

**OT101: Syllabus**  
Fall, 2003  
September 22 – December 5  
**Section I:** Monday 8:15 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

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## **Genesis-Ruth**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An examination of the books of Genesis through Ruth, including the contents, major themes, and theological messages of each. Special emphases are placed on the nature and significance of God's promises and covenants with His people. Special attention is also given to legitimate ways of reading the Bible. This involves understanding the particular qualities of narrative literature and of Old Testament law, and developing a valid hermeneutic for interpreting them. Prerequisite or concurrent enrollment: BT101.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Be able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the contents of the books Genesis-Ruth.
2. Understand the theological themes present in each book, and develop an appreciation for and understanding of the key theological themes in the books.
3. Demonstrate basic skills of interpreting biblical narratives.
4. Understand how to interpret biblical law, and to demonstrate the ways in which it is relevant to the modern Christian.
5. Be aware of the ways in which each book supports the themes and theology of the Old Testament as a whole, and how these themes relate to and support the themes and theology of the New Testament.
6. Understand the ways in which extra-biblical literature from the Ancient Near East aids in exegesis of the biblical material and apologetics.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

ALEXANDER, T. D. *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995. ISBN: 0-85364-647-3

ALTER, ROBERT. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981. ISBN: 046500427X

DILLARD, RAYMOND B. and TREMPER LONGMAN III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. ISBN: 0-310-43250-2

FRANK, HARRY T. *Hammond Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Maplewood, NJ: Hammond, 1990. ISBN: 0-8437-7055-4 (Please bring to each class for reference)

### **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (PROVIDED TO STUDENTS):**

"Atrahasis," in *Myths From Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others*, trans. S. DALLEY, 1-38. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

"Enuma Elish," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, ed. J.B. PRITCHARD, 60-72. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

- JENSON, PHILLIP P. "The Levitical Sacrificial System." In *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. R.T. Beckwith and M.J. Selman, 25-40. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- KITCHEN, KENNETH A. "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21/22 (1995): 48-57, 88-95.
- MCCONVILLE, J. GORDON. "Deuteronomy: Torah for the Church of Christ." *European Journal of Theology* 9, 1 (2000): 33-47.
- WENHAM, GORDON J. "Pentateuchal Studies Today." *Themelios* 22, 1 (1996): 3-13.
- WENHAM, GORDON J. "The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice." In *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. R.T. Beckwith and M.J. Selman, 75-87. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- OT101 Genesis-Ruth CD ROM. *Note: You will be billed \$5 to your student account for this CD ROM.*

#### ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Reading (10%):** All readings are to be completed as listed in the class schedule. Readings are to be completed by the start of the indicated class session. On the final examination, students will submit a signed statement indicating what percentage (not pages read) of the reading was completed, and whether it was completed on time. Please keep track throughout the course of your completion of the reading.

If you completed an Old Testament survey course in your undergraduate studies and feel that the required reading will be a duplication of what you have already read, please contact me as soon as possible to see about completing an advanced standing test or developing an alternative reading plan. It is ill-advised to simply not complete the reading.

You are to read carefully the entire contents of the books Genesis-Ruth in any version desired. International students may read the Bible in their own language. Each book is to be read in one sitting. You are free to read ahead, of course, but you must have completed the reading of the biblical material by the week in which that book is examined.

2. **Examinations and Quizzes (40%):** There will be two examinations in this course, each representing 15% of your final grade. Exam one will test your mastery of the material covered to that point in the course. Questions may come from the assigned readings (including the biblical texts) and lectures.

There will also be a final examination, which will be cumulative (though extra emphasis will be placed on material covered since the first exam). You will be expected to demonstrate your mastery of the key themes and theology of the books covered, and their contribution to our understanding of theology. The format for the final exam will be similar to the first examination. Both exams are closed book.

In addition, you will have two quizzes, each worth 5% of your final grade. Quizzes will be taken online in Blackboard, and will test your mastery of the content of the biblical books covered in this course. You are free to complete the quizzes at any time you are ready, but they must be completed no later than the dates indicated in the Course Schedule. It is incumbent on you to plan accordingly to ensure that your quizzes are completed on time.

Study guides for the exams and quizzes will be distributed to assist you in your preparation.

2. **Exegetical Paper OR Practical Project (45%):** Students will choose to complete *either* an exegetical paper *or* a practical project according to the guidelines provided in this syllabus.
3. **Reflection Paper (5%):** It is my conviction that encounters with God through his word results in a change within us. Therefore, I would like you to write a reflection paper of no more than 500 words in which you describe the ways in which you have grown as a result of encountering God through his word in this course. Please note that I am not asking you to describe what you have *learned* in terms of knowledge of methodology and/or content. Rather, I am interested in knowing how the Lord has revealed himself to you, and how you have changed as a result. Although this paper is to be submitted at the end of the course, I hope you will be thinking about and looking for God's activity in you throughout the quarter.

### Time Allotment:

Reading	38 hours
Class time	30
Exams and quizzes	16
Exegetical Paper or Practical Project	34
Reflection Paper	2
TOTAL	120

### GRADING

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.
- 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.

**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 or crisis for which latitude will be granted.

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.

**ATTENDANCE**

Regular and on-time class attendance is a necessary part of the learning experience. Unexcused absences beyond one class period (or equivalent) will result in a grade reduction. Absences will be excused at the professor’s discretion, according to the standards described above regarding late assignments. Please make every effort to attend every class session, and to be on-time.

**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

Abbreviations: *IOT* = Dillard and Longman, *Introduction to the Old Testament*  
*PPL* = Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land*  
*ABN* = Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*

DATE	COURSE TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
9/22	Course Introduction Introduction to the Old Testament	
9/29	Genesis	Genesis <i>PPL</i> , 97-156 <i>Enuma Elish</i> (Creation Epic) <i>Atrahasis</i>
10/6	Exodus	Exodus <i>IOT</i> , 57-71 <i>PPL</i> , 157-203
10/13	Seminar: Reading Old Testament Narrative	<i>ABN</i> Re-read Genesis 34
10/20	<b>Study Break—No Class</b>	View CD ROM Material on Pentateuchal source criticism <i>PPL</i> , 3-94 Wenham, “Pentateuchal Studies Today” Kitchen, “Patriarchal Age”
10/27	<b>Study Break – No Class</b>	Leviticus <i>IOT</i> , 73-90 Jenson, “Sacrificial System”
11/3	<b>Exam One</b>	Prepare for Exam Complete Quiz 1 (by start of class on 11/3)
11/10	Leviticus Numbers	Numbers <i>PPL</i> , 204-52
11/17	Interpretation and Relevance of Old Testament Law Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy Wenham, “Theology” McConville, “Deuteronomy” <i>PPL</i> , 253-80
11/24	Joshua Judges, Ruth	Joshua, Judges, Ruth <i>IOT</i> , 91-134
12/1	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Due: Reflection Paper Paper or Project</b>
12/5		Complete Quiz 2 (by 12/5 at 5:00 p.m.)

## GUIDELINES FOR EXEGETICAL PAPER

In approximately 2650 words, write an exegetical paper on either Genesis 3 or Judges 11: 29-40. 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 principles for interpreting narrative covered in your texts and classroom discussions. Therefore, I will expect that you will discuss issues such as imagery, plot, characterization, etc. (this is *not* a complete list) as part of your analysis of the meaning of the text. 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. Papers are to be double-spaced, and properly documented according to the current (6<sup>th</sup>) 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).
5. 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." Although we do not know the author of Judges, it is likely that it was written by a man, so using "he" is acceptable there as well.
6. Please indicate the number of words in your paper. 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 PROJECT

Develop a series of Bible study or Sunday school lessons based on stories from Genesis. Option 1 is to cover Creation, Fall, the flood, and the call of Abraham. Option 2 is to cover the Call of Abraham, the Three Visitors (Gen 18), Sodom and Gomorrah, and the testing of Abraham (Gen 22). Option 3 is to cover the blessing of Jacob, Jacob and Laban, Jacob wrestling with God, Jacob and Esau meeting. Your series should consist of at least four sessions, but you may develop material for as many sessions as you deem appropriate. 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. Your lessons should consist in 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. Note, too, that the texts selected are *not* random. They all “hang together” in important ways and I want you to convey that to your audience.
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*, 6<sup>th</sup> 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. 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.