Northern Seminary
OT 301A – THE PENTATEUCH (ONLINE)
Part A
Fall 2015
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will acquaint students with the history, theology, and critical study of the first five books of the Old Testament. The focus is the proper interpretation of its message to Israel and its abiding significance for the church.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student should leave the course able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the history and theology of the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.


3. Describe the problems associated with a single-authorship view of the Pentateuch, and to summarize and evaluate the traditional, critical theory of its composition—the Documentary Hypothesis.

4. Understand the goals and methods of ancient (Israelite) historiography.

5. Articulate their view on the genre of Genesis 1–11.

6. Understand the mission of God and the purpose of Israel’s election.

REQUIRED READING

The Bible in a modern translation, e.g., the NRSV, ESV, or NLT.


Topical Readings (See below)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Preparation & Reading:** Students are expected to prepare for each week by reading the assigned pages on time as indicated in the course schedule, including:

   (a) the biblical texts in translation. Prior reading does not substitute.

   (b) the passages from Victor Hamilton’s *Handbook on the Pentateuch* and all other assigned topical readings. These amount to the core instructional material for the online class.

   Students must also watch short videos when provided by the instructor.

2. **Online Discussion:** Students are required to participate weekly in the online forums.

   The professor posts starter questions online. Each student makes posts to the discussion forums, responding to questions by interacting with the readings, classmates, and any other materials provided by the instructor. The course requirement is **one or two substantive posts each week, totaling 15 posts over the 10-week course.** (See below for more guidelines.) The posts constitute 40% of the grade and are evaluated by critical engagement with the readings.

3. **Quizzes:** Students will take quizzes on the even weeks. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. You may not use course materials.

4. **Paper:** Students will write two short papers:


Papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, using 12-point Times New Roman font. Students must follow the style guidelines found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed.; University of Chicago Press, 2013). Please contact me early in the course if you have questions about what is expected.

**ONLINE FORUMS**

Students are required to make 15 substantial posts and 15 response posts over the 10-week class.

The **substantive posts**—amounting to somewhere between 350 and 450 words—should be directed towards the starter questions provided by the instructor. These posts should draw from the assigned readings, which are the primary material for the course. Students are expected to demonstrate engagement with the readings by citing and evaluating them. Each substantial post should include a *follow-up discussion question* for further discussion.

The **response posts** should be directed toward the follow-up discussion questions provided by your classmates. They may be brief and need not cite the readings.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

The course will follow a set schedule during the week. The professor will post the discussion questions Monday morning and students must post their substantive posts no later than Thursday at midnight. Further discussion (i.e., response posts) may continue Friday. You must take the quiz between 10:00am Friday and 11:59pm Sunday.

Discussion:  Monday 10:00am – Thursday 11:59pm  
Quiz:  Friday 10:00am – Sunday 11:59pm

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

40%  Class Participation (quality of online posts)  
30%  Quizzes Averaged  
30%  Paper
**GRADING SCALE**

- **A** = 100-95
- **A-** = 94-90
- **B+** = 89-87
- **B** = 86-83
- **B-** = 82-80
- **C+** = 79-77
- **C** = 76-73
- **C-** = 72-70
- **D+** = 69-67
- **D** = 66-63
- **D-** = 62-60
- **F** = 59 and below

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments must be completed on time. Assignments completed late will be accepted only on permission of the instructor and are subject to a penalty in grade. No assignments can be completed after the last day of the quarter without prior permission from the professor for an Incomplete. Such permission will not be granted unless the student can show good reason why he or she was prevented, beyond his or her control, from (unforeseeably) completing the assignment on time. Examples are serious illness or a death in the family. Difficulties such as being too busy, computer problems, and not anticipating the time required to manage job, family, and school responsibilities are not grounds for an Incomplete.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Old Testament**

- Content Reading: Boadt, “Introducing the Old Testament,” 11-25 (15 pp)
  = 40 pp

Optional:
- Hill & Walton, “Historical Overview of OT Times” (21 pp)

**Week 2: Themes of the Pentateuch**

- Content Reading: Hill & Walton, “Introduction to the Pentateuch,” 47-61 (15 pp)
  Friedman, “Torah (Pentateuch),” 605-608 (4 pp)
  LaSor, Hubbard, Bush, “The Pentateuch” (12 pp)
  Bandstra, “Survey of OT History,” 10-21 (12 pp)
  = 45 pp

*Quiz #1

**Week 3: Interpreting the Bible**

- Content Reading: Fee & Stuart, *How To Read the Bible*, 21–35 (15 pp)
  Dutcher-Walls, *Reading the Historical Books*, ch. 5 (30 pp)
  = 45 pp
Week 4: The Composition of the Pentateuch
Content Reading: Longman, *How to Read Genesis*, 43-58 (16 pp)
*DOTP*, “Source Criticism,” 798-804 (7 pp)
Friedman, “Torah (Pentateuch),” 608-622 (15 pp)
Whybray, *Making of the Pentateuch*, skim: 55-93, 120-26; read: 129-31 (3 pp)
= **41 pp**

Optional: *DOTP*, “Authorship of the Pentateuch,” 61-71 (11 pp)

*Quiz #2

Week 5: Genesis 1–3: Creation
Bible Reading: Genesis 1-3
Topical Reading: Walton, “Genesis 1 is Ancient Cosmology” (8 pp)
Longman, *How to Read Genesis*, 71-80 (10 pp)
Selections from *Enuma Elish*
Biologos.org, “Can Scientific and Scriptural Truth Be Reconciled?” (3 pp)
= **50 pages**

Week 6: Genesis 4–11: The Primeval History
Bible Reading: Genesis 4-11
Content Reading: Hamilton, *Handbook*, 57-77 (21 pp)
Topical Reading: *DOTP*, “Sons of God, Daughters of Man,” 793-797 (5 pp)
“Ancient Near Eastern Flood Accounts” *ZIBBCOT* 48-49 (2 pp)
Longman, *How to Read Genesis*, 81-87 (7 pp)
“Tower of Babel,” *ZIBBCOT* 60-65 (6 pp)
= **41 pages**

Optional: Walton, “Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel” (20 pp)

*Quiz #3

Week 7: The Genre of Genesis 1–11
Content Reading: Halton, *Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither?* 13-163 (151 pp)

*Due Sunday: 3-page paper on your view of the genre of Genesis 1–11

Week 8: The Purpose of Election
Bible Reading: Genesis 12
Content Reading: Wright, *Mission of God*, 191-264 (74 pp)
= **74 pages**

*No Quiz: Work on Final Paper*
Week 9: Genesis 12–50: The Covenant Family
Bible Reading: Genesis 12-50
Content Reading: Hamilton, Handbook, 81-129 (41 pp)
Topical Reading: Women’s Bible Commentary, 18-21, 29 (5 pp) (22-28 optional)
Longman, How to Read Genesis, 88-98 (10 pp)
= 56 pages

Week 10: The Exodus from Egypt
Bible Reading: Exodus 1-15
Content Reading: Hamilton, Handbook, 135-173 (39 pp)
Topical Reading: Mariottini, “The Name of God: Jehovah” (2 pp)
= 41 pages

*Quiz #4
*Due Sunday: 5-6 page paper on the mission of God and the purpose of Israel’s election

TOPICAL READINGS (Listed according to the Course Schedule)


**SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Introductory Texts**


**Thematic and Topical**


**Commentaries**


**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgment or documentation. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one’s own material copied, borrowed, or purchased from some other source. This includes, but is not limited to, downloading term papers from the internet, purchasing a paper from a “term paper mill,” reproducing parts or all of an article or book section, copying another student’s paper, and so on.

- Copying verbatim or taking ideas from a source without providing documentation (i.e., footnote or quotation marks).

- Copying verbatim or taking ideas from a source and providing fraudulent or misleading documentation.

- Copying verbatim from a source without using quotation marks or a block quotation. When copied material is not properly identified with quotation marks, readers are led to believe that the material is the writer’s own words, when in fact it is someone else’s, which is the essence of plagiarism. Providing a footnote after copied material without using quotation marks is not adequate documentation and constitutes plagiarism.

- Paraphrasing material that is too close to the original, whether documented properly or not. A paraphrase is unacceptable if it merely changes a few words or transposes phrases or sentences in the original source, but retains the bulk of the text as it originally appeared.

Since plagiarism is a form of claiming for ourselves what belongs to another, it constitutes an infringement on someone else’s intellectual property and is a form of stealing. It is a very serious violation of Christian ethics and raises profound questions about fitness for Christian ministry. The seminary takes these matters extremely seriously and will take disciplinary action against those who engage in plagiarism.

It is sometimes difficult to know whether or how to acknowledge and document certain kinds of material. When in doubt, consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., 2013, especially those sections dealing with using quotations...
and footnotes. Students are expected to know and follow the guidelines in Turabian. Ignorance of them is no excuse.