

# Pentateuch

Horizon College and Seminary, Winter 2010  
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## Course Description

The originary, ethical, and theological content of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—has provided many of the formative underpinnings of Judaism, Christianity, and Western culture. Accordingly, this course will seek to unpack the novelty of these texts by reading them in light of the scholarly understanding of the social, religious, and literary dynamics of the Ancient Near East and highlighting relevant insights and implications for religious life and faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Course Textbooks

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

Holy Bible (RSV and NRSV are good translations).

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will

- Have a thorough understanding of the important critical discussions within Pentateuchal scholarship.
- Have a comprehensive understanding of the content of these books in light of their place in the Ancient Near East.
- Be able to identify the Pentateuch's foundational theological themes and discuss the importance of these themes for subsequent writers.
- Be able to identify and discuss the novel aspects of ancient Israelite religion as found in the Pentateuch.
- Have a basic knowledge of the important critical resources available for the study of the Pentateuch.
- Be able to articulate some important implications of these texts for the contemporary period and their own personal lives.

## Course Outline

Week 1: Introductory Matters: Authorship and Approach

Week 2: Origins: Cosmos, Humanity, Civilization (Genesis 1-11)

Week 3: Origins: Patriarchs and the Beginning of a Nation (Genesis 12-50)

Week 4: Egypt and Exodus (Exodus 1-18)

Week 5: Law and Covenant (Exodus 19-40)

Week 6: Priest and Sacrifice (Leviticus 1-10)

Week 7: Purity and Holiness (Leviticus 11-27)

Week 8: The Wilderness Experience: Sinai to Kadesh (Numbers 1-20)

Week 9: The Wilderness Experience: Kadesh to Moab (Numbers 21-36)

Week 10: Remembering the Past; Anticipating the Future (Deuteronomy 1-11)

Week 11: Further Laws and Regulations (Deuteronomy 12-26)

Week 12: Blessings and Curses (Deuteronomy 27-34)

## **Course Requirements**

### ***Required readings:***

Students are required to read all portions of the course textbook as assigned by the instructor. Although no formal grades will be given for the completion of these readings, the course text forms a valuable supplement to the class lectures. As such, it is expected that the student will interact with the text and prepare him/herself for any related questions that might appear on class quizzes or the final exam.

### ***Quizzes (3x10%):***

In place of a midterm exam, students will be required to write three quizzes on dates assigned by the instructor. These quizzes are cumulative in nature and will reflect material from the class lectures and assigned readings up to, but not including, the day of the quiz.

### ***Research Essay (30%):***

Students will be required to submit one research essay of no less than 8 pages in length (MLA format). In consultation with the instructor, students will choose a topic from one of the following four general categories:

- An exegesis of a selected passage from the Pentateuch
- A history of interpretation of an important passage from the Pentateuch

- An exploration of a major theological theme from the Pentateuch
- The interpretation of the Pentateuch during the Second Temple period

***Final Exam (40%):***

Based on class lectures and assigned textbook readings.