

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – NY

COURSE SYLLABUS

Genesis-Deuteronomy 09OT5200

3 credits

Fall Semester, 2026

7:30-9:30 PM, Thursdays, September 10 – December 17
(no class Oct. 15, Nov. 19 or 26, Dec. 3)

6:00-9:00 Friday, Sept. 18 & 9:30-8:30 Saturday, Sept. 19
5 hours of video material

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. William Fullilove, Ph.D.

Contact Information:

bfullilove@rts.edu

770-952-8884

NOTE: Please do not email or text for questions on assignments or to request extensions. The following contacts should be via Canvas:

- 1) Extension requests must be made in the individual comment section where the student would submit that assignment on Canvas.
- 2) Questions about assignments should be made in the general comments section regarding that assignment (visible to all).
- 3) More general class questions should be made in the Professor/Student discussion forum in Canvas.

If the issue is not covered by these three categories, then please email me. You are welcome to have my cell phone, but please only text me for emergencies. The three categories above are not emergencies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of the literary structure, themes, and history of the first five books of the Old Testament, with special attention on exegesis and use of these texts in ministry contexts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Comprehension:

1. To increase your knowledge of the English Bible of the books Genesis-Deuteronomy.
2. To increase your understanding of the message(s) of the books Genesis-Deuteronomy, both separately and together.

Competence:

1. To sharpen your ability to understand and interpret Genesis-Deuteronomy.
2. To sharpen your ability to interpret the books Genesis-Deuteronomy in their historical, theological, and literary contexts.
3. To sharpen your ability to teach and preach the books Genesis-Deuteronomy in the context of the local church.
4. To prepare those called to pastoral ministry for licensure and ordination exams at their local church assemblies and examination boards.

Character:

1. To sharpen your application of the themes of the books Genesis-Deuteronomy in your personal spiritual life.

2. To be a person of growing faith, hope, and love based on the work of God as revealed in these books.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Biblical books of Genesis-Deuteronomy in two English translations of the student's choice.
- T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land* (TDA)
- M. Barrett (ed.), *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (FVHA)
- Chianequé, Luciano C. and Samuel Ngewa, "Deuteronomy" in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo, Zondervan, 2006. (LCSN, available on Canvas)
- J. Ligon Duncan et al, *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation* (TGD)
- Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*, IVP Academic, 2020. (EM)
- David Zac Niringiye, *The Church: God's Pilgrim People* (DZN) Richard Pratt, *He Gave Us Stories* (RP)
- Iain W. Provan, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2015. (PLL)
- M. VanPelt (ed.), *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (BTIOT)
- Shorter Readings (on course website):
 - Bonhoeffer, "Reading the Scriptures" from *Life Together*
 - Fullilove, "Reading to Be Wrong" at *The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture*
 - Fullilove, "Read God's Law for Maximal Application" at *The Gospel Coalition*
 - Benjamin D. Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research*, eds. T. Dozeman, K. Schmid, and B. Schwartz. FAT 78. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011, p.85-108.
 - John Frame – "Studying Theology as a Servant of Jesus"
 - CS Lewis – "Learning in Wartime"
 - Flannery O'Connor: "Christian Realism"
 - Flannery O'Connor: "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- Other optional Readings, Viewing, and Listening are also provided on the course website.

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: Students are required to attend class lectures and discussions. If you know you cannot make it to a portion of a class session, notify the instructor in advance. Multiple absences will impact a student's final grade and can even result in failing to pass this class.

Reading and Viewing: Students should complete all readings and viewing by the deadlines in the course schedule below. Reading and viewing must be completed **before** the beginning of class each week.

Quizzes: Starting in week 5, students will be quizzed at the **beginning** of class each week covering the reading of the Biblical books as indicated on the course schedule. (Students should not expect to arrive late and be able to take the quiz.) The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. To provide students with a sense of the level of difficulty of these quizzes, the first quiz (on Genesis 11:10-25:18) will be ungraded.

Weekly Professor Interaction Assignments: Starting in week 2, students will be assigned passages each week to which to apply the skills taught up to that point in this class. This work will require applying the skills taught in the viewing to the assigned scripture passage. Students should come to class each week prepared to discuss the passage and their analysis of it, including presentation to the class of their findings. Students should produce a SHORT (max. 2 pages) written submission that summarizes their work. This assignment should be submitted as a **.pdf** file **before** the start of class each week **via Canvas** where it will receive individual feedback from the professor. More details will be given weekly in class regarding the content of this assignment, as it will shift over the course of the semester.

Final Paper: Students will write a critical review of the historiographical methodology proposed in Part 1 of *A Biblical History of Israel*. This critical review should be approximately 8 pages, double-spaced. For instructions on writing a critical review, see the appendix to this syllabus.

Note carefully: this assignment is graded on BOTH content and writing ability. Please consult the resources on the course Canvas site about the nature of good writing.

Note: Students who are interested in doing **additional graduate study** beyond their RTS degree **MUST** contact the instructor in advance, as these requirements may be adjusted to better prepare the student for his or her future course of study.

TOTAL GRADE: The final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Quizzes: 25%
Attendance 10%
Weekly Assignments: 40%
Final Paper: 25%

Grades will be assigned according to the RTS grading system. The instructor reserves the right to adjust grades based on each student's attendance at class and participation in classroom discussion.

AI POLICY: Students please note carefully. In addition to the RTS AI policy, which students should consult, the following are controlling for this course:

The use of A.I. (in all its various forms) is permissible in this class when students are looking to understand readings and issues, etc. Students should note well, however, the tendencies of A.I. to include inaccuracies. Any such inaccuracies absorbed by the student will be the student's own responsibility.

Further, the use of an A.I. summary does not count as having completed the expected readings for the class.

Please note carefully as well: **any use of A.I. in preparing the thinking and analysis for written assignments is prohibited**, as doing so is presenting the work of others (in this case, an LLM) as the student's own, and is as such a violation of the 9th commandment by bearing false witness. **However, AI grammar checks (such as embedded in a word processor or Grammarly) are acceptable.**

EXTENSION POLICY: All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must complete an Extension Request Form. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

OFFICE HOURS:

Thursdays 4:30-5:30. I am always also available by appointment, including before or after class or by phone.

I enjoy sharing thoughts with students, so do not hesitate to contact me. The contact information given above is for your use, and you should feel free to contact me as much as you wish. I will respond as promptly as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

NOTE: The course schedule is ALWAYS subject to revision based on the needs of the class.

Week 1 – Sept. 10

- Other Reading: RP ch. 1-3
- Class Topics: Spiritual Reading
- Other Reading: John Frame: *Studying Theology as a Servant of Jesus*; Fullilove, *Reading to Be Wrong*, Bonhoeffer, “Reading the Scriptures”

Week 2 and Weekend – Sept. 17-19

- Bible Reading: Gen. 1-2
- Other Reading: Lewis, TDA chs. 1-3, TGD, FVHA
- Class Topics: Kingdom of God, Creation, and the Image of God; Days of Creation; Historical Adam

Week 3 – Sept. 24

- Bible Reading: Gen. 3-11
- Other Reading: BTIOT ch. 1, TDA chs. 4-5, O’Connor (both), Complete TGD or FVHA if necessary
- Viewing: Narrator/Evaluative Framework
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Gen. 4:1-16
- Class Topic: Primeval History (Everything is Broken)

Week 4 – Oct. 1

- Bible Reading: None
- Other Reading: RP, chs. 4-6; TDA, chs. 19-24; SO
- Viewing: Characterization, Part 1 and Part 2
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Gen. 9:18-29
- Class Topic: Types of Analysis

Week 5 – Oct. 8

- Bible Reading: Gen. 11:10-25:18
- Other Reading: RP, chs. 8-9; TDA ch. 6. EM, ch. 5
- Viewing: Structures and Scene Division
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Gen. 22:1-19
- Class Topic: Abraham (The Father of the Faith)

NOTE: No Class Oct. 15

Week 6 – Oct. 22

- Bible Reading: Gen. 25:19-36:40
- Other Reading: none
- Viewing: Plot
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Gen. 32:22-32
- Class Topic: Jacob (The Weasel Patriarch of Israel)

Week 7 – Oct. 29

- Bible Reading: Gen. 37-50
- Other Reading: RP ch. 7
- Viewing: Time and Space
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Gen. 42-45
- Class Topic: Joseph (From Punk to Pillar)

Week 8 – Nov. 5

- Bible Reading: Exodus
- Other Reading: TDA chs. 7-10; BTIOT ch. 2
- Viewing: Imagery & Scene Depiction
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Ex. 32
- Class Topic: Exodus (The Paradigm for Redemption)

Week 9 – Nov. 12

- Bible Reading: Leviticus
- Other Reading: TDA ch. 11-13; BTIOT, ch. 3, Fullilove *Read God's Law for Maximal Application*
- Viewing: Other Stylistic Devices
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Lev. 10
- Class Topic: Leviticus (Holy Living)

NO Class Nov. 19 or 26, Dec 3

Week 10 – Dec. 10

- Bible Reading: Numbers
- Other Reading: TDA ch. 14-15; BTIOT, ch. 4
- Passage to Prepare for Class Discussion: Num. 22-24
- Class Topic: Numbers (Grumbling in the Desert)

Week 11 – Dec. 17

- Bible Reading: Deuteronomy
- Other Reading: TDA ch. 16-18; BTIOT, ch. 5; DZN chs. 1-5; EM, ch. 7, LCSN
- Class Topic: Deuteronomy (Taking the Land, Life in Covenant)
Note: because of the foundational nature of Deuteronomy to all of the Old (and New!) Testament material that follows it in the Bible, students should reread Deuteronomy alongside Chianeque and Ngewa's commentary. Students are encouraged to read through Deuteronomy again after the class with a more extensive commentary as well.)
- **Paper due at the start of class**

Appendix 1: Instructions on Writing a Critical Review*

The **FIRST** part of your critical book review is a *statement of the contents*. Here you want to indicate both subject and theme. The subject can be loosely defined as what the author is talking about, and the theme loosely defined as what the author says about the subject. What you are interested in doing here is informing your reader of what he or she will find when picking up the book. Put another way, this section includes both a statement of the factual content of the book and a discussion of the author's bias. Here you are simply giving the facts: the contents of the book and the author's point of view. Your own opinions are irrelevant. Your end is simply to inform the reader objectively.

The **SECOND** part of your review is a critical evaluation of the book's strengths. Here it is your opinions that matter and your reaction to the book. What did you like about the book? Which sections were especially strong? Why? Which themes or topics were addressed well? How did the author make his or her case? Was it convincing? What was especially valuable about the treatment?

The **THIRD** section of your review is a critical evaluation of the book's weaknesses. Were there any sections that were particularly unsatisfactory? Did you find contradictions in what the author said in different parts? Does the work conflict with some other work that you have read?

In a word, in the last two sections you give your reactions to the book. The first part of the book review is somewhat mechanical. The second and third parts are for your evaluation. Obviously, it is not enough simply to say, "I like the book; I didn't like the book." Statements must be concrete and backed up with citations and arguments. Approximately one-third of your paper should be devoted to each section.

* Adapted from Dr. Bruce Waltke.

Appendix 2: Final Paper Grading Criteria

A	This paper is basically ready for and worthy of publication, not necessarily in a peer-reviewed academic journal, but in a publication geared towards educated lay people. It is not only clearly articulating and defending a thesis, but it is fully proofed and footnoted.
A-	This is an A paper, however it is not fully proofed or footnoted. Minor corrections are necessary.
B+	This paper states and defends its main thesis well and would “carry the day” in a debate about that thesis. It needs improvement, however, in one secondary area that is not essential to the main thesis but still important.
B	This paper states and defends its main thesis well and would “carry the day” in a debate about that thesis. It needs improvement, however, in multiple secondary areas that are not essential to the main thesis but still important.
B-	This paper shows insight into the assignment but struggles with both the problems of a B paper above and is not fully proofed or footnoted.
C+	This paper does not state a clear thesis, making it impossible to evaluate well whether it has proved its point. While it is well done in many respects, the argumentation is therefore lacking in the core point of the assignment.
C	Not only does this paper have the problem of a C+ paper, it also needs improvement in multiple secondary areas that are not essential to what would have been the main thesis if that thesis had been clearly enunciated.
C-	This paper shows all the problems of a C paper and also is not fully proofed or footnoted.
D	This paper is barely passing and flawed in multiple areas, barely addressing the assignment’s criteria.
F	This paper clearly does not meet the criteria established in the assignment (both and either as enunciated on Canvas and in the syllabus).

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Class Preparation assignments, Paper
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Exegetical Focus, Significant Paper, Class Preparation of specific passages
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Medium/Strong	Reformed Approach Covenants underlies class
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Close study of the Word of God sanctifies; strong devotional components of Scripture
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Material is taught thoroughly within and analyzed against redemptive-historical worldview
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	Discussion and evaluation of contributions from other traditions in a respectful and honoring way
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Exegetical work that forms the backbone of strong preaching; frequent discussion of applications for preaching

Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	Study of the Word of God should move believers to worship
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Minimal	Discussion as applicable
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Discussion as applicable