew students should present their own translation of the text they are interpreting, and your papers should demonstrate proper use of Hebrew.
3. Your paper should be grammatically correct, well-organized, concise, and readable. I expect that you will write several drafts, revise, and retype. If your paper is too weak in these areas, I may return it for correction before I assign a grade.
4. You should use at least 10 high-quality sources, *in addition* to the Bible and any materials used in this class. You should consult scholarly journal articles as well as books, and these should represent at least 5 sources. Your sources should be actually cited in your paper, not just included in a bibliography at the end. (That is, I want to see that you have interacted carefully with the argument presented in the source.)
5. Papers are to be double-spaced, and properly documented according to the current (6th) edition of Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (see the catalog, p. 85). Please note that failure to properly document the ideas and expressions of others constitutes plagiarism, and will be penalized appropriately, as detailed in the current Seminary catalog. All notes should be numbered consecutively and placed as footnotes at the bottom of the page (preferred option) or at the end of the paper on a separate page (accepted alternative). Do not use notes that are right in the text except when noting biblical references. These can be placed in parentheses in the text like this: (Genesis 16:2).
6. Please use sexually inclusive language when referring to human beings in your paper: "persons" not "men"; "humanity" not "mankind"; etc., unless you mean specifically men instead of women. To avoid using "he" all the time, pluralize pronouns or alternate genders. Since it is assumed that Moses was the author of Genesis it is acceptable to refer to the author of the text as "he."
7. Please indicate the number of words in your paper. Your paper should be about 2600 words. Substantial deviation from the assigned number of words (either higher or lower) will adversely affect your grade.
7. Your name, PO box, and the title of your paper should appear on a title page stapled to the paper. Please do not use report covers.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICAL EXEGETICAL PROJECT

Develop a series of Bible study or Sunday school lessons based on stories from Genesis. Your series should consist of at least four sessions, but you may develop material for as many sessions as you deem appropriate beyond four sessions. The following are the *minimum* requirements:

1. In an introduction to the project, identify the age group and ministry setting in which the material could be used. This may be submitted as a cover page to the project, rather than part of the project itself.
2. Write out lesson plans focusing on these stories. Your lesson plans should be user-friendly, so this could actually be used by someone other than yourself in a real teaching situation. Pay attention to grammar, spelling, and layout, as these all affect the effectiveness of your study guide (and, consequently, your grade for the project). Your lessons should consist in substantial part of key questions that get the class to focus on the text in question. You should think carefully about the questions, and design them so that they force the students to think about the story (text) and stimulate interest. Avoid overly subjective questions such as “What do you think about this passage” as well as “wooden” questions such as “What does verse 3 say?” In brackets under the questions, you should provide an answer to the question, to assist the leader in leading discussion of the text.
3. Your lessons should focus attention on the meaning of the text. You should, of course, seek to convey the relevance of the text for the church today, but the connections you make should be based on the meaning of the text. (Hermeneutically speaking, your implications must be legitimate, i.e., flowing out of the meaning of the text.) What I am especially interested in is seeing if you can convey the meaning of the text to the people you minister to. You should also select your stories carefully, and convey to your audience how these texts “hang together.”
4. Be creative. I would hope that you would actually be able to use this in a church setting. So, look for maps that would be helpful (if appropriate for the age group you deal with), pictures (you can draw them yourself, if you’re so inclined), graphics, and anything else that will help you effectively communicate the meaning of the texts.
5. Document the sources used in accordance with Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition. I expect that you will use at least 10 high-quality sources, *in addition* to the Bible and any materials used in this class. You should consult scholarly journal articles as well as books, and these should represent at least 5 sources. Be sure to cite any pictures or maps you use. I will be looking for explicit evidence that you have actually engaged with the ideas of your sources in your lesson plans, rather than simply appending them in a bibliography. Please note that failure to properly document the ideas and expressions of others constitutes plagiarism, and will be penalized appropriately, as detailed in the current Seminary catalog. Works consulted may be submitted as endnotes.
6. Please use sexually inclusive language when referring to human beings in your project: “persons” not “men”; “humanity” not “mankind”; etc., unless you mean specifically men instead of women. To avoid using “he” all the time, pluralize pronouns or alternate genders. Since it is assumed that Moses was the author of Genesis it is acceptable to refer to the author of the text as “he,” should that be necessary.
7. Your name, PO box, and the title of your project should appear on a title page stapled to the rest of the project. Please do not use report covers.

It should be apparent that although this is a practical project, you will need to engage in careful exegesis of the text(s) you are using in order to develop meaningful questions for study. Your grade will be based on your mastery of the text *and* the way in which you communicate that meaning through the development appropriate lesson plans and materials.

READING REPORT
(To be submitted on September 10)

Please indicate what reading you have completed by completing the following:

I give my word as a Christian that I have:

- Completed 100% of the reading and it was all completed on time.
- Completed 100% of the reading, but _____ % was completed late.
- Completed _____% of the reading, and it was all completed on time.
- Completed _____% of the reading, but _____% was completed late.

Signed: _____

Required Reading Summary:

Genesis – 3 times

Hartley's commentary on Genesis

ANE parallel texts

Sailhamer's article

Heaven is a Place on Earth