



B220 Pentateuch

3 credits. Prerequisites: B119 Bible Study Methods or B110 Introduction to the Old Testament

 On Campus with Remote Prof  Livestream  Video on Demand

March 10–April 17, 2025

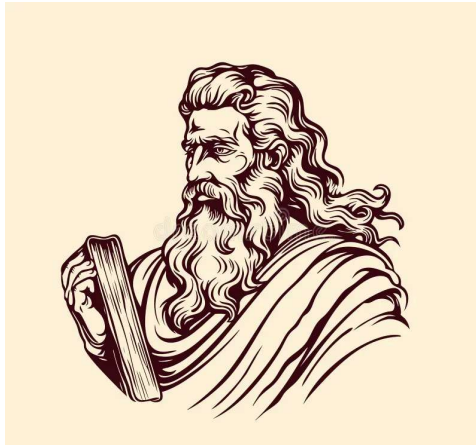
Term D

Monday–Thursday, 9:00am – 10:30am SK

(11:00am – 12:30pm ET)

Ambrose Thomson, PhD

athomson@horizon.edu



Please note: There is an assignment due the first week of class, so you may wish to start before class begins.

Course Goals

Course Description

This course introduces students to the structure, literature, and theology of the five books of Moses by tracing the key events, themes, and socio-cultural dimensions of these texts. In the process, we will explore how Pentateuch informs the faith and practices of the contemporary church.

Relationship to MCS-Horizon's Missions

This course prepares students for Spirit-empowered life and ministry by equipping them to understand and apply biblical truth with greater proficiency.



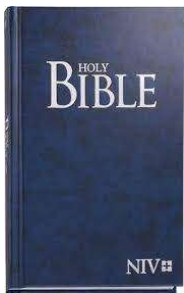
Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes

To demonstrate competency in Biblical and Theological Literacy, students will

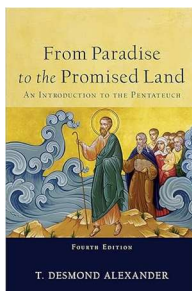
1. Interpret the Pentateuch in light of its literary and socio-historical contexts, structure, and distinct theological perspective with the assistance of relevant secondary literature.
 - *Assessment:* Class Preparation and Participation, Pentateuchal Book Overview Essay, Thematic Exploration
2. Describe the key interpretive issues that are critical for understanding the Pentateuch.
 - *Assessment:* Class Preparation and Participation, Pentateuchal Book Overview Essay
3. Identify and explain key emphases and their significance within the books of the Pentateuch
 - *Assessment:* Class Preparation and Participation, Reading & Reflection, Thematic Exploration
4. Explain how the theological witness of the Pentateuch informs the way we think, live, and minister today.
 - *Assessment:* Reading & Reflection, Pentateuchal Book Overview Essay, Thematic Exploration

Course Work

Required Readings



Contemporary translation of the Bible (NIV, NRSV recommended)



Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. ISBN: 978-1540963406.
DTL: <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1321789633>.

**While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.

Course Assignments and Activities

1. Class Preparation and Participation: Reading and Engagement – 20%

In order to cultivate a cooperative learning community, students will prepare for class during the term by 1) reading the relevant portions of the Pentateuch before attending (or watching) the class for which they are assigned in the course outline and 2) by identifying questions and observations that can be used to interact during lectures, group discussions, and other classroom activities. The passages to be read for each class can be found in the course outline below.

Note: Since there is no mandatory pre-reading on the first and last day of class, all three questions and observations can be from the class session that day.

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - Assignment Guidelines:
 - Carefully read the assigned passages for each day *before* attending/watching class.
 - Identify one critical question and one observation about the assigned passage *before* attending/watching class.
 - During each class session, identify an *additional two* critical observations and an *additional two* questions that arise from further engagement through the classroom lectures, group discussions, and other activities that day.
 - The critical questions should be focused on key interpretive issues that are critical to understanding the Pentateuch. The observations should be focused on key emphases that you see as significant to the message of the Pentateuch.
 - *Using the template provided on Populi*, compile your questions and observations into a written format for submission at the end of the term.
 - The assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Uses the template provided on Populi.
 - Includes three questions and three observations for each day.
 - Indicates the date on which the student completed each assigned reading.
 - “Stealing” the observations and questions raised by fellow students during classroom times is encouraged! However, try to think of why another person’s contribution stood out to you as important. Make it your own, even if your thoughts were stimulated by others.
 - Related learning outcome(s): #2, 3
 - **Assignment length:** No set length in pages; *Do not overtax yourself with the writing aspect of this assignment.* Single sentences for questions and observations are sufficient—as long as the professor can understand what you’re saying and how it engages with specific passages and class times. The goal is to document that you prepared for class times as expected.
 - **Due date:** Friday, April 11, 2025.

2. Reading & Reflection – 20%

This written submission of about five pages will involve reading and reflecting on one of the books of the Pentateuch other than Genesis. Approach your reading as a devotional activity with prayer. The goal of this exercise is not only to learn what is in the biblical book to support theological and biblical literacy, but to allow the book to function as divine revelation for your life right now. Since the word of the Lord does not return to him empty, you should expect and pray that this assignment will be transformative, as well as informative.

- To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:
 - Assignment Guidelines:
 - First, choose one of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy for your reading in this assignment.
 - Then, *before* reading for the assignment, develop your personal context for reading the book by identifying several questions you have in your life and learning right now. These can be questions about your personal life such as questions about decisions and direction or sense-making questions that you have as you try to understand what God is doing in your life through the circumstances and experiences you have encountered. The questions can also be related to your current level of biblical and theological understanding, such as questions about theological issues or Church practices and patterns of thought that you are wrestling with and need greater insight and clarity over. You will probably find it helpful to write down some of these questions as you begin the reading and add to them as you go.
 - Read the pentateuchal book you have chosen for the assignment, praying that the Holy Spirit will speak his living word to you through his Scriptures. It is encouraged, but not required, that you read the book at least twice.
 - As you read, look for ways that the things you have learned so far in the course impact the perspective you have on the text.
 - As you read, watch for thoughts and ideas that come into your mind about the questions you identified in developing your personal context for reading. These may be promptings of the Spirit. Note these things and pray about them. Listen to what the Lord may want to say in or about those thoughts and ideas.
 - Write a short reflective essay highlighting how these books make sense to you now in light of the lectures you've heard and how your experience of hearing from God through Scripture has been helped (or hindered) by the perspectives you've gained so far in the course. The essay should include specific discussion of your perspective on the pentateuchal book and how it has been impacted by the course as well as specific reflection on how God has or has not spoken into the questions you identified when developing your personal context of reading these Scriptures at the outset.
 - This assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Follows the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
 - Includes a short initial statement identifying which of the four books you have chosen and confirming that you have read it at least once.

- Related learning outcome(s): #3, 4
- **Assignment length:** \approx 5 pages. *Again, don't overtax yourself on the writing aspect of this assignment.* The goal of the submission is to provide evidence that you have gone through the process outlined above. The real “work” of the assignment is reading these books, listening for the Spirit’s voice, and prayerfully reflecting on how the reading is impacting you in the context of what you have learned in class. The vast majority of what comes out of this exercise for you will not be contained in the five-page submission. In the essay, you’re just trying to give an illustrative and brief (but convincing!) account of having completed the exercise.
- **Due date:** Thursday, March 13, 2025.

3. Pentateuchal Book Overview Essay – 30%

Each student will write an essay that gives an overview of one of the five books of the Pentateuch, describes its relationship to the other four pentateuchal books, and explores its role in the development of Israel’s existence and their relationship with God.

To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:

- Assignment Guidelines:
 - Choose one of the four books of the Pentateuch that are not Genesis to focus on in this assignment. Students must NOT choose the same book chosen for the reflective reading assignment.
 - Read Chapters 1–6 and 18 in the assigned course textbook (Alexander) as well as the textbook chapters that are relevant to your chosen pentateuchal book according to the following listing:

Exodus:	Alexander, chs. 7–10
Leviticus:	Alexander chs. 11–13
Numbers:	Alexander, chs. 14–15
Deuteronomy:	Alexander, chs. 16–17
 - Read the overview articles/chapters on your chosen pentateuchal book in at least two of the following resources (all available on DTL):
 - Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester, UK; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
 - Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
 - Keck, Leander E., ed. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. 12 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003.
 - Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Fee, Gordon D. *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.

In lieu of one or both of the overview articles/chapters you may read the “Introduction” in a relevant commentary from one of the following series: NICOT, NIVAC, NIB, BST, WBC, ZECOT, TOTC.

- Write a summary essay about your chosen pentateuchal book that integrates a discussion of relevant interpretive issues (e.g., authorship, date, genre, and purpose) with a description of the unique contribution your chosen book makes to the theological profile of the Pentateuch as a whole and the effect that it has on the Pentateuch’s role in the wider Christian canon.

This essay should include the following sections:

1. *Introduction*: Identify the purpose of the essay and clearly articulate a thesis about the theological or thematic relationship between your chosen book, the rest of the Pentateuch, and the canon as a whole (including the NT).
 2. *Body Section*: Present an argument that supports your thesis statement. This argument should supply evidence from the chosen Pentateuchal book Old and interact with the assigned course textbook and at least two other resources from the list above.
 3. *Conclusion*: Given the brevity of the paper, there need not be any recap of your argument in the conclusion. Instead, reflect in several sentences on how your exploration of this pentateuchal book has relevance for the life of the Church in the world today.
- This assignment will be considered complete if the assignment submission:
 - Follows the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
 - Has a clearly identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion.
 - Identifies and focuses on one specific Pentateuchal book.
 - Related learning outcome(s): # 1, 2, 4.
 - **Assignment length**: 5-6 pages.
 - **Due date**: Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

4. *Thematic Exploration* – 30%

The final assignment for this course will be a written submission on key thematic threads within the Pentateuch by providing long form answers to four thematically integrative questions.

To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:

- Assignment Guidelines:
 - During your readings throughout the term as well as during class lectures take note of anything that stands out as relevant to answering the questions in this assignment.

- Consult three or more scholarly resources that deal with the Pentateuch's theology in ways related to the questions in this assignment.
A good place to start is a dictionary entry in something like *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, or *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. For more advanced resources, check out the Cambridge and Oxford Handbook or Companion series. Other major academic presses also have similar collections, which should all be available through DTL. These companion series often have a dedicated volume on the Pentateuch with helpful essays by leading experts on a variety of relevant topics. Pay attention to how these scholarly discussions highlight things you either did or did not notice in your own reading of the biblical text.
- Finally, complete the written submission *using the template provided on Populi* by providing long-form/essay style answers to the following questions:

What is the overarching plan of God for creation and how does it unfold/progress in the Pentateuch? (~2 pgs.)

Who is Israel, why do they exist, and what is the fundamental basis of their identity and function within the Pentateuch? (~2 pgs.)

In what ways does the Gospel fulfill the expectations of Israel's existence? (~1 pg.)

In what ways can the church be effective in fulfilling God's purposes revealed in the Pentateuch in the world today? (~1 pg.)

In your answers to these questions, you should make reference to specific passages in the Pentateuch that support your answer and you should interact with the 3 or more scholarly resources you consulted.

- This assignment will be considered complete if the submission:
 - Uses the template provided on Populi.
 - Follows the MCS-Horizon Format Guide.
 - Includes long-form responses to each question as indicated above.
 - Includes a bibliography of at least three scholarly resources that you cited in footnotes.
- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 5-7 pages.
- **Due date:** Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is being offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have the same assignment due dates as in-class students.

- By Saturday at 11:59pm each week, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from the previous week's classes.
- By Saturday at 11:59pm each week, VOD students will submit a 2-3-minute video report on Padlet that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording for the last seven days, 2) summarizes one thing you learned that week that will help you reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
- In order to pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly submissions. These submissions are marked pass/fail based on whether or not they demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the lecture content and in-class activities.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	Weighting
1. Class Preparation & Participation	15 hrs	April 11	20%
2. Reading & Reflection	10 hrs	March 13	20%
3. Pentateuchal Book Overview Essay	20 hrs	March 26	30%
4. Thematic Exploration	20 hrs	April 8	30%
Total =		~95 hrs	

All assignments are due at 11:59pm **SK time**, unless otherwise indicated.

Assessment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Course Outline

Date	Class Topic(s)	Assigned Reading
Week 1 March 10-13	March 10: Class Introduction March 11: Orientation to the Pentateuch March 12: Interpreting the Pentateuch March 13: The Theology of the Pentateuch	Ps 19 (Optional) Gen 1-5, Deut 34 Exod 3, 6 Gen 12:1-9
Week 2 March 17-20	March 17: An Old Human Problem March 18: A New Human Promise March 19: Forming a Family, Building a Nation March 20: The Plight of the New Humanity	Gen 1-11 Gen 12, 15, 17, 22 Gen 32, 35, 46, 49 Exod 1-5
Week 3 March 24-27	March 21: Redemption March 22: A Covenant of Presence March 23: Disaster and Mercy March 24: Entering the Presence	Exod 7-12 Exod 19-20, 25 Exod 32-34, 40 Lev 1-3, 8-11, 13, 16
Week 4 March 31-April 3	March 31: Living in and Living out the Presence April 1: Life and Death in the Covenant April 2: Numbers? Really? April 3: People, Place, and Presence	Lev 18-25 Lev 26 Num 1-3 Num 14, 26-27
Week 5 April 7-10	April 7: A Number of Matters April 8: A Second Law, A New History	Num 12, 15-18, 22-24 Deut 1-6

	April 9: A Perfect Plan and An Open Future April 10: Wrap-Up, Loose Ends, Course Evals	Deut 7, 12-15, 31-32 Psalm 119 (Optional)
--	---	--

- First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after April 11, 2025.
- Revision week is April 14-17. Your instructor may also request revisions on some assignments before revision week.
- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after April 17, 2025.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the [MCS-Horizon](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Assignment Extension Request Form* on Populi and *before the due date*. Professors may grant extensions in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or a family emergency. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. If a student incurs multiple instances of late submissions, it will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation, failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late, the student will fail the course.

Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Assignment Revisions

Students can generally submit up to two revisions for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward achieving competency.

MCS-Horizon College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment rubric. Once a

student's assignment has met all competency requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. Likewise, a final course grade is not calculated until the end of the course. Students pass a course (with a B- or higher) only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all competency requirements* for that course and, therefore, only after they have passed all assignments.

MCS-Horizon CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated good achievement of all learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

If the student does not meet all competency requirements in a course and, therefore, does not pass all the assignments in a course, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at MCS-Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below according to the scale below.

BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student was beginning to meet one or more learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Accessible Learning Services Information

MCS-Horizon aims to provide an accessible learning environment for all our students. If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to temporary or ongoing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, please contact us as soon as possible to schedule a

conversation. In all cases we ask that you provide current documentation of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. MCS-Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, contact Wendy Holmes, MCS's Director of Academic Success (wendy.holmes@mcs.edu), or Richelle Bekkattla, Horizon's Library Technician and Academic Accommodations Coordinator (library@horizon.edu).

Class Attendance (On Campus or Livestreaming)

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or through livestreaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

MCS-Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.

- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.