



# Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

## ***Course Identification***

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Course Number : WYB5111HS/RLG3142  
Course Name: The Book of Genesis  
Campus: St. George

## ***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Glen Taylor  
E-mail: glen.taylor@utoronto.ca  
Telephone O: (416) 946-3541; H: (416) 944-2546 before 10 pm only  
Office Hours: Normally, following class (never before!)  
Time and Place: Conference room, Tuesdays 2-4 p.m.

## ***Course Prerequisites or Requisites***

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For AD students focusing on Bible, at least two years of Biblical Hebrew, and at least one of the following: German, French, Modern Hebrew.

## ***Course Description***

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A critical and exegetical study of the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis. In addition to historical-critical issues, attention will be paid to ancient Near Eastern parallels as well as to themes, key compositional theories, structure and religious significance.

The course has two main goals: 1) to provide the student with an understanding and appreciation of the themes, content and structure of the Book of Genesis, and 2) to expose the student to a selected—pre-modern, modern and post-modern— methodologies employed in the study of the book of Genesis.

## ***Course Methodology***

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Seminars, assignments (translation, readings, possible occasional quizzes), class presentation(s), appropriate participation, term paper

## ***Course Outcomes***

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COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAMME OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects

	course elements:	of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (PhD, ThM, MA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will have greater familiarity not only with the content of the Book of Genesis, but with selected traditional (and to a lesser extent post-modern and pre-critical) methodologies for analyzing the text</li> </ul>	Assignments, readings	See Appendix to TST AD Handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will have a better understanding of the Hebrew text of Genesis, including the Masoretic aids reflected in (primarily) the BHS</li> </ul>	Presentations, frequent analyses of the Hebrew text, based on pre-class preparation	See Appendix to TST AD Handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will have gained exposure to several comparative ANE texts and their possible relevance to Genesis</li> </ul>	Lectures (presentation style)	See Appendix to TST AD Handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will have a good understanding of several contemporary and classical scholarly theories relevant to the study of Genesis</li> </ul>	Presentations, lectures, readings	See Appendix to TST AD Handbook

## Required Course Texts

- Access to the Hebrew text, ideally in a searchable, tagged software programme; an excellent choice for a well-rounded exegetical commentary is the WBC by Gordon Wenham (2 vols). A good general resource is the *IVP Dictionary of the Pentateuch*, whereas the book of Campbell and O'Brien on *Sources of the Pentateuch* is a handy, accessible source for understanding the classical Documentary Hypothesis.

## Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

## Class Schedule

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### Provisional List of Topics Covered

- history of recent scholarship on Genesis
- the notes and accentual system of the Masoretes
- the stories of creation and "fall" (topics: parallel creation stories)

- the flood (topic: source criticism and ANE parallels)
- the call of Abraham (topic: Hebrew syntax, and the religious significance of the theme of "promise")
- the Akedah (Gen. 22) (topics: narrative artistry and interpretive history)
- the Jacob Cycle as a whole (topic: theories concerning a possible chiasmic structure)
- the story of Jacob at the Jabbok (topics: structural analysis and form-criticism)
- the conflict between Jacob and Esau (topic: the religious significance of the reference to "twos" [e.g. "double-camp"])
- the Joseph Cycle (topics: its date, and the problem of its relationship to the Jacob cycle)
- the relationship of the Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers" to the Stories of Jacob and Joseph
- hermeneutics relevant to appropriation of Genesis as Scripture within a faith community.

## ***Evaluation***

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### **Requirements**

#### *Approach*

A different portion of the Hebrew text of Genesis will be considered each week. Students will be expected to read and translate the passage (no more than a chapter on average, often less) and to prepare for a topic of study, most often based on the portion considered. The topic will vary in such a way as to provide the student with an appreciation of themes, structure, and critical issues.

#### *Presentation*

Each student will be expected to present a paper on a critical or post-critical issue (or the interface between two particular methods) or on a passage of no less than 10 verses not covered in class. The presentation can be the basis for the term paper to follow. The presentation should be a formal paper, 30 minutes long, and of the kind presented at the CSBS or AAR/SBL. A copy of the paper must be made available to the class by no later than five p.m. on the Friday before the paper is presented. Each student will read the paper and submit to the Professor at the beginning of the class a one- to two-page sheet (double-spaced) summarizing the paper and listing two pertinent questions the paper evoked. For each paper presented, one student will be appointed as an official respondent. In place of submitting the usual summary and list of questions, the respondent will prepare a response of approximately 10 minutes in length. The response should be honest, courteous in tone, and should address strengths as well as weaknesses as well as issues or questions raised. A copy of the response must be given to the instructor at least one hour before class time. Students dealing with a method should prepare a bibliography for the benefit of their classmates. Students dealing with a text should prepare a statement suggesting how the text may best be applied within the context of the faith community with which they are most familiar).

#### ***Break down of grades:***

Class assignments, preparation and participation	45%
Class presentation	20%
Term project	25%
Respondent to presentation	10%

#### *Guidelines for Giving an Academic Response*

-Use the person's last name (and where applicable, title(s)) at least predominantly. -First names are acceptable here and there where you know the person well. This is after all, a formal thing.

-Begin by explicitly expressing thanks to the presenter. As well very early on (in the first few sentences) find some affirming (even if guarded, such as "interesting") adjectives to demonstrate your graciousness and to uphold the presenter's dignity regardless of the quality of the paper.

-Even where you differ with the presenter, and especially if your challenge must be sharp, be sure to include some mediating comments that provide some positive balance to your criticism. (E.g. "to be sure, to her credit, professor x included p and q, but the omission of r and s remains noteworthy and regrettable.")

-this is an opportunity to show your critical skills and familiarity with the topic, so being "impressive" is fine, but never at the expense of the other person.

-end your evaluation on a positive tone of some kind: appreciative, conciliatory, etc.

## Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

### ***Policy on Assignment Extensions***

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = "standing deferred") beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a

mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar's office.

**One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

## ***Policies***

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm)).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

**Writing Style.** The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), which is available at Crux Books.

## ***Bibliography***

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In addition to the following, see the handouts distributed in class on individual learning units. N.B. There are many more commentaries on Genesis that are useful than are listed (e.g. Brueggemann, Coats, Sarna, etc.)

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Armstrong, Karen. *In the Beginning: A New Interpretation of Genesis*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

Bandstra, Barry. *Genesis 1–11: A Handbook of the Hebrew Text*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008.

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- De La Torre, Miguel A. *Genesis. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011.
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<sup>1</sup> Maintains Genesis is a book in its own right (i.e. is not simply one part of the Pentateuch).

<sup>2</sup> Overview of scholarship on the Toledoth formulae.

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