# GENESIS – STMA 593-02

*Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry*
*Winter Quarter 2014 • Hunthausen 100 • Wednesday 9:00-11:50 am*

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## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Book of Genesis contains some of the Bible's best-known stories, and this course is an opportunity to dig deeply into their theological and literary complexity. An entire course devoted to Genesis will give us a chance to linger over these stories, exploring how they have shaped Judaism and Christianity. Besides reviewing the most recent scholarly approaches to Genesis, this course will pay close attention to the book's narrative artistry, theological subtleties, and pastoral possibilities. We will read these stories again for the first time with a new appreciation for their depth and diversity.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Ability to read scriptural texts critically (MDiv, MAPS, MATS).
- Ability to use biblical tools and resources as a way to inform their own exegesis for the purpose of doing their ministry (MDiv).
- Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview [whether ancient or modern] (MDiv, MAPS, MATS).
- Awareness of their own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as they engage the text in their own lives, their communities, and the larger world (MDiv).

## III. TEXTBOOKS

### A. Required

1. One of the following annotated Bibles: *The HarperCollins Study Bible*; *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (which I will use in class); *The Catholic Study Bible* (2d ed.); *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*; *The Jewish Study Bible*.
   - Avoid the following translations: *The King James Version*; *The Message*; *The Living Bible*; *The Way*.
2. Ronald Hendel, ed. *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
3. Coursepack available at SuperCopy (http://www.seattleu.edu/repro).

#### B. Recommended (for personal enrichment)

1. Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

## IV. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND DUE DATES

**Wed 1/8** *Ancient Israel, the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Canon*
Recommended: Ronald Hendel, "Introduction," *Reading Genesis*, 1-12; Joel Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 13-33 (Course Pack); Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A*

*Literary History*, 25-30 (Course Pack); Tod Linafelt, "Prolegomena to Meaning, or, What Is 'Literary' about the Torah?," *TS* 69 (2008): 62-79 (Canvas).

**Wed 1/15** *Creation Stories*
Assignment: Gen 1-3; Naomi Seidman, "Translation," *Reading Genesis*, 157-75; Richard Clifford, "The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation," *TS* 46 (1985): 507-23 (Canvas); Eileen Schuller, "Feminism and Biblical Hermeneutics: Genesis 1-3 as a Test Case," in *Gender, Genre and Religion: Feminist Reflections*, 31-46 (Course Pack); George Ramsey, "Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 3:2 and Elsewhere?," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 24-35 (Canvas).

**Wed 1/22** *Primeval History*
Assignment: Gen 4-11; Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, "Characterization, Comedy, and Catastrophe: Divine/Human Relations, Emotions, and Rules of Law," in *Genesis: Texts @ Contexts*, 221-46 (Course Pack); Robert Kawashima, "Sources and Redaction," *Reading Genesis*, 47-70; Theodore Hiebert, "The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *JBL* 126 (2007): 29-58 (Canvas); John Strong, "Shattering the Image of God: A Response to Theodore Hiebert's Interpretation of the Story of the Tower of Babel," *JBL* 127 (2008): 625-34 (Canvas); André Lacocque, "Whatever Happened in the Valley of Shinar? A Response to Theodore Hiebert," *JBL* 128 (2009): 29-41 (Canvas).

**Wed 1/29** *Abraham Cycle, Part One*
Assignment: Gen 12-15; Ilana Pardes, Chana Kronfeld, and Ronald Hendel, "Gender and Sexuality," *Reading Genesis*, 71-91; Richard Layton, "Interpretation in the Early Church," *Reading Genesis*, 136-56; Jon Levenson, "The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism," in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, 143-69 (Course Pack).

**Wed 2/5** *Abraham Cycle, Part Two*
Assignment: Gen 16-21; Dina Stein, "Rabbinic Interpretation," *Reading Genesis*, 119-35; Ilana Pardes, "Modern Literature," *Reading Genesis*, 176-95; Phyllis Trible, "Hagar: The Desolation of Rejection," in *Texts of Terror*, 9-35 (Course Pack).

**Wed 2/12** *The Isaac Cycle*
Assignment: Gen 21-26; Jon Levenson, "Abusing Abraham: Traditions, Religious Histories, and Modern Misinterpretations," *Judaism* 47 (1998): 259-77 (Canvas); John Collins, "Modern Theology," *Reading Genesis*, 196-214.

**Wed 2/19** *The Jacob Cycle*
Assignment: Gen 27-33; Robert Alter, "Literature," *Reading Genesis*, 13-27; Ronald Hendel, "Cultural Memory," *Reading Genesis*, 28-46; Yair Zakovitch, "Inner-Biblical Interpretation," *Reading Genesis*, 92-118; Robert Kawashima, "Verbal Medium and Narrative Art in Homer and the Bible," *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004): 103-17 (Canvas).

**Wed 2/26** *The Rape of Dinah*
Assignment: Gen 34-36; Meir Sternberg, "Delicate Balance in the Rape of Dinah," in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 445-75 (Course Pack); Danna Fewell and David Gunn, "Tipping the Balance: Sternberg's Reader and the Rape of Dinah," *JBL* 110 (1991): 193-211 (Canvas); Meir Sternberg, "Biblical Poetics and Sexual Politics: From Reading to Counterreading," *JBL* 111 (1992): 463-88 (Canvas).

**Wed 3/5** *The Joseph Narrative, Part One*
Assignment: Gen 37-41; Richard Clifford, "Genesis 38: Its Contribution to the Jacob Story," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 519-32 (Canvas); Joel Kaminsky, "Reclaiming a Theology of Election: Favoritism and the Joseph Story," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 31 (2004): 135-52 (Canvas); Joel Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 34-44 (Course Pack); Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, 120-22 (Course Pack).

**Wed 3/12** *The Joseph Narrative, Part Two*
Assignment: Gen 42-50. Meir Sternberg, "Curiosity and the Dynamics of Retrospection," in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 283-308 (Course Pack)

## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. *Completion of reading assignments*. They should be completed prior to the class on which they are assigned.

B. *Attendance and participation in class*. I expect you to arrive on time to each class. Since absence and tardiness, even when they are "excused," diminish your participation in class, they will likewise diminish your participation grade. Moreover, because your classmates and I deserve your full attention, I expect you to keep food and smart phones packed away during class time (not counting the fifteen-minute break). If you take notes on a laptop, I expect you to refrain from social networking during class time. Any of these activities will diminish your participation grade.

C. *Completion of weekly one-page papers*. For each class you will be expected to turn in a one-page paper – literally, a single sheet with text only on one side; I will not read or grade writing on the back of the sheet or on a separate sheet – with **two** paragraphs. In the **first** I want you to respond to a biblical passage that I have chosen from the week's assigned readings. In the **second** paragraph I want you to engage with the secondary literature. Choose something you found especially significant, insightful, challenging, or problematic, etc., and respond to it. These papers will be graded based on how thoughtfully you engage with the biblical text and the assigned reading for that class. **One-page papers that are late will not be accepted but will receive a zero**.

D. *Completion of a final paper*. This 8-10 page paper will be an exegesis of a biblical text from a list that I will supply. (Students may propose to study a text not on the list. Such a proposal should be typed, double-spaced, about a page long, and it should persuade me that your proposed passage is the only biblical text that will enable you to write a successful paper. Proposals must be submitted to me by January 22. Unpersuasive proposals will not be approved.)

The term "exegesis" refers to "the process of careful, analytical study of biblical passages undertaken in order to produce useful interpretations of those passages…The goal of exegesis is to know neither less nor more than the information actually contained in the passage" (D. Stuart, "Exegesis," in *ABD* II, p. 682). A handout with more information on how to approach this paper, a list of biblical passages available for study, and a rubric will be distributed separately. Additionally, it may be helpful to consult M. Gorman's *Elements of*

*Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (rev. and exp.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009).

**The Final Paper is due to me by 9:50 am on Friday, March 21, which is the end of our assigned exam period. Late papers will be docked ten points per day until it is turned in.**

## VI. ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be calculated thus:

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| Weekly Paper Average | 40% |
| Participation | 20% |
| Final Paper | 40% |
| Final Grade | 100% |

Letter grades will be determined thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | 93 – 100 |
| A- | 90 – 92.99 |
| B+ | 87 – 89.99 |
| B | 83 – 86.99 |
| B- | 80 – 82.99 |
| C+ | 77 – 79.99 |
| C | 73 – 76.99 |
| C- | 70 – 72.99 |
| D+ | 67 – 69.99 |
| D | 63 – 66.99 |
| D- | 60 – 62.99 |
| F | < 60 |

## VII. ADDITIONAL POLICIES

- Academic Honesty (including plagiarism): The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the academic policy regarding Academic Integrity as indicated on the Seattle University Registrar website, as noted in the box below.
- Disability: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, please see related note in the box below.

University Resources and Policies

Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/)
  - *(This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)*
- Academic Integrity Tutorial *(found on Canvas and SU Online)*

Academic Policies on Registrar website (https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy *(only for those professional programs to which it applies)*

Notice for students concerning Disabilities

*If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.*

Students in the Pastoral Counseling degree submit papers with citations in APA (American Psychological Association) format delineated by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. All other students submit papers with citations in CMS (Chicago Manual of Style) format delineated by *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers.* The basic rules for these style formats may be found at the following websites:

- **APA:** http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/ (Diana Hacker website/social sciences)
- **CMS** http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/ (Diana Hacker website/history)
  *or* http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (CMS website)

At times students need assistance with the writing process itself. In addition to face-to-face assistance offered by Seattle University's Writing Center (McGoldrick Learning Commons 2nd Floor), two websites offer online assistance with writing.

- **Seattle University Writing Center:** http://www.seattleu.edu/writingcenter/ (Resources)
- **Purdue Writing Center:** http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/