

**University of Dubuque Theological Seminary**  
**BI 628D – Genesis**  
**Spring 2010 - Online**

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3 credits, letter grade or (as an elective) pass/fail.  
Core requirement for M.Div. in Old Testament English Exegesis.  
Prerequisite: Old Testament Introduction (or equivalent).

### **Course Description**

An in-depth study of the book of Genesis in English translation, with a focus on the themes, structure, literary artistry, and message of this foundational book of the Bible. Attention will also be paid to critical issues and methods, ancient Near Eastern parallels, and the history of scholarship on the book of Genesis.

### **Objectives**

At the successful completion of this course the student should have:

- 1) a thorough grasp of the content, theme, and message of the book of Genesis;
- 2) an awareness of issues surrounding the interpretation of the book of Genesis, including an acquaintance with the ancient Near Eastern background to the book, historical-critical and more recent literary and ideological (re)readings;
- 3) an ability to explore the historical narratives of Genesis through literary analysis, theological reflection, and canonical criticism, for the purpose of discerning the message for the ancient context and for today; and
- 4) some sense of the significance of these studies for spiritual growth and ministry.

In keeping with the stated purpose of the M.Div. degree, “to serve the one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and prepare women and men for faithful, compassionate, and effective pastoral ministry,” this course meets the following M.Div. curricular objectives. It will encourage students to

- 1) Nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer, and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives;
- 2) be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church;
- 3) interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition;
- 4) engage contemporary theological and ethical issues with insight and humility
- 5) integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.

### **Requirements**

- 1) Class Preparation and Participation: Students are expected to do assigned weekly readings and be prepared to participate in online discussions on those readings.
- 2) Exegetical Paper: One 12-15 page exegetical paper on a passage from Genesis to be chosen from a list distributed in class.
- 3) Theological Reflection Papers – Three reflection papers (approx. 2-3 pages) on the following topics:
  - a. Earth-Keeping: What does it mean to be created in the image of God and to have “dominion” over creation? Give a biblical perspective on the

relationship between humanity and the earth. What is our responsibility toward creation? What should the role of the Christian be with respect to the ecological crises? How does this impact our living today?

- b. Feminism and the Bible: What is the issue that some feminists have with the biblical text? Are their concerns valid? How would you respond to the charge of feminists that the bible is a patriarchal book with an androcentric bias that offers little good news for women?
  - c. Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives and Its Implication for the Christian Faith: What is the relationship between history (what actually happened) and historiography (the account of what happened) in the Patriarchal narratives? Do they reflect actual events or did faith create Abraham? Does it matter?
- 4) Final Exam: A one-hour test assessing knowledge of the chronology, people, places and events of the book of Genesis. Students can best prepare for this test by repeated reading of the book of Genesis.

### **Assessment and Grading:**

Final grades will be assessed as follows:

- 1) Exegetical Paper – 40%
- 2) Theological Reflection papers – 30%
- 3) Class Participation (online) – 20%
- 4) Final Exam – 10%

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

A = 100-95%	C = 76-73%
A- = 94-90%	C- = 72-70%
B+ = 89-87%	D+ = 69-67%
B = 86-83%	D = 66-63%
B- = 82-80%	D- = 62-60%
C+ = 79-77%	F = 59% or below

### **Textbooks (tentative):**

The following textbooks are required for class participation:

- 1) Any good study Bible. For instance, *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (NRSV), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (NRSV), and *The NIV Study Bible*. Students wishing to use a Bible other than ones listed here should consult with the instructor.
- 2) Amit, Yairah. *Reading Biblical Narratives*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- 3) Arnold, Bill T. *Genesis*. NCBC New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- 4) Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.