

BSTH 310

The Pentateuch

Instructor	Daniel R. Driver, PhD	Course	Version 1.0
Phone	416.226.6620 x2201	Meets	Mondays & Wednesdays
Email	ddriver@tyndale.ca	Time	1:00–2:20 PM
Office	Ballyconnor 1088	Room	Ballyconnor 2082
Hours	Mon. & Wed., 2:30–4:30 PM	Website	danieldriver.com

Commuter Hotline Class cancellations due to inclement weather or illness will be announced on the commuter hotline at 416.226.6620 x2187. Alternately, weather cancellation information is posted at tyndale.ca/weather.

MyTyndale.ca This course may have materials stored on its website, such as handouts or readings that may be needed in order to complete assignments. Students are responsible for checking these course pages on a regular basis. Here, too, students are able to view their grades throughout the semester. For more information see Section 7.3.2, below.

Mail Students are responsible for information communicated through their campus mailboxes and student e-mail accounts. A mailbox directory hangs beside the mailboxes. For more information contact the Registrar's office.

1 Course Description

From the Academic Calendar: A survey of the first five books of the Bible, also called the five books of Moses or the Law (Torah) in Judaism. Examination of the literary character of the material will include narrative and legal aspects, as well as the question of literary formation. Prerequisites: BSTH 101, 102, 201.

2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should have read the Pentateuch carefully, meaning that they understand many particular passages, the outline of each of its five books, and the general shape of the whole work. They should be able to give robust, informed answers to two questions in particular: “Who is Moses?” and “What is biblical Law?” In addressing these matters students should be able to identify and analyze parallels in the Pentateuch, especially by drawing on standard models that account for the origin and purpose of the books. Finally, they should be able to distinguish modern, critical assessment of the Pentateuch from its value in Jewish and Christian antiquity.

3 Required Texts & Materials

All required texts are available for purchase in the Tyndale Bookstore, and [online](#).

- [Alter] Robert Alter. *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2004 (paperback 2008). [ISBN 978-0393333930](#)
- [B&M] John Barton and John Muddiman, eds. *The Pentateuch*. The Oxford Bible Commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (updated 2010). [ISBN 978-0199580248](#)
- [B&L] Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr, eds. *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. [ISBN 978-0801039126](#)
- [Gregory] Gregory of Nyssa. *The Life of Moses*. HarperCollins Spiritual Classics. Translated by A.J. Malherbe and E. Ferguson. New York: HarperOne, 2006. [ISBN 978-0060754648](#)

4 Supplementary Texts

A foundational work in the history of modern Pentateuchal scholarship is Julius Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1882, ET 1885). The English translation is available for free on Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4732>

5 Evaluation

5.1 Grade Structure for BSTH 310

- Each week of class will typically include a **reading quiz**. These are designed to ensure that you have read the assigned material carefully. Quizzes given in class may not be made up in the case of absence. Online quizzes are open book, but they are timed, and only a single attempt is allowed.
- A **midterm paper** is due at the start of the first class after reading week (24 February). It must be a 4000 to 5000 word answer to the question: **Who is Moses?**
- A **final paper** is due at the start of the exam period as schedule by the Registrar (see 6.2). It must be a 6000 to 7000 word answer to the question: **What is biblical Law?**

The breakdown for the semester’s total work is as follows:

+	90–100	4.00
A	85–89	4.00
–	80–84	3.70
+	77–79	3.30
B	73–76	3.00
–	70–72	2.70
+	67–69	2.30
C	63–66	2.00
–	60–62	1.70
+	57–59	1.30
D	53–56	1.00
–	50–52	0.70
F	0–49	0.00

Reading Quizzes	30%
Midterm Paper	30%
Final Paper	40%

Table 1: Distribution of Grades

5.2 Grading System at Tyndale

Tyndale University College provides these benchmarks for summative assessment. I may furnish more detailed rubrics for particular assignments.

A, B – Excellent, Good These grades are earned only when evidence indicates that the student has consistently maintained above average progress in the subject. Sufficient evidence may involve such qualities as creativity, originality, thoroughness, responsibility and consistency.

C – Satisfactory This grade means that the student has fulfilled the requirements of the subject to the satisfaction of the instructor. These requirements include the understanding of subject matter, adequacy and promptness in the preparation of assignments and participation in the work of the class.

D – Poor This grade indicates that the accuracy and content of work submitted meets only the minimal standards of the instructor. Consistent performance at this level is considered inadequate for graduation.

F – Failing Work submitted is inadequate. Attitude, performance and attendance are considered insufficient for a passing grade.

6 Policy on Assignments & Exams

All policy in Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this syllabus applies to this course in addition to policy in the current [Academic Calendar](#). In some cases the syllabus underscores the general policy, while in other cases it supersedes it.

For all matters not covered in this syllabus, refer to Section 5 of the Academic Calendar, “University College Academic Policies, Procedures, and Notices.” Students are strongly encouraged to read this document carefully at least once in their career at Tyndale, and to review it every year they matriculate.

6.1 Assignments

This is a university course. All papers and other writing assignments should therefore be written at the university level. Submissions must be typewritten and double-spaced, should be free from error, and in this course should follow the *SBL Handbook of Style* (refer to the free, online [SBLHS Student Supplement](#).)

If you ever struggle with composition—anything from the relatively simple matters of spelling, grammar and proper citation to deeper-level issues of tone, structure and argument—then please make use of the Writing Centre (see Section 8.1). Experienced writers know that drafts and peer feedback are integral to the writing process. Inexperienced writers are often unaware that their surface-level errors create credibility problems with their readers. When you [misspell common words](#), fail to know [how to use an apostrophe](#), or do not bother to credit your sources appropriately, why should your readers trust you with more important matters—the facts and ideas under discussion?

6.1.1 Deadlines

Assignments *must* be submitted on time. Even if the work is rough or incomplete, you must turn in something by the due date to receive any credit whatsoever. Unless I specify differently in class, papers and take-home exams are due by 11:59 PM on the due date. All other work is due at the start of the day's class.

Note that, because no late work is accepted in this class, there is no scale of penalty for unexcused late assignments. If a truly extraordinary event keeps you from doing your best work, then let me know so that we can make special arrangements. I am guided by the Academic Calendar in what counts as extenuation. "Extensions are not granted for what best could be described as 'poor time management' or 'over-involvement' in an extracurricular activity."

6.1.2 Submission as PDFs

Papers and some other assignments in this course are to be submitted electronically through the course pages (Section 7.3.2). To preserve formatting, formal writing assignments must be uploaded in Portable Document Format. There are many ways of creating PDFs; it is your responsibility to know how to do so on the computer platform you use, and to make and submit your PDFs on time.

6.1.3 Backup

In the event of the loss of assignments post-submission—electronic systems fail, and my office has flooded before—students are required to keep backup copies of all assignments submitted.

Learning how to secure and preserve your work is a peculiar challenge of the digital age. Plan on the crash of your hard drive, and the theft of your laptop (the first is inevitable, the second quite probable). If you do not have a backup strategy, I recommend that you start with a free account on [dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com).

6.2 Examinations

My examination policy follows that outlined in Section 5 of the Academic Calendar, part of which is summarized below for emphasis.

1. Midterm exams will be held as scheduled by the instructor. If you miss the exam for a legitimate reason, you must write the exam within the same number of days that you were absent from school (possibly the next day).
2. Final examinations will take place during the exam period as scheduled by the Registrar. Students are responsible for noting the date, time and location of their final exam in this class. Students are also responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Registrar's examination policies.
3. The following rules apply to every final examination:
 - (a) No student is permitted to take into the examination room any materials relating to the examination subject, including Bibles.
 - (b) No student may leave the room without permission from the proctor.
 - (c) No student may leave his or her seat during the final fifteen minutes.
 - (d) Students must not linger in the halls outside the examination rooms while examinations are being written.
 - (e) No student will be permitted to write beyond the allotted time without special permission of the Registrar (see Section 8.2).

4. Provisions exist for students who are justifiably unable to write the final exam at the scheduled time. See the Academic Calendar for details, and make arrangements through the Office of the Registrar.
5. Normally, a final exam can only be reschedule in two circumstances: (a) a documented illness, or (b) a conflict with another exam (two at the same time, or three within 24 hours). [Apply to the Registrar](#) in either case.

7 Student Expectations & Guidelines

7.1 Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity. It includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors, using false information in an assignment (including false references to secondary sources), improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism.

Tyndale takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to apply consequences for academic dishonesty. Consult Section 5 of the Academic Calendar for more information on the school's policy and its application to your work in this course.

7.2 Attendance

"Faithful attendance at classes is an important indicator of student maturity and involvement" (Academic Calendar). Remember, too, that you are responsible for everything that happens in every class. Your best policy is to attend and engage. Please do not ask me to repeat for your benefit anything I have said in a class you have missed.

Keeping a record of attendance is mandatory for faculty at Tyndale (in contrast to many other colleges and universities). The University College publishes guidelines for how attendance should bear on your final evaluation in a course, and I adhere to them. Note that four lates equals one absence.

What should you do if you miss an undue number of classes? First, arrange for a classmate to brief you on the material missed, or get my permission for a classmate to make a recording for you (see Section 7.3.4). Second, notify the Dean of Students in person or by phone. If illness is the cause you will need to submit a doctor's certificate upon return. The Dean of Students will notify your professors of the reason for the absence and suggest that they take this into consideration when assigning grades.

7.3 Technology

Technological innovation has brought students and educators a number of powerful new tools, and I encourage you to use them as you research, write and collaborate. Some of these tools also call for disciplined use and management.

7.3.1 Email

Email can be a chore, and you may prefer other channels of communication. As a matter of policy, however, students must use their myTyndale accounts for all course-related email correspondence. During term time you should check your school account at least once a day (optional on weekends).

I myself aim to check my school email at the beginning and end of each workday. At other times my email client is often closed. I will try to answer your messages within 24 hours, though you should not expect replies on weekends.

7.3.2 MyTyndale.ca

The mytyndale.ca course pages are an efficient means of distributing handouts, notes, slides, and other course-related materials. This is also where instructors log attendance and upload grades for assignments. Students are therefore required to check the site for updates about their classes as well as for any materials needed for lectures and assignments.

My own use of this platform varies from semester to semester, and from course to course. At times I may ask you to use the forums, quiz module, or other parts of the system. At a minimum I will use the site as a repository for course materials, and as a destination for your submission of PDFs (Section 6.1.2).

7.3.3 Laptops and Other Devices

Use of laptops is forbidden in my classroom, except to facilitate presentation. I implement this policy in recognition of the cognitive costs of multitasking, with the aim of giving you and your peers the best chance of success. I hope as well to foster a culture of keen intellectual engagement.

As researchers at McMaster University recently demonstrated, “[laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers](#).” There’s little new in their finding that the allegedly multitasking students do less well in class (11% worse on the quiz in their experiment). This effect is well known. Rather, their novel discovery is that classmates *without* laptops who sat with a view of another student’s screen did worse as well (17% worse than those with no laptop in sight).

Prohibiting laptops is not the only possible response to these findings, but it fits with other pedagogical goals of mine. It also gives heavy laptop users an opportunity to experiment with different technologies in the classroom. (I’m a touch typist, but find handwritten notes more useful because of the selectivity that goes into them.) There is even evidence that [writing by hand](#) brings a number of cognitive benefits.

As for the myriad networked devices that many of us carry, it’s a simple matter of professionalism to keep these things silent and out of sight. Kindles, Nooks and iPads are permitted *only if they are used to display the assigned reading*. If this is you, let me invite you to put the machine in airplane mode while class is in session.

7.3.4 Recording of Classes

Students must request permission from the professor of any class that they would like to record. Where permission is granted, students are expected to supply their own equipment.

I generally prefer not to have my classes recorded, and I am not at all friendly to being recorded without my knowledge. In cases where I grant permission, I stipulate that the recordings must be for personal use only. They should not be shared with other students at Tyndale, even in the same section, and they absolutely must not be posted online in any format (including, say, transcribed for a blog post).

If a student is not able to attend a lecture and would like to have it recorded, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain the professor’s permission, find another student to record the lecture, and supply that student with the recording device.

8 Student Support

8.1 Tyndale Writing Centre

Through a combination of tutorials, workshops and resources, Tyndale’s Writing Centre offers a comprehensive program of writing support to Tyndale students, including individual 30-minute tutoring sessions, workshops, handbooks and other writing resources. Students may bring essays that have been graded (and, at least for my classes, work that is in process but has not yet

been submitted for a grade) and will receive detailed suggestions for improving their writing. This service, at no charge to students, is available by appointment.

Professors may recommend that a student go to the Writing Centre for help: students are strongly encouraged to follow such recommendations. The Academic Standards Committee may require an undergraduate student who is experiencing difficulty in his or her academic program to go to the Writing Centre for assistance and support.

As someone who cares a great deal about writing, and was student director of his college Writing Center (*sic*), I must emphasize that getting competent feedback on writing is not just for marginal students. Outstanding writers learn to crave good feedback. Think you don't need the Writing Centre? Make two appointments this semester. See if the service it provides might not contribute to your education here after all.

8.2 Accommodation

Students with documented disabilities may be granted special accommodation for exams, and in some cases for other assignments. It is even possible to get permission to use a laptop in class (Section 7.3.3), although I will need to be convinced of the use case. It is up to the student to contact the Dean of Students as early as possible in the semester—not later than the second week—and to document the need. The Dean of Students will then advise each of the student's professors of the accommodations that may be required. Please note that special arrangements for assignments need to be made with me well in advance of assignment due dates (Section 6.1.1). Timely requests shall not unreasonably be denied.

9 Course Outline

Readings of a given day should be completed before the start of class on the same date. Primary readings are compulsory. We will adhere to the schedule as closely as possible, though I reserve the right to adjust it to suit the needs of the class.

See the [Registrar's website](#) for a list of other important dates. Generally, the last day to add or drop a class without penalty is the end of the second week of class.

10 Course Bibliography

Introductory bibliographies are provided in [B&M] and [B&L]. In addition to these resources you may wish to consult Biblical Studies listings in Oxford Bibliographies, especially those for:

- [Genesis](#), by Victor H. Matthews
- [Exodus](#), by Thomas B. Dozeman
- [Leviticus](#), by Jeffrey Stackert and Samuel L. Boyd
- [Numbers](#), by Reinhard Achenbach
- [Deuteronomy](#), by Stephen L. Cook
- [The Pentateuch](#), by Thomas B. Dozeman
- [Moses](#), by Thomas B. Dozeman

§. Primary Reading	Barton & Muddiman	Briggs & Lohr	Date
1. Syllabus			6 Jan.
2. Introductions	16–53	1–18	8 Jan.
3. Genesis 1–11	53–66		13 Jan.
4. Genesis 12–25	66–76		15 Jan.
5. Genesis 26–36	76–83	19–50	20 Jan.
6. Genesis 37–50	83–92	(Briggs)	22 Jan.
7. Exodus 1–11	92–103		27 Jan.
8. Exodus 12–18	103–110		29 Jan.
9. Exodus 19–31	110–121	51–82	3 Feb.
10. Exodus 32–40	121–127	(Wells)	5 Feb.
11. Gregory of Nyssa			10 Feb.
12. Gregory of Nyssa			12 Feb.
— . No Class: Reading Week (1st paper due at start of next class)			17–21 Feb.
13. Leviticus 1–10	127–138		24 Feb.
14. Leviticus 11–16	138–141		26 Feb.
15. Leviticus 17–24	141–147	83–111	3 Mar.
16. Leviticus 25–27	148–153	(Lohr)	5 Mar.
17. Numbers 1–10	153–163		10 Mar.
18. Numbers 11–21	163–175		12 Mar.
19. Numbers 22–29	175–181	113–144	17 Mar.
20. Numbers 30–36	182–186	(MacDonald)	19 Mar.
21. Deuteronomy 1–11	187–200		24 Mar.
22. Deuteronomy 12–16	200–205		26 Mar.
23. Deuteronomy 17–26	205–210	145–176	31 Mar.
24. Deuteronomy 27–34	210–219	(Barrett)	2 Apr.
— . No Class: Reading Days (2nd paper due at start of exam period)			7–8 Apr.

Table 2: Schedule of Readings