



OT 2XA3/6XA6 PENTATEUCH
Fall 2009

Class Schedule:

Thursdays @ 10:30am-12:20pm

Professor: Dr. Paul S. Evans

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Course Description:

- An introduction to the contents of the Pentateuch, the “Five Books of Moses” (Genesis–Deuteronomy), and to its cultural and historical setting. Matters of authorship, origin, sources used in its compilation, unity and complexity, structure and themes will be discussed. Diverse critical methodologies will be used with an effort to underscore the continuing relevance of the Pentateuch for Christian theological understanding.

Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To have a thorough knowledge of the contents and message of the Pentateuch
- To gain familiarity with the assumptions, methods and conclusions of modern critical scholarship on the Pentateuch
- To gain an introductory knowledge of relevant Ancient Near Eastern Literature: One will read an English translation of the most important extra-biblical documents for a proper understanding of the Pentateuch within its ancient Near Eastern context.

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the Pentateuch for the Church today
- To grow closer to God through study of the Pentateuch

Doing

- To be able to discuss the relation of Genesis 1-11 to ancient Near Eastern mythology and modern science
- To be able to interpret the Pentateuch in its original context
- To be able to apply the message of the Pentateuch to contemporary audiences

Required Texts:

- Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995).
- A Bible (in a modern critical translation (e.g., NRSV, TNIV, NIV, NLT, NASB, RSV). The *Tanakh: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985) is recommended.
- Readings to be handed out (or on reserve in the Library)

Additional Text for Advanced Degree Students

Joseph Blenkinsopp. *Treasures Old and New: Essays in the Theology of the Pentateuch*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

20% Response Papers: Students will write two 4-5 page papers (10% per paper) responding to both class material and assigned readings on the following topics:

- The Documentary Hypothesis: due **September 24**
- Creation in Genesis and Science: due **October 15**

40%-Research Paper: 5% for summary and annotated bibliography due **October 29**;
35% for final paper due **November 12**

- 15 pgs, double-spaced, 12pt Roman font throughout entire paper. However, footnotes must be single spaced and 10pt Roman font.
- See 'Research Paper guideline' below

Summary and annotated bibliography

- One paragraph stating the goal of your paper and an annotated bibliography consisting of *at least 12 items* of varied secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, specialized books and *at least 3 articles from refereed journals*). By way of **supplement** to these 12 sources, a student may use a **maximum of 2** internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of these internet resources. *The paper must avoid too informal language and be gender inclusive*. (E.g., do not refer to "mankind" or "man", but rather "humankind" or "person").
- For your annotated bibliography each item should have a couple sentences explaining the author's thesis and what evidence or arguments she / he uses to

support it. Make sure you show that you have read and understood the article or book.

- ALL TOPICS MUST BE APPROVED BY YOUR PROFESSOR

**For journal articles to assist paper preparation and research, do a subject search of the ATLA Religion database

Useful Internet Sites

- *Bible Gateway* (<http://www.biblegateway.com/>). Online Bibles with search engines.
- *Dinur Centre for Research in Jewish History* (http://www.hum.huji.ac.il/dinur/internetresources/historyresources/biblical_studies.htm) Includes links on creation, flood, patriarchs
- *Internet Ancient History Sourcebook* (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html>). The sections on Human Origins and Mesopotamia include some useful comparative material for Genesis.
- *Links related to Bible & ANE:* (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/%7Ehumm/Resources/Texts/index.html>)

30%- Application Paper, **December 3**

- 15 pgs, double-spaced, 12pt Roman font throughout entire paper. However, footnotes must be single spaced and 10pt Roman font.
- Drawing on your textbook, pick three of the themes isolated by Alexander and apply them to today. Using Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard's "Four-Step Methodology for Legitimate Application" (ch. 11 in their *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*) interact with both Alexander's work and the biblical text and show the applicability of these themes for today.

10% Assigned readings. Students are to read the textbook and the Pentateuch in its entirety as well as other readings assigned throughout the semester. These other assigned readings are to be done in preparation for each week of class as requested in class. Students will give account of their completed readings via a hand in sheet on **December 4**

College Style for Submission of Written Work

All written work is to be submitted in accordance with the McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses, available on the McMaster Divinity College website.

All papers to be submitted in electronic (Microsoft Word) format only—no hardcopies! Email to psevans@gmail.com. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment. To avoid late marks papers must be received before the end of the calendar day on which they are due (i.e., before midnight).

Policy concerning late papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at

the rate of 1% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be handed in by the last day of class in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

Academic dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php.

Inclusive language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Disclaimer

This syllabus for Pentateuch is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus has been prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

* **Addendum re: Advanced Degree Students**

In addition to the assignments outlined above, Advanced Degree (AD) Students are responsible for additional reading, writing and class participation.

A. Reading

In addition to reading the T. D. Alexander textbook AD students will read the Blenkinsopp volume in its entirety and also give a written account of the number of pages read beyond the Alexander textbook. These additional pages may include readings done in research paper preparation. Additional readings must total **5,000** pages beyond the Alexander volume. Students will give an account of their completed readings via a hand in sheet on **December 4**

These additional readings together with those assigned above will comprise **10%** value for the course for AD students.

B. Writing

In addition to the written assignments outlined above AD students will each write **three** critical reviews (5-6 pages each) of **three** chapters from the Blenkinsopp textbook (see 'Critical Chapter Review Guideline' below).

- Due dates for these reviews will be worked out *in situ*.

These critical reviews and the corresponding presentation, together with the response papers assigned above will comprise **20%** value for the course for AD students (4% per response paper, 4% per critical review. Presentation (see below) must be done in order to get credit for the review papers).

As well, for AD students the research paper must be **20-25** pages in length instead of 15 pages (see 'Research Paper guideline' below). This paper worth **40%** of course mark.

C. Class Participation

Each AD student will take a turn leading the class discussion. This discussion will consist of:

- 1) A presentation of the contents of one of Blenkinsopp's chapters and;
- 2) The facilitation of further discussion on the topic.
 - The critical review of the corresponding chapter from Blenkinsopp will be due before class on the day of the presentation
 - Dates for presentations will be worked out *in situ*.

Research Paper Evaluation

Name: _____ Topic: _____

I. The next items are rated according to this scale: 1 = inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = superior.

Bibliographic consciousness	1	2	3	4	5
Range and Use of Sources	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity in Defining Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Strength of Argument	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of Exegetical Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy of Data and Assertions	1	2	3	4	5
Analysis /Critical Thinking	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction (Thesis Statement /Clear Issue)	1	2	3	4	5
Development of Thesis (focus)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Organization/coherence of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if so indicated

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified essay | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line spacing, Font size, Margins,
Page numbers etc. need attention | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper needs balance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cite primary resources correctly/
consistently (e.g., Gen 1:26; Genesis 1; etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cite secondary resources correctly/
consistently |

III. Comments

Critical Chapter Review Guideline

Name: _____ Topic: _____

I. The critical review of chapters from Blenkinsopp's *Treasures Old & New* should roughly follow this format:

Summary of Content: 2-3 Pages

Critique of chapter 1-2 Pages

Personal Reflection 1-2 Pages

Total=*no more* than 6 pages! Pages 7ff *will not* be read

The following items are rated according to the following scale:

1 = poor/inadequate; 2 = adequate; 3 = good/more than adequate; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent/superior.

Summary of Content (noted key concepts etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Critique (evidence of critical thought)	1	2	3	4	5
Reflective Thought (theological depth, sensitivity)	1	2	3	4	5
Literary Style (awkward, wordy, repetitive)	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar/Spelling	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness/Presentation	1	2	3	4	5

§ Note: this is a simple evaluation tool to assist in paper assessment. The categories are not weighted equally, and thus are not added together or averaged to calculate your grade.

II. The following need attention if checked

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive language | <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is too long/too short |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a unified review | <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your paper more thoroughly |
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III. Comments