

PENTATEUCH – STMA 526

Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry
Winter Quarter 2012 • Hunthausen 110 • Tuesday 9-11:50 am

Instructor: Andrew R. Davis, Ph.D.
Office Hrs: Monday 1-3 pm (and by appointment)

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will examine the first five books of the Bible, namely the Pentateuch (or Torah). Our primary interest in this course will be in the theologies of these books and their significance for the Jewish and Christian traditions, though we will also discuss the use of critical methodologies, such as form criticism, source criticism, and redaction criticism. By the end of this course, I hope you will have a better understanding of the God who is revealed in these books, an appreciation of the Pentateuch's narrative artistry, and more familiarity with the tools of biblical exegesis. I also hope you will have found creative new ways to infuse your spiritual life and ministry with these important books.

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. An annotated Bible, such as *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*; *The Lutheran Study Bible*.
 - Avoid: *The King James Version*; *The Message*; *The Living Bible*; *The Way*.
2. Terrence E. Fretheim, *The Pentateuch* (Abingdon, 1996).
3. A. Bellis and J. Kaminsky, eds., *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (= *JCTHS*; Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).
4. Course Pack. Available at SuperCopy (<http://www.seattleu.edu/repro>).

B. Recommended

1. Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Eisenbrauns, 2006).
2. W. Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (rev. ed.; Union for Reformed Judaism, 2005).
3. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (Norton, 2004).

IV. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

- Jan. 10 **Introduction the Pentateuch**
Recommended: T. Linafelt, “Prolegomena to Meaning, or, What’s ‘Literary’ about the Torah,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 62-79; C. Houtman, “Pentateuchal Criticism,” in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:257-62.
- Jan. 17 **The Pentateuch, the Bible and Theology**
Assignment: Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 19-63; W. Brueggemann, “Biblical Theology Appropriately Postmodern,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 97-108; T. Frymer-Kensky, “The Emergence of Jewish Biblical Theologies,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 109-121; R. Rendtorff, “A Christian Approach to the Theology of Hebrew Scriptures,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 137-51; J. Pixley, “Christian Biblical Theology and the Struggle against Oppression,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 173-77.

Recommended: J. Levenson, “Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology,” in *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament and Historical Criticism* (pp. 33-61).
- Jan. 24 **The Book of Genesis – Part 1**
Assignment: Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 67-84; R. Clifford, “The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,” *Theological Studies* 46 (1985): 507-23; Jerome Walsh, “Genesis 2:4b-3:24: A Synchronic Approach,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 161-77; K. Swenson, “Care and Keeping East of Eden: Gen 4:1-16 in Light of Gen 2-3,” *Interpretation* 60 (2006): 373-84; Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, “Characterizations, Comedy, and Catastrophe: Divine/human relations, Emotions, and Rules of Law,” in *Genesis* (Fortress, 2010), 221-46.

Recommended: J. Levenson, “The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (pp. 143-69);
- Jan. 31 **The Book of Genesis – Part 2**
Assignment: Genesis 12-36; Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 84-100; J. Levenson, “Abusing Abraham: Traditions, Religious Histories, and Modern Misinterpretations,” *Judaism* 47 (1998): 259-77; T. Fretheim, “Which Blessing Does Isaac Give Jacob?” in *JCTHS*, pp. 279-91; D. Marcus, “Traditional Jewish Responses to the Question of Deceit in Genesis 27,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 293-305; Phyllis Trible, “Hagar: The Desolation of Rejection,” in *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Fortress, 1984), pp. 9-35.

Recommended: M. Fishbane, “The Jacob Cycle,” in *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York, 1979), pp. 40-62; A. Davis, “Jacob in the Hebrew Bible and African American Religious Tradition.”
- Feb. 7 **The Book of Exodus – Part 1**
Assignment: Exodus 1-15; Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 101-20; E. Fuchs, “A Jewish-Feminist Reading of Exodus 1-2,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 307-26; J. Levenson,

“Liberation Theology and the Exodus,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 215-30; J. Pixley, “History and Particularity in Reading the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Jon D. Levenson,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 231-37; J. Levenson, “The Perils of Engaged Scholarship: A Rejoinder to Jorge Pixley,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 239-46; J. Collins, “The Exodus and Biblical Theology,” in *JCTHS*, pp.247-61; J. Levenson, “The Exodus and Biblical Theology: A Rejoinder to John J. Collins,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 263-75.

Feb. 14

The Book of Exodus – Part 2

Assignment: Exodus 16-24, 32-34; J. Kaminsky, “Paradise Regained: Rabbinic Reflections on Israel at Sinai,” in *JCTHS*, 15-43; B. Schramm, “Exodus 19 and Its Christian Appropriation,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 327-52; M. Brettler, “The Many Faces of God in Exodus 19,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 253-67; J. Clinton McCann, “Exodus 32:1-14,” *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 277-81; Jon Michael Spencer, “Promises and Passages: The Exodus Story Told through the Spirituals,” in *Protest and Praise: Sacred Music of Black Religion* (Fortress, 1990), 3-34.

Feb. 21

The Book of Leviticus

Assignment: Leviticus 1-16, 19; Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 121-36; Frank Gorman, “Priestly World View and Priestly Ritual,” in *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (Sheffield, 1990), 39-60; Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, “Menstrual Blood, Semen, and Discharge: The Fluid Symbolism of the Human Body,” in *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Indiana University Press, 1990), 177-94; William Gilders, “The $\square a \square \square \bar{a}$ ’t Blood Manipulations in P,” in *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 109-41; Ellen Davis, “A Wholesome Materiality: Reading Leviticus,” in *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 80-100, 197-202.

Feb. 28

The Book of Numbers

Assignment: Numbers 10-25; Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp. 137-51; S. Sperling, “The Law and the Prophet,” in *JCTHS*, pp. 123-36; Benjamin Sommer, “Reflecting on Moses: The Redaction of Numbers 11,” *JBL* 118 (1999): 601-24; Pamela Reis, “Numbers XI: Seeing Moses Plain,” *VT* 55 (2005): 207-31; John Levison, “Prophecy in Ancient Israel: The Case of the Ecstatic Elders,” *CBQ* 65 (2003): 503-21.

Mar. 6

The Book of Deuteronomy

Assignment: Deuteronomy 4:44-28:68, 34; Fretheim, *The Pentateuch*, pp.152-70; Michael Wyschogrod, “The ‘Shema Israel’ in Judaism and the New Testament,” in *Roots of our Common Faith* (World Council of Churches, 1984), 23-32; S. Dean McBride, “The Yoke of the Kingdom: An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5,” *Interpretation* 27 (1973): 273-306; Patrick Miller, *Deuteronomy* (John Knox Press, 1990), 42-52; Norbert Lohfink, “The ‘Small Credo’ of Deuteronomy 26:5-9,” in *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy* (Fortress, 1994), 265-89; Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Fortress, 1997), 209-12.

V. 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) with **two** paragraphs. In the **first** I want you to respond to a biblical passage that I will choose 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 the assigned reading for that class. **Late one-page papers will not be accepted but will receive a zero.**
- D. *Completion of a final paper.* This 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 no later than January 24. 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, including the list of biblical passages, will be distributed later in the course. 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 Second Paper is due to me by 9:50 am on Thursday, March 15, which is the end of our assigned exam period. Late papers will be docked ten points per day until it is turned in.

VI. CITATION FORMAT

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/>

VII. SPECIAL NEEDS

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 discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, 206-296-5740.

VIII. ACADEMIC HONESTY

The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook (see the Seattle University website).

IX. ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be calculated thus:

Weekly Paper Average	40%	A	93 – 100
Participation	20%	A-	90 – 92.99
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>	B+	87 – 89.99
Final Grade	100%	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

Letter grades will be determined thus: