

Hebrew Bible The Book of Genesis

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| Professor | Daniel R. Driver, PhD | Course | Version 2.1.3 |
| Phone | 902-425-7051 | Meets | Fridays |
| Email | ddriver@asttheology.ns.ca | Time | 9:00–11:30 AM |
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1 Course Description

From the Academic Calendar: In the modern period an enormous amount has been written about the genesis of Genesis, the history *behind* the first book of the Bible. Prior to the critical era, however, perhaps even more has been written in commentary upon the Book of Genesis, forming a history *before* the text (the history of the book's reception). These two approaches to the history of Genesis can seem radically different. Indeed, some commentators today still hold that the dawn of the historical-critical era marks a definitive break with traditional interpretation, for good or for ill. Then again, others now seek to combine what can be known about worlds behind and before the Book of Genesis into a more comprehensive theological vision. In this course we will explore histories of Genesis in parallax, seeking above all to let them shape our understanding of the Book of Genesis as a core part of Jewish and Christian scripture from antiquity down through the present day.

2 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to: remember and summarize events from the Genesis narratives in detail, locating them approximately by chapter; name and differentiate the most important ancestors (patriarchs and matriarchs) of Israel; explain different major models for the interpretation of Genesis, illustrating them with particular texts; use a variety of commentaries on Genesis from a number of different historical eras; distinguish text and interpretation by focusing on the afterlives of Adam and Eve; analyze claims made by different faith communities on the legacy of Abraham; critique specific arguments put forward by scholars about the meaning of select parts of Genesis; generate questions relevant to the interpretation of short passages from Genesis; construct an original argument in aid of the exposition of short passages from Genesis.

3 Required Texts & Materials

The following texts are required. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase their own copies. Library copies that are not reference works will be placed on a 2-hour reserve.

- [NRSV] M. D. Coogan, ed. *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: NRSV*. 4th ed. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0195289602.
- [Anderson] Gary A. Anderson. *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. ISBN 978-0664226992.
- [Levenson] Jon D. Levenson. *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0691163550.
- [Provan] Iain Provan. *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. ISBN 978-0802872371.

An acceptable alternative study Bible is the NJPS: Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). A reference copy is available in the library, and it is well worth consulting.

4 Supplementary Texts

Supplementary readings will be recommended throughout the semester. Excerpts from this literature may either be placed on reserve or made available for download through the course website. Outstanding students will also pursue leads on their own, making maximum use of notes and bibliographies in the required textbooks.

Major modern commentaries on Genesis include:

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| M. M. Kalisch (1858) | O. Procksch (³ 1924) | G. von Rad (ET ² 1972) |
| J. P. Lange (ET 1868) | B. Jacob (1934) | R. Davidson (1973) |
| F. Delitzsch (⁵ 1899) | A. Richardson (1953) | C. Westermann (1974) |
| A. Dillmann (⁶ 1892) | A. Clamer (1953) | B. Vawter (1977) |
| H. Holzinger (1898) | U. Cassuto (1961–64) | N. Sarna (1989) |
| S. R. Driver (1904) | E. A. Speiser (1964) | J. Ebach [37–50, HthKAT] (2007) |
| J. Skinner (1910) | W. Zimmerli (³ 1967, 76) | T. Longman (2016) |
| H. Gunkel (⁴ 1917) | D. Kidner (1967) | C. Dohmen [1–11, KB] (2017) |

Commentaries on Genesis in the AST library include:

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| Targums: BS 709.2 B5 1987 VV. 1A, 1B, 6 (c. 150-?) | Leibowitz, Nehama: BS 1235.3 L413 1981 |
| Didymus the Blind: BS 1235 D4913 2016 (d. 398) | Wenham, Gordon : BS 491.2 W67 1982 |
| Augustine of Hippo: BS 1235 A8413 1991 (d. 430) | Brueggemann, Walter: BS 1235.3 B78 (1982) |
| Bede, the Venerable: BS 1235 B43 2008 (d. 735) | Maher, Michael: BS 1235.3 M346 1982 |
| ACCS, Genesis 1–11: BS 1235.3 G46 2001 | Westermann, Claus: BS 1235.3 W43213 1986, 1987, 1994 |
| ACCS, Genesis 12–50: BS 1235.53 G46 2002 | Sarna, Nahum: BS 1235.3 S325 1989 |
| RCS, Genesis 1–11: BS 1235.53 G455 2012 | Hamilton, Victor: BS 1235.3 H32 1990, 1995 |
| Luther, Martin: BR 330 E5 1955 VV.1–8 (d. 1546) | Scullion, John: BS 1235.3 S37 1992 |
| Calvin, John: BS 1235 C293 1948 (d. 1564) | Fox, Everett: BS 1223 A3 F68 1995 |
| Patrick, Simon: BS 1235 P36 1695 | Hamilton, Victor: BS 1235.3 H323 1995 |
| Henry, Matthew: BS 490 H4 1961 (d. 1714) | Hartley, John: BS 1235.3 H37 2000 |
| Hershon, Paul Isaac: BS 1235 H47 (1883) | Towner, Sibley: BS 1235.3 T69 2001 |
| Delitzsch, Franz: BS 1235 D4 (1888) | Walton, John: BS 1235.53 W35 2001 |
| Skinner, John: BS 1235 S45 1917, 1963 (1930) | Cotter, David: BS 1235.52 C68 2003 |
| Richardson, Alan: BS 1235 R66 1959 | Briscoe, Stuart: BS 1151.2 C66 2004 |
| Cassuto, Umberto: BS 1235.3 C3 (1961) | McKeown, James: BS 1235.53 M35 2008 |
| Herbert, Arthur: BS 1235.3 H4 (1962) | Arnold, Bill: BS 1235.53 A76 2009 |
| Speiser, E. A.: BS 1233 S64 1964 | Goldingay, John: BS 1235.53 G65 2010 |
| Kidner, Derek: BS 1235.3 K47 (1967) | Reno, Russell: BS 1235.53 R46 2010 |
| von Rad, Gerhard: BS 1235.3 R3213 1972 | Cook, Joan: BS 1235.53 C66 2011 |
| Plaut, Gunther: BS 1225.3 P55 V. 1 (1974) | De La Torre, Miguel: BS 1235.53 D4 2011 |
| Vawter, Bruce: BS 1235.3 V38 1977 | Coleson, Joseph: BS 1235.53 C64 2012 |
| Davidson, Robert: BS 1235.3 D3 1973, 1979 | Longman, Tremper: BS 1235.53 L66 2016 |

5 Course Outline

We will adhere to the schedule in [Table 1](#) as closely as possible, though the professor reserves the right to adjust it to suit the needs of the class.

| §. Primary | Anderson | Levenson | Provan | Date |
|---|----------|----------|--------|---------|
| 1. Genesis 49 | | | | 6 Jan. |
| 2. Genesis 9 | Intro–1 | | 1–3 | 13 Jan. |
| 3. Genesis 1 | 2–3 | | 4 | 19 Jan. |
| 4. Genesis 2 | 4–5 | | 5 | 27 Jan. |
| 5. Genesis 3 | 6–7 | | 6 | 3 Feb. |
| 6. Genesis 4–5 | 8–End | | 7 | 10 Feb. |
| ☞ First paper is <i>due</i> at the start of class seven | | | | |
| 7. Genesis 6–11 | | Intro | 8 | 17 Feb. |
| ~. No Class: Term Break (Monday to Friday) | | | | 24 Feb. |
| 8. Genesis 12–15 | | 1–2 | | 3 Mar. |
| 9. Genesis 16–25 | | 3–4 | 9 | 10 Mar. |
| 10. Genesis 26–36 | | 5 | 10 | 17 Mar. |
| 11. Genesis 37–45 | | 6 | 11 | 24 Mar. |
| ☞ Second paper is <i>due</i> at the start of class twelve | | | | |
| 12. Genesis 46–50 | | | | 31 Mar. |
| ☞ End of Term: Final marks are due for all courses | | | | 12 Apr. |

Table 1: Schedule of Readings

See the AST website for a list of other **important dates**.

6 Evaluation and Grade Structure

1. The professor will set **reading prompts** throughout the semester, as often as once a week. Prompts will consist of questions drawn from the secondary reading, and so presuppose that students have read the assigned material carefully. Points may be deducted if it becomes evident that the reading has not been taken seriously.
2. Every other week, students will lead **seminars** on single chapters from the Book of Genesis. They should take the lead by briefly outlining the chapter in question, situating it relative to the rest of Genesis, and reporting on their research into part of that chapter. Then, in the balance of the time, they should helping the class elaborate, reflect on, test, challenge, or extend a central idea or two. Students are encouraged to align their seminar preparations with their choice of texts for their exegetical paper.
3. A major **exegetical paper** will facilitate an extended exercise in biblical interpretation. It should focus on a short passage from Genesis, should interact with the secondary readings and further research into the passage in question, and should be 3–4,000 words long. It is due at the start of the last class.

The breakdown for the semester's total work is shown in [Table 2](#).

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| Reading Prompts | 30% |
| Student Seminars | 30% |
| Exegetical Paper | 40% |

Table 2: Distribution of Grades

AST's **Academic Calendar** provides guidelines and detailed criteria for academic assessment. Marks are assigned by letter grade using these benchmarks. Note that, at AST, a grade of "C" is deemed "Unsatisfactory."

7 Other Course Policy

Late work will not be accepted, except in genuinely extenuating circumstances.

Essay submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced, and free from error. In this course they should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd Edition (refer to the free, online **Student Supplement**). **Plagiarism**, if **detected**, will result in failure of the course.

Students should request permission to record a class. If permission is granted, I stipulate that the recording be for personal use only. It may not be shared or distributed.

Finally, as **cognitive psychologists have demonstrated**, "laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." I therefore encourage the conscientious use of laptops, tablets, and other technology in the classroom. Please do your part to foster an environment of open dialogue by honouring the presence of your classmates.