**The Pentateuch I: Genesis**

Instructor-Pat Reeder

Wednesday evenings, 7pm-9:30pm

# Course description

This course is the first of four courses on the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible). Genesis is often consigned to the rubbish heap of modern theology, a vestige of ancient mythologizing, a collection of moral tales for spiritual edification with no connection to the world of history or science. A large portion of this course will involve sorting through the interpretive difficulties of Genesis in order to understand its theological centrality, as well as how it impacts our personal lives. I will also engage two major polemics presented against Genesis: (i) modern Science disproves the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2; (ii) Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch but there were numerous authors over a thousand years with no connection to the events described.

# Course Expectations

*Attendance* You must attend 5 of 6 classes to receive credit. Roughly, everyone has 1 “excused absence” before receiving an incomplete. Any other absence is negotiable, to be discussed with the instructor.

*Readings* There are weekly readings to keep in step with the material being covered each week. Questions on the readings can be found on the back of this sheet.

# Calendar

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| Week  | Date | Content  | Readings  |
| 1  | 1/4 | Overview; Critical Theory and Authorship  | N/A  |
| 2  | 1/11 | Science and Scripture  | Gen 1:1-2:3  |
| 3  | 1/18 | Humanity: Its Creation and Fall  | Gen 2:4-4:25 |
| 4  | 1/25 | History of Adam-Terah  | Gen 5:1-25:11  |
| 5  | 2/1 | History of Ishmael-Isaac-Esau  | Gen 25:12-37:1  |
| 6  | 2/8 | History of Jacob  | Gen 37:2-Gen 50:26  |

# Miscellaneous

Students will be responsible for their own notes. We will provide notebooks and the presentations will be available upon request.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS Reflect on and answer the following questions.

**Homework 1**- Read Gen 1:1-2:3 once quickly and then re-read it slowly word-for-word.

1. What stood out to you? Is there anything you’ve never noticed before in reading this passage?
2. What is the main point of this passage?
3. What does this passage teach about the nature of God? Nature of Mankind?

**Homework 2**- Read Gen 2:4-4:25- Reflect on and answer the following questions.

1. What do you learn about God in this section? Man and woman?
2. Why do you think the author includes the strange and disturbing story of Cain and Abel?

**Homework 3**- Read Gen 5:1-25:11- Reflect on and answer the following questions.

1. What is the reader of Genesis supposed to learn from the flood narrative?
2. List at least two of Abram/Abraham’s mistakes and explain why you believe they’re mistake.
3. Write down a short list of any time Abraham’s age is listed and what occurred at each one.

**Homework 4-** Read Gen 25:12-36:43-

1. What differences are there between Esau and Jacob? How do those harmonize these with Genesis 25:23 and Romans 9:10-13?
2. Based on Jacob’s interactions with God (whether direct or through his prayers), how would you characterize Jacob’s understanding of God?

**Homework 5**- Read Gen 37:2-50:26-

1. What do you think God was teaching Joseph while he was in Egypt? What do you think God was teaching *Jacob* while Joseph was in Egypt? What could the other brothers (first ten, of course) have learned from Joseph’s experience in Egypt?
2. Looking back, compare and contrast how God relates to the various players. Pay special attention to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. How has he provided for them? Pay special attention to the scale of time. How do they relate to Genesis 12:1-3?