

OT 201-3 Exegesis of Genesis
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Spring Term 2018
Wed and Fri 8:30am – 9:50am

Instructor: Tyler Mayfield
tmayfield@lpts.edu
(502) 992-9375

Office: Schlegel 315
Office Hours: email for appointment

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of the book of Genesis through translation and exegetical exercises in the original Hebrew text. Students will gain greater familiarity with exegetical methods and interpretation of particular texts. In addition, greater facility may be attained in translating and interpreting biblical Hebrew and the use of secondary literature.

Course Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

- 1) Describe the various historical divisions, literary features, and theological outlooks of the book of Genesis.
- 2) Translate Hebrew prose texts with greater facility.
- 3) Exegete passages by asking historical, literary, and theological questions of the text.
- 4) Write an exegetical paper combining multiple methods on a selected biblical passage.

Required Books

1) English translation of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. I recommend the JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh or a NRSV Study Bible such as The New Oxford or New Interpreters. Many of you already bought one of these bibles for Scripture I.

Instead of #2 and #3, students could purchase BibleWorks software.

2) Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/77).

3) Clines, David J. A., ed. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009). [Or another suitable lexicon such as BDB or HALOT by Koehler & Baumgartner]

4) Terence Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible Volume I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

Students will pick between #5 and #6.

5) David Cotter, *Genesis* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003).

6) Bill Arnold, *Genesis* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Assignments & Evaluation

1) Attendance and Class Participation (15%)

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend “all scheduled meetings of the courses” excepting illness or “other valid reasons.” In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify me of their planned absence from class preferably prior to the session. Tardiness also affects classroom dynamics; please make every effort to be ready to start class on time.

Students should come to class each day eagerly ready to discuss the assigned biblical passage and secondary readings. Active participation includes, but is not limited to, activities such as listening carefully to others’ presentations and thoughts, taking notes, asking relevant questions, responding to others’ comments, and inviting others into the conversation. It does not include dominating a group or class discussion.

2) Group Exegetical Presentation & Class Leadership (25%)

Once during the semester students will lead in pairs a class session on a given Genesis passage. Students should be ready to guide the class through the passage using multiple exegetical methods. This presentation will require the consultation of resources (primarily commentaries) not required on the syllabus. Further detailed directions will be provided.

3) Friday Hebrew Translations with Exegetical Notes (25%)

Students will bring to class and turn in their weekly Hebrew translations and exegetical notes every Friday. I will provide an example.

4) Exegesis Paper (35%)

Students will write an exegesis paper on a selected Genesis passage. This paper will be completed throughout the semester in sections and receive significant feedback from me in order to strengthen the final product.

Translation of Passage with Text Critical Notes 1 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Monday, Feb 19
Historical/Diachronic/Author Section 5 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Monday, March 19
Literary/Synchronic/Text Section 5 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Monday, April 9
Theological/Existential/Reader Section 5 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Monday, April 30

Final Paper with revisions of above sections 16-17 pages (15%) Due Friday, May 11*

*I need a final paper from those graduating by Wed. May 9 so you can participate in ceremonies.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty: All work turned in is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an *early* date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students requiring accommodation for a physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) within the first few days of the course and should speak with me as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Inclusive Language: Our use of language, personally and as a community, is a powerful tool of both healing and oppression. In order to establish a more egalitarian environment and in accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. Avoid language for people that excludes part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. See http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

When referring to God, students are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. The God of the Hebrew Bible is envisioned in both personal and non-personal ways, as well as masculine and feminine terms. Naming God exclusively as "He" does not capture this splendid diversity.

Policy on late work: All written assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

Use of electronic devices in class: I ask that we create a time and space in the classroom to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask me for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will negatively affect the course grade.

Course Schedule

Fridays are Hebrew Translation and Exegesis Days. Students will bring to class their translations with some textual/exegetical/historical/literary/commentary notes, and we will translate and discuss the passage.

Wednesdays are Exegetical Presentation Days. I will lead an exegetical workshop/presentation on a given topic or Genesis passage OR you will lead an exegetical presentation on a passage.

Friday, Feb 2

Introduction to course / syllabus

What is Exegesis?

Why Genesis?

Wednesday, Feb 7

An Introduction to the Book of Genesis

Class Readings: Read through Genesis 12-35 in English translation.

Johanna Bos, *Making Wise the Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005): 58-69. [CAMS]

NIB, 321-330.

CAIN AND ABEL

Friday, Feb 9

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 4:1-11

English Exegesis: Genesis 4:1-16

Class Readings: NIB, 372-78.

Arnold, 76-82 OR Cotter, 40-46.

Wednesday, Feb 14

Cain and Abel, Again

Class Readings: Joel S. Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007): 19-27. [CAMS]

Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 99-145. [On Print Reserve]

ABRAHAM / SARAH / HAGAR / ISAAC / ISHMAEL

Friday, Feb 16

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 15:1-7, 12-15

English Exegesis: Genesis 15

Class Readings: NIB, 444-450.

Arnold, 150-161 OR Cotter, 97-102.

Wednesday, Feb 21

Group Exegetical Presentation #1: Wife-Sister Stories (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1-11)

Class Readings: Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18

NIB, 427-431, 481-485.

Tammi Schneider, *Sarah: Mother of Nations* (New York: Continuum, 2004): 30-35, 82-91. [CAMS]

Suggested Reading: Mignon Jacobs, *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007): 73-102. [On print reserve]

Friday, Feb 23

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 16:1-6, 11-13

English Exegesis: Genesis 16

Class Readings: NIB, 451-455.

Arnold, 161-166 OR Cotter, 102-106.

Wednesday, Feb 28

Group Exegetical Presentation #2: Hagar in Genesis 16

Class Readings: Renita Weems, *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible* (San Diego: LuraMedia, 1988): 1-19. [CAMS]

Delores S. Williams, "Hagar in African American Biblical Appropriation," in *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives* (eds. Phyllis Trible and Letty Russell; Louisville: WJK, 2006): 171-184. [CAMS]

Suggested Reading: Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, *Far More Precious Than Jewels: Perspectives on Biblical Women* (Louisville: WJK, 1991): 132-163. [CAMS]

Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: WJK, 2003): 7-25. [On print reserve]

Friday, March 2

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 17:1-7, 10-11, 15-19

English Exegesis: Genesis 17

Class Readings: NIB, 457-461.

Arnold, 166-174 OR Cotter, 106-112.

Wednesday, March 7

Ishmael

Class Readings: R. Christopher Heard, *Dynamics of Diselection: Ambiguity in Genesis 12-36 and Ethnic Boundaries in Post-Exilic Judah* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2001): 63-96. [CAMS]

Friday, March 9

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 18:1-2, 9-15

English Exegesis: Genesis 18:1-15

Class Readings: NIB, 462-465.

Arnold, 178-180 OR Cotter, 112-118.

Wednesday, March 21

Group Exegetical Presentation #3: Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:16-19:38)

Class Readings: Genesis 19

NIB, 467-479.

Suggested Reading: Christopher Elwood, "A singular example of the wrath of God: the use of Sodom in sixteenth-century exegesis," *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005): 67-93. [ATLA Database]

Friday, March 23

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 21:1-7

English Exegesis: Genesis 21:1-21

Class Readings: NIB, 485-486

Arnold, 194-195 OR Cotter, 134-140

Wednesday, March 28

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

Class Readings: Genesis 21:8-21

NIB, 487-490.

Arnold, 195-197 or Cotter, 140-143.

Tammi Schneider, *Sarah: Mother of Nations* (New York: Continuum, 2004): 93-102. [CAMS]

Wednesday, April 4

The Near Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22)

Class Readings: Genesis 22

NIB, 494-501.

Jon Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham: The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2012): 66-89. [CAMS]

ISAAC / REBEKAH / ESAU / JACOB / LEAH / RACHEL

Friday, April 6

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 25:19-27

English Exegesis: Genesis 25:19-34

Class Readings: NIB, 520-524.

Arnold, 228-233 or Cotter, 184-191.

Bradford A. Anderson, *Brotherhood and Inheritance: A Canonical Reading of the Esau and Edom Traditions* (LHBOT 556; New York: T&T Clark, 2011): 41-51. [CAMS]

Wednesday, April 11

Group Exegetical Presentation #4: Rebekah (Genesis 24)

Class Readings: Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne* (Louisville: WJK, 2017): 45-52. [CAMS]

Alice Odgen Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2007): 67-71. [CAMS]

Friday, April 13

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 27:18-29, 39-40

English Exegesis: Genesis 27:1-46

Class Readings: NIB, 534-539.

Arnold, 244-248 or Cotter, 200-205.

Wednesday, April 18

Esau

Class Readings: Frank Anthony Spina, *The Faith of the Outsider: Exclusion and Inclusion in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005): 14-34. [CAMS]

Bradford A. Anderson, *Brotherhood and Inheritance: A Canonical Reading of the Esau and Edom Traditions* (LHBOT 556; New York: T&T Clark, 2011): 6-9, 153-155. [CAMS]

Friday, April 20

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 29:15-25

English Exegesis: Genesis 29

Class Readings: NIB, 552-554

Arnold, 263-267 or Cotter, 217-226.

Wednesday, April 25

Group Exegetical Presentation #5: Rachel and Leah (Genesis 30-31)

Class Readings: Jacqueline Lapsley, *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville: WJK, 2005): 21-34. [CAMS]

Amy Kalmanofsky, *Dangerous Sisters of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014): 19-36. [CAMS]

Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne* (Louisville: WJK, 2017): 54-67. [CAMS]

Friday, April 27

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 32:22-32

English Exegesis: Genesis 32:22-32

Class Readings: NIB, 565-570.

Arnold, 279-287 or Cotter, 239-248.

Wednesday, May 2

The Rape of Dinah (Genesis 34)

Class Readings: Susanne Scholz, *Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010): 27-38. [CAMS]

Tammi Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008): 138-147. [CAMS]

NIB, 576-581.

Suggested Reading: Athalya Brenner, *I Am... Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005): 25-49. [CAMS]

Alice Odgen Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: WJK Press, 2007): 73-77. [CAMS]

Friday, May 4

Hebrew Translation: Genesis 33:1-15

English Exegesis: Genesis 33

Class Readings: NIB, 571-574.

Arnold, 287-291 or Cotter, 248-251.