

# Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology



This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

## *Course Identification*

Course Number: WYB3910HF/WYB6910HF  
 Course Name: Reading Scripture Through the Ages  
 Campus: St. George  
 Time: Thursday 2:00-4:00

## *Instructor Information*

Instructor: Marion Taylor  
 E-mail: m.taylor@utoronto.ca  
 Office Hours: By appointment: Wycliffe College Rm. 227

## *Course Prerequisites or Requisites*

None.

## *Course Description*

This course traces the history of the interpretation of the Bible from pre-rabbinic Jewish interpretation and the New Testament to the present. We will examine major figures and major forms of biblical interpretation and also give attention to a consideration of popular and forgotten voices. Like all Wycliffe College courses, “Reading Scripture Through the Ages” is shaped by a set of course outcomes/learning goals, describing the knowledge and abilities a student will have attained by the end of the course. In the chart below, these course outcomes are correlated with the outcomes for the M.Div and MTS programs as a whole. For a full list of the latter consult the Wycliffe College web site.

## *Course Methodology*

Lectures, readings, class discussions, presentation, reflection paper/book report (AD), final paper

## *Course Outcomes*

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students will	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe’s statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)

Demonstrate the ability to place individual interpreters within their historical context	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	<b>MTS:</b> 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 <b>MDiv:</b> 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
Identify and explain methodological, exegetical and hermeneutical issues raised by interpreters as they engage Scripture;	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	<b>MTS:</b> 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 <b>MDiv:</b> 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
Demonstrate how culture, social setting and gender, culture, class, ethnicity and age influences interpretation	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	<b>MTS:</b> 2.2, 2.3, 3.1 <b>MDiv:</b> 2.2
Use primary and secondary research tools and resources.	Hand out for oral presentation; class paper.	<b>MTS:</b> 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 3.1 <b>MDiv:</b> 2.1, 2.2

***AD Outcomes:***

<b>COURSE OUTCOMES</b>	<b>COURSE ELEMENT</b>	<b>PROGRAM OUTCOMES</b>
<b>By the end of this course, students</b>	<b>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</b>	<b>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)</b>
Demonstrate the ability to place individual interpreters within their historical context	Participating in discussions of primary and secondary texts about male and female from each period; presenting on one figure and writing on another; reflection paper	<b>PhD:</b> 1.1, 1.2 <b>MA:</b> 1.1 <b>ThM:</b> 1.1 <b>DMin:</b> 1.1, 1.2
Identify and explain methodological, exegetical and hermeneutical issues raised by interpreters as they engage Scripture;	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	<b>PhD:</b> 2.3–2.5 <b>MA:</b> 2.3–2.5 <b>ThM:</b> 2.3–2.5 <b>DMin:</b> 2.1–2.3
Demonstrate how culture, social setting and gender, culture, class, ethnicity and age influences interpretation	Class discussions; oral presentation; reflection paper, class paper.	<b>PhD:</b> 1.1 <b>MA:</b> 1.1 <b>ThM:</b> 1.1 <b>DMin:</b> 1.1
Use secondary research tools and resources.	Hand out for oral presentation; class paper	<b>PhD:</b> 2.5 <b>MA:</b> 2.5 <b>ThM:</b> 2.5

## Course Resources

---

### Required Course Texts

- *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*, edited by Marion Ann Taylor; associate editor Agnes Choi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).
- William Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader*. Baker Academic, 2011. (You might find a used copy at ABEbooks.com or Amazon.ca)
- Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: IVP, 2019).

*AD students will also need:*

- Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- John L Thompson, *Reading the Bible with the Dead. What you can learn from the history of exegesis that you can't learn from exegesis alone*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. (You might find a good used copy used copies at ABEbooks.com)
- Highly recommended expensive but accessible online through University of Toronto Library is Joy A Schroeder, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*, Oxford, 2014.

### Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask [xxx] for further help.]

### Class Schedule

---

**Week 1 (January 9)** Lecture: Introduction.

**Week 2 (January 16)** Pre-rabbinic Jewish interpretation and the New Testament. *Readings:* Part One, Yarchin and Taylor, "Introduction".

**Week 3 (January 23)** Patristic Interpretation and Its Legacy. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 4–9 and Taylor *Handbook* entries on Proba, Paula, Egeria, and Dhuoda.

**Week 4 (January 30)** Continuing Legacy, Aquinas, Nicolas of Lyra and Rabbinic Interpretation and Medieval Women. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 10–15 and Taylor *Handbook* entries on Hildegard, Gertrude the Great, Julian of Norwich, and Catherine of Siena.

**Week 5 (February 6)** Renaissance and Reformation. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 16–17 and Taylor *Handbook* entries on Teresa of Avila, Christine de Pizan, Narducci, Marguerite de Navarre, Marie Dentiere, and Zell.

**Week 6 (February 13)** The Enlightenment. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 18–19 and Taylor *Handbook* entries on Roper, Parr, Anne Askew, Elizabeth 1, Lock, Herbert, Lanyer, Anne Hutchinson, Guyard or Marie of the Incarnation.

**Week 7 (February 17-21)** Reading Week.

**Week 8 (February 27)** Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Interpreters. *Readings:* Taylor *Handbook* entries on Tarabotti, van Shurman, Margaret Askew Fell, Hutchinson, Petersen, Guyon, Juana Ines de la Cruz, Mary Astell, Susanna Wesley.

**Week 9 (March 5)** Nineteenth century biblical criticism. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 20–21 and Taylor *Handbook* entries on Trimmer, Barbauld, More, Hands, Cornwallis, Wollstonecraft, Hall, Schimmelpenninck, Lee, Copley, Hale, Tonna, Grimke, Julia Smith.

**Week 10 (March 12)** Nineteenth-Century Women's voices. *Readings:* *Handbook* entries on the nineteenth-century interpreters listed on p. 559-560 from Egerton to Blackwell, from Warner to Habershon from Penn-Lewis to Kirshbaum. Read posted selections on Jael

**Week 11 (March 19)** Twentieth Century. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 22–26 and Taylor, Read select entries on the interpreters listed on p. 561 beginning with Jonas.

**Week 12 (March 26)** Twentieth Century continued. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 27–30 and skim and compare excerpts from commentaries written by women from different theological and ideological perspectives: *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, *The New IVP Women's Bible Commentary*. See blackboard.

**Week 13 (April 2)** Twentieth Century Continued and the Twenty-first Century. *Readings:* Yarchin Chapters 31–34 and any three articles listed in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* (ed Steven L McKenzie) that describe an interpretative method practiced in the twenty-first century. Available online through the University of Toronto library (i.e. Asian American Biblical Interpretation, Feminist Biblical Interpretation, Theological interpretation, Postmodern Interpretation, Pop Culture and the Bible).

## ***Evaluation***

---

### **Requirements**

Classes will be held once a week for two hours. Regular and faithful attendance at lectures is expected. All written assignments are due at the beginning of the class hour. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The minimum penalty for a plagiarized paper is the grade of zero. If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases, you must acknowledge your source(s) properly.

#### **Basic Degree Students:**

1. **Participation** (10%). Students are expected to participate actively in the class.
2. **Class presentation** on an assigned biblical interpreter; focus must not be on biography but rather biblical interpretation (20%).
3. **Reflection Paper** (30%). Read and write a reflection paper on Amanda Benckhuysen's *The Gospel of Eve*. How does this illustrate the relevance of the history of interpretation for the present? What questions does this book raise for you? Your paper should **demonstrate that you have engaged with the contents of the book**. It should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, and 12 font.
3. **Final Paper** should be about 8-10 pages and is due April 2nd (40%). **Details see below.**

#### **Advanced Degree Students:**

1. **Class presentation** on an assigned biblical interpreter (20%).
2. **Reflection paper** on Bray, Thompson and the *Handbook*. (6-10 pages). AD Students should read each of these books (15%).

**3. Write a Review of** Amanda Benckhuysen's *The Gospel of Eve* that you could submit to a journal of choice such as the TJT or The **Canadian-American** Theological Review (CATR) (15%). Follow the rubrics for book are you for the journal you choose.

**4. Final Paper** should be 12-15 pages and is due April 9 (40%).

### Instructions for final Paper

1. Students may choose to do a paper on the life and work of an agreed upon interpreter, especially a person who commented on Paul. BRIEFLY include in your paper relevant details about the writer's birth, family, education, and formative influences that provide the context out of which his/her interpretive work was done. Do not get lost in the interesting details about the person's life. The larger question at stake is "does the writing say anything about the "place" (social, textual, economic, gender, etc.) of the author and how that context affected her writing? When analyzing his/her writing, try to answer the following questions: \*What is the purpose of the writing? \*Who is the intended audience? \* What are the major themes in her work? \*What approaches and methods of biblical interpretation are being used? \*To what the extent does the author re-write, re-fashion or re-interpret Scripture and/or traditional readings of Scripture in light of his/her context? \*Are there key issues relating to women? \*Does she deal with difficult passages like Genesis 1-3 and 1 Timothy 2 and female figures in the Bible. If so, how? Finally, consider the question of legacy. If it is relevant, include a reflection on the question of gendered exegesis.

**OR**

2. Students may choose to do a paper on a particular method of biblical interpretation.

**OR**

3. Students may trace the history of the interpretation of a passage or figure in Scripture (the apostle Paul is recommended), focusing on women's interpretation. Consult, Joy A Schroeder, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*, the first comprehensive study of Jewish and Christian interpretations of Deborah and Judges 4-5 and one of the few books on the history of biblical interpretation that examines the interpretive work of both male and female commentators in their historical contexts.

**OR**

4. For other topics please consult Professor.

## Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value

NCR Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation

SDF Standing deferred (a temporary extension)

INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

### ***Policy on Assignment Extensions***

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

**One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

### ***Policies***

---

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm)).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

**Writing Style.** The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), which is available at Crux Books.