



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 : WYB5111HS/RLG3142
Course Name: The Book of Genesis
Campus: St. George

Instructor Information

Instructor: Glen Taylor
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Office Hours: Normally, following class (never before!)
Time and Place: Thursdays 11–1

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

For AD students focusing on Bible, at least two years of Biblical Hebrew; normally students will have either passed an exam in German, French or Modern Hebrew or be working towards that end.

Course Description

A critical and exegetical study of the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis. In addition to historical-critical issues, attention will be paid to ancient Near Eastern parallels as well as to themes, key compositional theories, structure and religious significance.

The course has two main goals: 1) to provide the student with an understanding and appreciation of the themes, content and structure of the Book of Genesis, and 2) to expose the student to a selected—pre-modern, modern and post-modern—methodologies employed in the study of the book of Genesis.

Course Methodology

Seminars, assignments (translation, readings, possible occasional quizzes), class presentation(s), appropriate participation, term paper

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAMME OUTCOMES
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By the end of this course, students will be able to:	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (PhD, ThM/MA¹)
• outline the plot of the Book of Genesis	Inductive study on Genesis	PhD²: 1. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge Level 1 or 2 ThM³: 1.1-1.3
• identify and explain most of the Masoretic notes and accents reflected in BHS/BHQ of Genesis	In class readings and analysis;	PhD: 3. Level of Application of Knowledge (s.v. language proficiency) ThM : 2.2
• read, translate and identify the grammatical features and categories of several chapters of the Hebrew text of Genesis	In-class reading sessions, quizzes	PhD: 3. Level of Application of Knowledge (s.v. language proficiency) ThM: 2.1, 2.2
• articulate the similarities and differences between selected material in Genesis and selected ANE accounts of creation, antediluvians, flood, postdiluvians as well as of brotherly episodes	Presentations, lectures, readings	PhD: 1.Depth & Breadth of Knowledge; 2. Research & Scholarship ThM: 1.1–1.3; 2.3, 2.5
• demonstrate conformity to the norms that prevail within Biblical societies for both presenting research and responding to that of others	Student presentations of a paper and the giving of a response	PhD: 2. Research & Scholarship (N.B. e.g. section on outcomes “as reflected in students able to produce discrete forms of research-based scholarly discourse (oral presentations)”) ” ThM: 2.5
• identify and explain the main historical-critical approaches as they apply to Genesis as well as selected pre- and post-critical approaches	Assignments, readings	PhD: 1. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge; 2. Research & Scholarship ThM: 2.3–2.5

¹ At the time of composing this syllabus, specific MA outcomes were not available. In the meantime, we may presume them to be akin to those of the ThM.

² See Appendix A: *TST Graduate Degree Handbook*.

³ See Appendices 1 and 2, pp. 34–41 of the *TST ThM Handbook: 2016–17*.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imitate <i>SBL Handbook of Style</i> protocol for writing a paper in biblical studies (e.g. citation, referencing, transliteration, etc.) 	Final term paper, quiz on transliteration	PhD: 2. Research & Scholarship ThM: 2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ability to conduct research, present an argument, and construct arguments in support of it and write it up in an acceptable manner 	Final term paper	PhD: 2. Research & Scholarship ThM: 2.1–2.5, ThM I: 3.1

Required Course Texts

- Access to the Hebrew text, ideally in a searchable, tagged software programme; an excellent choice for a well-rounded exegetical commentary is the WBC by Gordon Wenham (2 vols). A good general resource is the *IVP Dictionary of the Pentateuch*, whereas the book of Campbell and O'Brien on *Sources of the Pentateuch* is a handy, accessible source for understanding the classical Documentary Hypothesis.

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 Thomas Power for further help.

Approach

A different portion of the Hebrew text of Genesis will be considered each week. Students will be expected to read and translate the passage (no more than a chapter on average, often less) and to prepare for a topic of study, most often based on the portion considered. The topic will vary in such a way as to provide the student with an appreciation of themes, structure, and critical issues.

Tentative Class Schedule

N.B. This is a provisional list; the professor reserves the right to make changes. Students wishing to prepare ahead of time may nonetheless be assured that the following texts (to name only a few) will be considered in some detail: Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28; 12:1-3; 22:1-19; 32, 49:8-12.

January 11: Introduction and History of Scholarship

January 18: History of scholarship cont'd

January 25: Discussion of Students' Inductive Studies

February 1: Primeval History Part I

February 8: Primeval History Part II

February 15: The Figure of Abram and the “Akedah” (Gen. 22)

February 22: Reading Week

March 1: The Jacob Cycle: Part I

March 8: Student Presentations and Responses

March 15: Student Presentations and Responses

March 22: The Jacob Cycle Part II

March 29 (Time Conflict?): The Joseph Cycle Part I

April 5: Joseph Cycle Part II; Wrap Up

Evaluation

Requirements

Inductive Study

Early in the term each student will complete a comprehensive reading and analysis of the Book of Genesis in the form of an “inductive study.” The approach and specific requirements are outlined immediately below:

What is Inductive Bible Study?

Inductive Bible Study refers to an informal method of determining through investigation what a portion of Scripture says and ultimately means. The method involves recovering the inquisitiveness of a young child who constantly asks: “but why?” Asking simple who-what-where-when-why questions, and then looking in the text for the answer, is what Inductive Bible study is all about

The point is to discover what the passive reader will never see, nor can imagine ever seeing! Anything that aids independent discovery is fair game: diagramming the passage, writing it out, asking a stock set of basic questions like the ones below, etc. Assume nothing. Do with the text what a dog does with its bone: hold, chew, probe, turn, scratch, enjoy, treasure. You will soon be on an exciting journey of discovery—including of how little you saw before.

How Does One Begin and Proceed?

Beginners as well as experts often resort to a stock list of things to look for in a text. The point is not to subject the text to questions for their own sake, but to see what wouldn’t otherwise be seen. Here, then, is a list of suggested questions or things specifically to (ask and then) look for:

-What comparisons/contrasts are made? What is repeated? What seems important to the writer judging from what is written and how (regardless of personal interest)? Why might this paragraph appear where it does in the context? To answer this, we might have first to ask: How would I describe the argument leading up to and following this text? What might a writer include this content, and here vs somewhere else in the book? Does the space given to a topic seem disproportional, and what that might mean? What is not mentioned that one might expect and why might that be? Is there movement from the specific to general or vice versa? Are questions implicitly or explicitly being asked? If so, what is the answer, if given (and if not, that’s perhaps noteworthy too—as in Acts 1:8 where Jesus seems to dodge a question)?

The list could (and should) go on with such things as interchange between ideas, climaxes, summative one-liners, humor, suspense, apparent contradictions, etc.

Urgent Qualification:

For this kind of study, **do not use** (yet, that is) **secondary sources** such as Bible commentaries. (They inhibit fresh thinking; besides, how else will you be able, later on, to know to agree with them or not?)

Suggestions:

Your text is codex Leningradensis; English texts may be consulted (NASB, JPSV). You know you are on the right track if it's not busy work, but a journey of discovery. Constantly look for the possible significance of what you are seeing, not just what but why. Ask questions that take you into different spheres, such as the temporal, spatial, causal, canonical, etc. Don't be concerned to ask profound questions. Often profound insights come from the simplest of observations. If you get stuck, come back to the text after a break. Photocopy your biblical passage leaving wide margins so you can draw lines, make connections, write out the structure of the passage, etc.

N.B. Assign titles to segments (often chapters), then group them into sections, subsections, etc. according to themes that you logically assign based on data. Generate an outline to which you can rationalize and assign a tentative theme. Use this as a basis for exploring smaller portions, allowing the part to inform the whole and vice versa. (See the sources below for more tips and details.)

paper must include (in no particular order):

1. Tangible Clues as to the Purpose, Dating, Setting of the Book, etc. (15%)
Identify possible clues as to the "original" date, setting, purpose of the book. Ask when, why, where was this book written. Refer to texts, specify inferences, etc.
2. Table of Contents with Captions (15%)
Use short, non-scholarly (even creative or catchy) titles. Don't be constrained by chapter divisions, as they are often not reflective of the book's structure
3. Analysis of The Book's Structure (35%)
Expand and justify your table of contents. How did you come up with the structure? What are the major sections of the book? How are these subsections divided? Are there sections that convey a different literary style. Be sure to defend your assessment of the book's structure (i.e. show how it is based on actual indicators from the text itself).
4. Theme of the Book (15%)
What is the one central theme of the book? How does that theme unfold? Be sure not to confuse the theme from subthemes or motifs. Be sure to defend your assessment of the theme from concrete data within the text.
5. General Observations and Theological Insights (20%)
What are some of the more prominent theological emphases in the book? How are they developed?

Papers should be typewritten, double-spaced, and not more than 15 pages long (not including title page). Provide a minimum one-inch margin for each page.

Remember: no secondary sources may be used for your overall effort, though you may look up such things as the location of a place in a Bible atlas or other such details relating to specific words etc. (An example would be to look up the meaning of a word in BDB.)

For Further Information:

1. Oletta Wald, *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Augsburg/Fortress and idem, *The New Joy of Teaching Discovery Bible Study*. Revised Ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 2002.

2. The International Inductive Study Bible, especially the Introduction.
3. Hans Finzel, *Observe Interpret Apply. How to Study the Bible Inductively.* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994.
4. Frank Traina, *Methodical Bible Study.* Asbury Seminary.

Presentation

Each student will be expected to present a paper on a critical or post-critical issue (or the interface between two particular methods) or on a passage of no less than 10 verses not covered in class. The presentation can be the basis for the term paper to follow. The presentation should be a formal paper, 20 minutes long, and of the kind presented at the CSBS or AAR/SBL. A copy of the paper must be made available to the class by no later than five p.m. on the Friday before the paper is presented. Each student will read the paper and submit to the Professor at the beginning of the class a one- to two-page sheet (double-spaced) summarizing the paper and listing two pertinent questions the paper evoked. For each paper presented, one student will be appointed as an official respondent. In place of submitting the usual summary and list of questions, the respondent will prepare a response of approximately 10 minutes in length. The response should be honest, courteous in tone, and should address strengths as well as weaknesses as well as issues or questions raised. A copy of the response must be given to the instructor at least one hour before class time. Students dealing with a method should prepare a bibliography for the benefit of their classmates. Students dealing with a text should prepare a statement suggesting how the text may best be applied within the context of the faith community with which they are most familiar).

Break down of grades:

Class assignments, preparation and participation	45%
Class presentation	20%
Term project	25%
Respondent to presentation	10%

Guidelines for Giving an Academic Response

-Use the person's last name (and where applicable, title(s)) at least predominantly. -First names are acceptable here and there where you know the person well. This is after all, a formal thing.

-Begin by explicitly expressing thanks to the presenter. As well very early on (in the first few sentences) find some affirming (even if guarded, such as "interesting") adjectives to demonstrate your graciousness and to uphold the presenter's dignity regardless of the quality of the paper.

-Even where you differ with the presenter, and especially if your challenge must be sharp, be sure to include some mediating comments that provide some positive balance to your criticism. (E.g. "to be sure, to her credit, professor x included p and q, but the omission of r and s remains noteworthy and regrettable.")

-this is an opportunity to show your critical skills and familiarity with the topic, so being "impressive" is fine, but never at the expense of the other person.

-end your evaluation on a positive tone of some kind: appreciative, conciliatory, etc.

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).

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. Although the writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is stated to be Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), there are many details particular to biblical studies that are not covered by Turabian. These are covered by the *SBL Handbook of Style*. Indeed, this resource has become so standard in biblical studies that is impractical not to use it as the standard in place of Turabian. Turabian is available at Crux Books.

Selected Bibliography

In addition to the following, see the handouts distributed in class on individual learning units. N.B. There are many more commentaries on Genesis that are useful than are listed (e.g. Brueggemann, Coats, Sarna, etc.)

Adar, Zvi. *The Book of Genesis: An Introduction to the Biblical World*. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990.

Arnold, Bill T. *Genesis*. NCBC; Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Armstrong, Karen. *In the Beginning: A New Interpretation of Genesis*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

Bandstra, Barry. *Genesis 1–11: A Handbook of the Hebrew Text*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Creation, Uncreation, Recreation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1–11*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2011.

Brodie, Thomas L. *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Carr, David. *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches*. Louisville: John Knox, 1996.

Collins, C. John. *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006.

Cotter, David W. *Genesis*. Berit Olam; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Davies, P.R. and D.J.A. Clines, eds. *The World of Genesis. Persons, Places, Perspectives*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

De La Torre, Miguel A. *Genesis. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011

Evans, Craig A. et al. eds. *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation*. VTSup 152. Leiden: Brill, 2012. Essays include: Jan Christian Gertz, “The Formation of the Primeval History,” pp. 107–35; Carol Meyers, “Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective,” pp. 137–57.

- Fokkelman, Jan P. *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975.
- Garrett, D. A. *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Gelander, Shamaï. *The Good Creator: Literature and Theology in Genesis 1–11*. SFSHJ 147. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- . *Genesis*. Ra'anana: Open University of Israel, 2009 (in Hebrew).
- Green, William Henry. *The Unity of the Book of Genesis*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- . *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18–50*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Hartley, John E. i. NIBCOT 1. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000.
- Harduf, David Mendel. *Introduction to the Book of Genesis*. Willowdale, ON: Harduf Books/Beit Ra'if, 2004.
- Hendel, Ronald, ed. *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*. Cambridge, 2010. Essays include: Kawashima, Robert S. "Sources and Redaction," pp. 47–70.
- Hirsch, Samson Raphael. *The Pentateuch: Genesis*. Translated by Isaac Levy. Second Edition. Judaica Press, 1999. [German original, *Der Pentateuch übersetzt und erklärt*, 1867–78.]
- Kass, Leon R. *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*. New York: Free Press, 2003.
- Kessler, Martin and Karel Deurloo. *A Commentary on Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*. New York: Paulist, 2004.
- Lacocque, André. *The Trial of Innocence: Adam, Eve, and the Yahwist*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2006.
- Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- MacDonald, Nathan, Mark W. Elliott, Grant Macaskil, eds. *Genesis and Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.*
- McEvenue, S. "Reading Genesis with Faith and Reason." *Word and World* 14 (1994): 136–43.
- McKeown, James. *Genesis*. THOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Moberly, R. W. L. *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Peterson, David L. "The Genesis of Genesis." In *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*. Edited André Lemaire. VTSup 133. Leiden: Brill, 2010. Pp. 28. ⁴
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Genesis*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972.
- Rendsburg, Gary. *The Redaction of Genesis*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986.
- Reno, Russell. *Genesis*. BBC 1. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010.

⁴ Maintains Genesis is a book in its own right (i.e. is not simply one part of the Pentateuch).

- Rogerson, John W. *Genesis 1–11*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991.
- Sacks, Robert D. *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. Edwin Mellen, 1990.
- *Schmid, Konrad. *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible*. Siphrut 3. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- Thomas, Matthew A. *These are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the 'Toledot' Formula*. LHBOTS 551. New York: T & T Clark International, 2011.⁵
- Towner, Wayne Sibley. *Genesis*. Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Turner, Laurence A. *Genesis*. Second Edition. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.
- Waltke, Bruce K and Cathi J. Fredricks. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Walton, John H. *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- . “Genesis.” In *Genesis to Deuteronomy*. Volume 1 of *The Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*. Edited by John H. Walton. 5 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Wenham, Gordon J. “Genesis.” In *Eerdmans Bible Commentary*. Edited James D.G. Dunn and John Rogerson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- *———. *Genesis 1–15*. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1987.
- . *Genesis 16–50*. WBC. Waco, TX: Word, 1990.
- Wénin, André. *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*. BETL 155. Leuven: Peeters, 2001.
Essays include: Carr, David M. “Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story,” pp. 293–95.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Genesis. Olam ha-Tanak*, Vol. 1. Tel Aviv: Davidzon-Iti, 1998 (in Hebrew).
- White, Hugh C. *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Whybray, R. N. “Genesis.” In *Oxford Bible Commentary*. Edited John Barton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁵ Overview of scholarship on the Toledoth formulae.