

Houston Graduate School of Theology

OT 611 Studies in the Pentateuch: Creation

Spring 2012, Wednesday, 1:30-4:00 pm

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The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual, and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

I. Course Description

Studies in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy with a view to understanding the Pentateuch as a whole as well as in various parts and kinds of content. Attention is given to exegetical methods, historical and literary contexts, and to appropriate interpretation and application.

The current course will study the theme of creation in the Pentateuch, with a view to understanding the cultural and philosophical background of creation, the historical and theological importance of the theme, and the canonical development of the theme beyond the Pentateuch.

II. Goals and Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Discuss various theological issues related to the creation narratives. This outcome will be measured through daily definition papers and major project.
- B. Analyze the biblical creation narratives in light of modern scientific challenges. This outcome will be measured through the book review of *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?*
- C. Explain the biblical theologies of creation. This outcome will be measured through the major project.
- D. Interpret the biblical text with proper hermeneutical tools, critical analysis, and spiritual insight. This outcome will be measured through the major project.
- E. Synthesize the biblical creation narratives, theological insight, and scientific realities into a cogent, personal theology of creation. This outcome will be measured through the major project.
- F. Apply the personal theology of creation to the challenge of ecology and natural disaster. This outcome will be measured through the book review of *Creation Untamed*.

II. Texts

Required Textbooks:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Creation and Fall, Temptation*. New York: Touchstone, 1959, 1983.
ISBN 0684825872 (CF)

Brown, William P. *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder*. New York: Oxford, 2010. ISBN 0199730792 (SP)

Collins, C. John. *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. ISBN 1433524252

———. *Genesis 1-4: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2006. ISBN 0875526195 (C)

Fretheim, Terence E. *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. ISBN 0801038936

Waltke, Bruce. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. ISBN 0310224586 (W)

Recommended Text:

Baker, David W., and T. Desmond Alexander, ed. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. 978-0830817818 (DOT)

IV. Course Requirements

- A. Attendance and class participation based on daily assignments (see policies below).
- B. Readings from textbooks, as assigned in the schedule below. Completion of reading assignments will be assessed by means of a statement that the student will submit along with the book review on the final day of class.
- C. Daily Papers. Each student will produce four daily papers. Each paper should be 1-2 pages, double-spaced, thus requiring conciseness and organization. The student should use footnotes to reference sources used. A bibliography should be appended as an extra (i.e. third) page.
 1. Define “The image of God.” Utilizing required texts, scripture, and the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, s.v. “Image of God,” the student should define his or her personal understanding of the “image of God” as presented in Gen. 1. This is not an opinion paper, but a brief essay on the topic that presents and defends the student’s understanding of “image of God” in humanity.
 2. Define “The fall of man.” Utilizing required texts, scripture, and the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, s.v. “Fall,” the student should explain what is usually understood by the term “fall of man” and its importance (or lack of importance) in the remainder of scripture.
 3. Discuss briefly source criticism in relation to Gen. 1-4. Utilizing required texts and the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, “Source Criticism,” briefly highlight the major tenets of source criticism pertaining to the origin, organization, and interpretation of Gen. 1-4.
 4. Define “Days of Creation.” Utilizing required texts, explain briefly the differing beliefs concerning the seven days of creation, including a personal critique of each. This is not an opinion paper, but a brief essay on the topic that presents and defends the student’s understanding of the topic.

- D. Book Review 1: Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* The student should produce a 4- to 6-page page critical book review that includes the following parts: bibliographical entry, summary of contents of the book (approximately one page), and a critical assessment of the contents of the book (2-3 pages). The critical assessment should include analysis of the book, particularly relating to the achievement of the book's purposes, with explicit examples. The review should conclude with a brief discussion of the student's understanding of the relationship of the events in Gen. 1-4 with actual historical events, especially in light of scientific challenges to the biblical narratives (1-2 pages). For the latter section of the review, students may use other course resources.
- E. Book Review 2: Fretheim, *Creation Untamed*. The student should produce a 4- to 6-page critical book review that includes the following parts: bibliographical entry, summary of contents of the book (approximately one page), and a critical assessment of the contents of the book (3-4 pages). The critical assessment should include analysis of the book, particularly relating to the achievement of the book's purposes, with explicit examples. The critical evaluation should include the student's personal understanding of the role of the creator in light of ecological disasters.
- F. Major project: Personal Theology of Creation. The student will produce a major research project presenting a personal theology of creation. The paper will be minimum 3000 words (approximately 12 pages) in length, double-spaced, exclusive of title page. The paper should be based on scripture (utilizing both Gen. 1-4 and other creation texts, as studied in class), biblical exegesis resources, and other theological and historical materials, as necessary. The student must utilize academic journal articles in the research. The paper should exhibit the student's ability to analyze a variety of data, integrate those data into a coherent whole, and present a logically and grammatically clear written document. These data include the variety of biblical theologies of creation, scientific and historical challenges to the biblical narrative, and theological understandings of the doctrine of creation.

V. Grading Scale

A. Assignments are weighted according to this scale:

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Attendance and Class Participation | 5% of final grade |
| 2. Assigned Readings | 5% of final grade |
| 3. Daily Papers | 20% of final grade (each paper 5%) |
| 4. Book Review 1 | 20% of final grade |
| 5. Book Review 2 | 20% of final grade |
| 6. Major Project | 30% of final grade |

B. Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

96-100	A	84-85	C+
94-95	A-	80-83	C
92-93	B+	78-79	C-
88-91	B	70-77	D
86-87	B-	below 69	F

VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time. The student could lose as much as a letter grade for excessive tardiness. Up to five hours (two class periods) of *excused* absence will not affect the student's grade, but more than this will affect the student's class participation grade. More than four absences will require extra work in order to receive credit for the course.
- B. Work is expected on the due date. With prior permission from the instructor, late work will receive a letter grade reduction until it is one week late, and a two-letter grade reduction until two weeks late. After two weeks, the assignment will not be accepted and a zero will be entered for the assignment, unless the student has received expressed prior permission.
- C. Cell phones provide distractions to class. The student should turn cell phones to silence or vibrate and should only respond to calls during breaks.
- D. In-class use of computers. Students are welcome to use laptops in class. However, students should respect the instructor and fellow students by not searching the Internet, utilizing social networking, or checking emails during class.
- E. *Incompletes*
In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments, which are not completed by the end of the semester or term, subject to a 5-point grade reduction on the final grade of each assignment. If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of "I" (Incomplete) and set an extension of time, not to exceed thirty calendar days from the end of the class, within which to complete the work. Additional extensions may be granted only by the Academic Dean or Associate Dean and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of "I" will be converted to the grade earned by the student up to that point. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the registrar's office by the deadline published in the school calendar.
- F. *Plagiarism*
Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one's own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.
1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
 - The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.

- For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.
 - For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Academic Dean.
 3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Academic Dean. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President's decision will be final.

G. *Library Usage*

A student's ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, one or more of the following libraries.

1. *Houston Public Library*— Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library's website, www.houstonlibrary.org, to search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832-393-1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832-393-1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website.
2. *Fondren Library at Rice University*— The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. Please visit www.rice.edu/fondren for more information. The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [www.rice.edu/fondren] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records).
3. Lanier Theological Library is a new resource for scholarly theological research in the Houston area. The library is open to the public, Monday, Wednesday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, and Tuesday, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM. The library is a research library with no circulation privileges. Nonetheless, students should consider Lanier Library to be a valuable research option. The catalog of Lanier Library is available online: <http://alexandria.lanierlibrary.net/#>.
4. *Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary*—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary's Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6 miles from HGST. For more information, please visit

- <http://beran.stthom.edu>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.
5. *Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant* – as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalog, go to <http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi>.
 6. Other options include Harris County Public Library (www.hcpl.net) and the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

- A. Writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition. This includes matters of style and format. Counseling students should pay particular attention to the *Manual* guidelines on submission of academic papers.
- B. The instructor requires the use of footnotes for documentation. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except for the first page of the paper (not counting the title page). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings require a two-inch top margin.
- C. The student should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.
- D. Critical or formal writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly. Failure to do so will be penalized.
 1. Avoid 1st or 2nd person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
 2. Never use contractions.
 3. Avoid passive voice construction (i.e. The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
 4. Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
 5. Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Dr. Pitts does not tolerate misspelled words. Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
 6. Grammar check works as well!
 7. All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
 8. Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

VIII. Class and Reading Schedule

**Due Dates for Assignments are Marked by Asterisks*

Selected readings should be completed prior to class discussion on the topic

Jan. 25	Class Introduction	Pentateuchal Criticism <i>SP 3-20</i>
Feb. 1	Gen. 1:1-13	<i>CF 9-33; SP 21-73;</i> <i>C 39-56; W 53-62</i> <i>Enuma Elish (available online)</i>
Feb. 8	Gen. 1:14-2:3	<i>CF 34-46; SP 73-77;</i> <i>C 56-100; W 62-73</i> *Daily paper: Define “the image of God” <i>DOT 441-445</i>
Feb. 15	Gen. 2:3-25	<i>CF 47-69; SP 78-110;</i> <i>C 101-147; W 79-90</i>
Feb. 22	Gen. 3:1-24	<i>CF 70-105; SP 110-114;</i> <i>C 149-188; W 90-96</i> *Daily Paper: Define “the fall” <i>DOT 285-291</i>
Feb. 29	Gen. 4:1-26	<i>CF 106-107; C 189-220; W 96-107</i>
Mar. 7	Sources and Criticism *Daily Paper: Discuss briefly source criticism in relation to Gen. 1-4	<i>C 221-247; W 21-31</i> <i>DOT 798-805</i>
Mar. 21	Genesis and History *Critical Book Review: Collins, <i>Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?</i>	<i>C 13-18, 249-267; W 73-78;</i>
Mar. 28	Genesis and Science *Daily Paper: Define “Days of Creation”	<i>C 260-267; SP 55-76</i>
Apr. 4	Creation in Psalms	<i>SP 141-160; Ps 8, 74, 104, 148</i>
Apr. 11	Creation in Job and Proverbs	<i>SP 115-140, 161-176; Job 38-41;</i> <i>Prov 8</i>
Apr. 18	Creation in Ecclesiastes and Is. 40-55	<i>SP 177-220; Ecc 1, 3, 12;</i> <i>Is 40-45, 51, 55</i>
Apr. 25	Paper Presentations *Creation Theology Paper due	
May 2	Creation in the New Testament	<i>John 1; Rom. 1, 5, 7-8; Heb. 4:3-11</i> <i>Rev. 21-22</i>
May 9	Creation and 21 st Century Realities *Critical Book Review—Fretheim, <i>Creation Untamed</i>	<i>SP 221-240</i>

The professor of record reserves the right to adjust classroom topics as the course develops.

IX. Bibliography

- Anderson, Bernhard W., ed. *Creation in the Old Testament*. Issues in religion and theology, vol. 6. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Creation and Fall, Temptation*. New York: Touchstone, 1959, 1983.
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- Hamilton, Victor. *The Book of Genesis*. 2 Vols. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 1995.
- Smith, Mark S. *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*. Fortress, 2010.
- Thielicke, Helmut. *How the World Began: Man in the First Chapters of the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenburt Press, 1961.
- Waltke, Bruce. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Walton, John H. *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- . *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*. Eisenbrauns, 2011.
- . *The Lost World of Genesis One*. IVP, 2009.
- Walton, John H. and Victor H. Matthews. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis-Deuteronomy*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15, 16-50*. Two Volumes. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word Books, 1987, 1994.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11: A Continental Commentary; 12-36; 37-50*. Translated by John J. Scullion. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994, 1995, 1986.

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC		
Criterion	Points Possible	Points Earned
Content/Development		
All key elements of the assignment are covered in a substantive way.	50	
Content is comprehensive, accurate, and/or persuasive.		
Major points are stated clearly and are supported by professional literature or logic.		
Meaningful use of source material and analytical reasoning to elaborate upon the topic or theme.		
Research is adequate and timely for the topic.		
The context and purpose of the writing is clear.		
Organization		
The introduction provides sufficient background on the topic and previews major points.	20	
Ideas flow in a logical sequence.		
The structure of the paper is clear and easy to follow.		
The paper's organization emphasizes the central theme or purpose.		
Paragraph transitions are present, logical, and direct the flow of thought throughout the paper.		
The conclusion logically derives from the paper's ideas.		
The conclusion reviews the major points toward the appropriate audience.		
Format		
The paper includes Title page, footnotes, and bibliography.	10	
The paper is laid out effectively and uses reader-friendly aids (e.g., section summaries, appendices, etc.) when appropriate.		
The bibliography page(s) contains adequate scholarly citations.		
The paper follows Turabian format guidelines.		
The paper is written in 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced and 1" margins.		
The work is original, giving credit to all borrowed ideas.		
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling		
Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed.	10	
Spelling is correct.		
Readability/Style		
Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.	10	
Sentences are well-constructed with consistently strong and varied structure.		
Sentence transitions are present and direct the flow of thought.		
Words used are precise and unambiguous.		
Total Points	100	