



TYNDALE
University College

RLGS 3213: TEXT & INTERPRETATION—GENESIS
Winter 2009; Wednesdays, 6:30–9:30 PM; Room 1003

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Class cancellations due to inclement weather or illness will be announced/posted here.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Text & Interpretation: Each course in this series examines the literary structure, narrative development, authorial purpose and interpretation of a book in the Hebrew Bible in its historical context, with an effort to discover the continuing relevance of that book in the development of Judeo-Christian theological understanding. Prerequisites: RLGS 1013 and RLGS 1023.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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 had been written upon the Book of Genesis—forming a history *before* the text, the history of its reception. These two perspectives can seem so radically different that one is tempted to say that modern scholars have re-written the traditional narrative altogether. And for some the dawn of the historical-critical era marks a decisive break with the tradition. But others have lately sought to combine what can be known about these two perspectives on Genesis in history, behind and before the text. We will pursue something of this parallax.

The required texts address various aspects of this challenge. They will be contextualized and augmented by lectures. Additionally, we will become familiar with diverse interpretations of select chapters in Genesis by drawing upon commentators from a range of historical epochs.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Gary Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).
2. R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992; repr. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

3. Saint Augustine, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (trans. Edmund Hill; Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002). We will read the third of Augustine's official commentaries on Genesis. Note the assigned introductions by Michael Fiedrowicz.

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

1. David Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," *Theology Today* 37/1 (1980): 27–38 [Get it here: <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/search/index-browse.htm>].
2. John L. Thompson, "Introduction", pages 1–11 in *Reading the Bible With the Dead: What You Can Learn from the History of Exegesis That You Can't Learn from Exegesis Alone* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Note also the "Finding Guide" to English translations of commentaries before 1600.
3. James Barr, "Why the World was Created in 4004 B.C.: Archbishop Ussher and Biblical Chronology," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 67/2 (1985): 575–608.
4. Hermann Gunkel, "Introduction: The Legends of Genesis," pages vii–lxxxvi in *Genesis* (trans. Mark Biddle; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997 [1901]).
5. Alan Jacobs, "The African Bishop" and "Some Dreadful Thing No Doubt," pages 23–66 in *Original Sin: A Cultural History* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2008).
6. Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Ad Litteram: How Augustine, Calvin, and Barth Read the "Plain Sense" of Genesis 1–3* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).
7. Nathan MacDonald, "The *Imago Dei* and Election: Reading Genesis 1:26–28 and Old Testament Scholarship with Karl Barth," *IJST* 10/3 (2008): 303–327.
8. Peter Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

V. COURSE EVALUATION:

1. Each class will commence with a **reading quiz**. These are designed to ensure that you have read the assigned material carefully. Quizzes may not be made up in the case of absence, though in special cases they may be taken in advance.
2. Also for each class, you must produce and hand in a sheet of **notes summarizing your research** into a passage from Genesis, typically a single chapter. These notes are to be typed, in a standard type-face, and should be between one half and one full page in length (500 words max). At the top they should also clearly state your name, the date, the passage in question, and the commentator used. Note that your work will be circulated to all classmates after the workshop portion of each class.
3. In the first half of the semester students will compose a **midterm essay** on one of the chapters we have workshopped up to that point: Genesis 1, 2, 3 or 6. You are to consult all the perspectives brought to bear on the chapter of your choice, and to incorporate as many as are expedient for your discussion (no less than five). The aim of digging deeper will be facilitated in part by the preliminary researches of your classmates (the notes under item 2 are for your consultation here). You will need to read more widely on your own, however; the seminar and the notes of your classmates form a starting point, but they will not be sufficient in themselves. The essays are due Fri, 6 March at 12:00 midnight. Late penalty: a letter grade per day, including weekends.

4. The **final exam** will be held during exam week, Wednesday 22 April – Wednesday 29 April 2009 (including Sat.), as scheduled by the Registrar. It will either be a take-home essay analogous to the midterm essay, or it will feature essay questions pertaining to the chapters from Genesis covered after week 7, namely, Genesis 12, 15, 16, 22, 26, 32 and 39. Details to follow.
5. The semester's work will be weighted as follows, though the instructor reserves the right to adjust the balance as necessary:

Reading Quizzes	25%
Research Note Sheets	25%
Midterm Essay	25%
Final Essay / Exam	25%

Students are responsible to keep a backup print copy of all assignments.

On writing: Good writing, like good reading, is a skill that must be honed in the practice. It takes work. It also involves revision: the *reworking* of first and second attempts. Alan Jacobs underscores the difference between *editing*—tidying up around the house—and *revising*—the remodeling of your house. There are a number of excellent resources available to help you with this task, and I strongly urge you to use them. One is Tyndale's Writing Centre. Others are freely available online. Jacobs, for instance, lists a number of questions to which you should have good answers. I augment them here:

Do you have a thesis? What is it?
 Do your sub-theses support it? Do you explain how?
 Are your paragraphs well-organized?
 Are they healthy (supported, well-illustrated) and not anemic?
 Do you know what a comma splice is and how to avoid it?
 Is your writing clear and vivid?

For more, see Prof. Jacobs' page, here: http://ayjay.jottit.com/on_revising
 Or go here: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/bedfordresearcher/links/writingprocess.asp#revising>
 Also excellent, and currently being updated: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Remember, Tyndale offers free tutoring: <http://www.tyndale.ca/universitycollege/writingcentre>

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR WORKSHOPS:

Each week, students should focus on a commentator from the list below (or elsewhere, by arrangement) and give a short (5 minutes max.) account of his exegesis of the chapter in question. Present on the basis of your **study notes**—item 2 under “Course Evaluation.” You will get the chance to work with three different commentators over the semester (three to four weeks each), preferably in three different major periods. For those with the language skills, registering notes on Hebrew and Greek texts is also an option; cf. the Targums, too. The aim is to gain as much insight into the message of scripture by close attention to text, including translations, and commentary.

Versions

1. Masoretic Text (MT): Kittel, Rudolf. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997 [Ref BS 715 1984].

2. The Septuagint (LXX) is available in two modern editions: (1) as part of the Rahlfs edition [Ref BS 741.R3 2006], and (2) the Göttingen critical edition. A recent English translation based on Rahlfs is online at: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>
3. Vulgate/Jerome: *Biblia Sacra Latina ex Biblia Sacra Vulgat* [Ref BS 75 1800].
4. Targumim: *The Targum Onkelos to Genesis* (trans. B. Grossfeld; Wilmington, Del. : M. Glazier, 1988) [Ref BS 709 .2 .A72 v.6 1988]; *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (trans. M. McNamara; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992) [Ref BS 709 .2 .A72 v.1A 1992]; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (trans. M. Maher; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992) [Ref BS 709 .2 .A72 v.1B 1992].
Older translations of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Onkelos on Genesis are available online: http://targum.info/?page_id=8
5. Peters, Melvin K. H., *A critical edition of the Coptic (Bohairic) Pentateuch* (Atlanta, GA : Scholars Press, 1983) [BS 1224 .C6 P47 v.1 1985].

Commentaries

A. Early Church / Synagogue

1. Origen (c 185–254), *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (trans. R. E. Heine; Washington, DC: Catholic UP, 1982) [BS 1235 .O7 1982].
2. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373), *Commentary on Genesis* in FC 91 (trans. Edward G. Mathews, Jr.; Washington, D.C.: Catholic UP, 1994: 59–213) [BR 65 .E632 E5].
3. Basil of Caesarea (330–379), *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* [Genesis 1–11] (trans. B. Jackson in NPNF2-8 and also by A. C. Way in FC 46 [1963]: 3–150); the older translation is online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf208.viii.i.html>
4. Gregory of Nyssa (c 335–394), *On the Making of Man* (trans. W. Moore in NPNF2–5:387–427); online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf205.x.ii.i.html>
5. John Chrysostom (347–407), *Homilies on Genesis* (trans. R. C. Hill; 3 vols; Washington, D.C.: Catholic UP, 1986–1992) [BS 1235 .C42].
6. Jerome (c 347–420), *Hebrew questions on Genesis* (trans. C.T.R. Hayward; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) [BS 1235 .J4713 1995].
7. Augustine (354–430) — 3 commentaries in required textbook (1 and 2 are options).
8. *Genesis rabbah: the Judaic commentary to the book of Genesis* (trans. Jacob Neusner; 3 vols; Atlanta, GA : Scholars Press, 1985) [BM 517 .M65 A3 1985].

B. Medieval

9. Bede (673–735), *On Genesis* (trans. C. Kendall; Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2008) [BS 1235 .B43 2008].
10. Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam, c 1080–1160), *Commentary on Genesis* (trans. M. I. Lockshin; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989) [].
11. Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), *The twelve patriarchs; The mystical ark; Book three of The Trinity* (trans. G. A. Zinn; New York: Paulist, 1979) [BV 5080 .R5513 1979].
12. Robert Grosseteste (c 1175–1253), *On the six days of creation: a translation of the Hexaemeron* (trans. R. Crossetest; Oxford: OUP, 1996) [B 765 .G73 H4913 1996].

C. Reformation

13. Martin Luther (1483–1546), *Luther's commentary on Genesis* (trans. J. Theodore Mueller; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) [BS 1235 .L79 1958].
See also: J.S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament interpretation from Augustine to the young Luther* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1969) [BR 333.5.B5 P7 1969].
14. John Calvin (1509-1564), *A commentary on Genesis* (trans. John King; London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965) [BS 1235 .C34 1965]. Also online: <http://www.ccel.org/> or <http://www.thirdmill.org/books/calvin.asp>
See also STC 4393, 4440 and 4457 in [Ref Z 2002.P77 1976]

D. Early Modern / Critical

15. J. P. Lange, *Genesis: or, the first book of Moses* (trans. T. Lewis and A. Gosman; New York: Charles Scribner, 1915 [1868]) [BS 1235 .L36 1915].
16. F. Delitzsch, *A new commentary on Genesis* (trans. Sophia Taylor; 2 vols; Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1978) [BS 1235 .D44 1978].
17. S. R. Driver, *The book of Genesis; with a new appendix by G. R. Driver* (London: Methuen & Co., 1926) [BS 1235 .D75 1926] [1920 ed: BS 1235 .D75 1920].
18. J. Skinner, *A critical and exegetical commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930) [Ref BS 491 .I6 v.1 1930].
19. H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (trans. M. Biddle; foreword by Ernest W. Nicholson; Macon, GA: Mercer UP, 1997 [1901]) [BS 1235 .3 .G86 1997].
See also *The legends of Genesis* (trans. W. H. Carruth; Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1901) [BS 1235 .G813 1901] and *Creation and chaos in the primeval era and the eschaton: a religio-historical study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12* (trans. K. William Whitney, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006 [1895]) [BS 1235 .52 .G8613].

E. Modern

20. B. Jacob, *The first book of the Bible: Genesis* (trans. Ernest I. Jacob and Walter Jacob; New York: Ktav , 1974) [BS 1235 .J2 1974].
21. U. Cassuto, *A commentary on the book of Genesis* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961–1964) [BS 1235 .3 .C3 1961].
22. T. Fretheim, *Creation, fall, and flood: studies in Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1969) [BS 1235 .2 .F7 1969].
23. G. von Rad, *Genesis: a commentary* (trans. John H. Marks; London: SCM, 1972) [BS 1235 .3 .R3213 1972].
24. C. Westermann, *Genesis: a commentary* (trans. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984–1986); 3 vols: *Genesis 1-11* [BS 1235 .3 .W432 v.1 1984], *Genesis 12–36* [BS 1235 .3 .W432 v.2 1985] and *Genesis 37–50* [BS 1235 .3 .W432 v.3 1986].
See also *Genesis: a practical commentary* (trans. David Green; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) [BS 1235 .3 .W4313 1987].
25. N. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989 [1970]) [Ref BS 1151 .2 .J6 v.1 1989].

26. W. Brueggemann, *Genesis: a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981) [BS 1235 .3 .B78 1981].
27. R. Alter, *Genesis: translation and commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996) [BS 1235 .3 .A78 1996]
28. B. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: a commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) [BS 1235 .53 .W34 2001].
29. **Want to recommend somebody else?** You may make a suggestion of your own here, but it will require my prior approval. The commentary must be sufficiently academic, or have significant theological interest, to pass muster.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

		<u>Secondary Readings</u>	<u>Seminar Assignment</u>
Week 1	14 Jan	Intro and Rationale for the Course	
Week 2	21 Jan	Steinmetz; Thompson; (bonus: Barr)	Genesis 1–50, <i>*outline due*</i>
Week 3	28 Jan	Anderson, Preface–Ch 1	Genesis 1
Week 4	4 Feb	Anderson, Chs 2–4	Genesis 2
Week 5	11 Feb	Anderson, Chs 6–8	Genesis 3
Week 6	18 Feb	Anderson, Ch 5 & Afterword; Gunkel	Genesis 6
Week 7	25 Feb	READING WEEK (23–27 February)	
Week 8	4 Mar	Moberly, Ch 1; Jacobs; Fiedrowicz	Genesis 12
Week 9	11 Mar	Moberly, Ch 2; Augustine, I–II	Genesis 15
Week 10	18 Mar	Moberly, Ch 3; Augustine, III–IV	Genesis 16
Week 11	25 Mar	Moberly, Ch 4; Augustine, V–VI	Genesis 22
Week 12	1 Apr	Moberly, Ch 5; Augustine, VII–VIII	Genesis 26 (and read 20)
Week 13	8 Apr	Moberly, Ch 6; Augustine, IX–X	Genesis 32
Week 14	15 Apr	Augustine, XI–XII; (bonus: MacDonald)	Genesis 39 (and read 37–50)
Week 15	TBA	READING DAYS (20–21 April): The final exam will be held during exam week, 22–29 April 2009 (incl. Sat.), as scheduled by the Registrar.	