

OT5301 Pentateuch

3 credits. Prerequisites: None

 On Campus, Saskatoon

 Livestream

 Video on Demand

November 16 – 20, 2026

Fall 2026

Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm SK



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Please note: This course contains reading and writing before and during the module. Complete the readings & papers for Day 1 before the start of the module.

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 the Pentateuch informs the faith and practices of the contemporary church.

Relationship to Horizon's Mission

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

Course 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:* Book Overview Essay; Summary/Synthesis Essay.
2. Describe the key interpretive issues that are critical for understanding the Pentateuch.
 - *Assessment:* Pre-Class Reading & Reflection; Book Overview Essay.
3. Identify and explain key emphases and their significance within the books of the Pentateuch
 - *Assessment:* Pre-Class Reading & Reflection; Book Reading & Reflection; Book Overview Essay; Summary/Synthesis Essay.
4. Explain how the theological witness of the Pentateuch informs the way we think, live, and minister today.
 - *Assessment:* Book Reading & Reflection; Book Overview Essay; Summary/Synthesis Essay.

Course Work

Required Readings

Any contemporary translation of the Bible (NIV, NRSV, ESV recommended)

Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. ISBN: 978-0801039980.

[DTL](#)

****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. Pre-Class Reading & Reflection (20%)

Format: Short reflection papers (19 total), submitted before each relevant session, 1–2 pages each (double-spaced).

Description: For each assigned session's biblical passage(s), students will read the text closely and submit a brief reflection consisting of: (a) a concise summary of the passage's content and literary context, (b) one or two key theological or thematic observations that stood out to the student, and (c) at least one interpretive question the reading raised—questions about meaning, historical background, apparent tension, or application that the student genuinely wants answered in class.

Purpose: This assessment builds the habit of careful, reflective reading of the primary text before it is filtered through secondary literature or lecture, and it seeds class discussion with student-generated questions rather than only instructor-driven content.

Grading criteria:

- Evidence of careful reading of the assigned passage (not just summary of secondary material).
- Quality and specificity of theological/thematic observations.
- Genuine, substantive interpretive questions (not rhetorical or superficial).
- Timeliness (submitted before the relevant session).
- Related learning outcome(s): #2, 3.
- **Assignment length:** 1 – 2 pages per paper (19 papers total).¹

¹ Do not worry! The emphasis is on reading the biblical passages and the papers will help to support that endeavour. These are not long papers, and your only source is the biblical text.

- **Due date:** November 16 at 9am; November 17 at 9am; November 18 at 9am; November 19 at 9am; November 20 at 9am.

2. *Book Reading & Reflection* (20%).

Format: Reflective paper, 5–6 pages, on one book of the Pentateuch (student’s choice).

Description: Students will read one complete book of the Pentateuch in a single sustained reading (or a small number of sittings) and write a reflective—rather than technical or academic—paper capturing: (a) what the student personally “received” or noticed in the book that they hadn’t seen before, (b) how specific aspects of the book speak to or apply to the student’s own life, ministry, or context, and (c) how the book “makes sense” to the student as a coherent whole—what holds it together for them, and what it communicates about God, humanity, or Israel when read as a unified book rather than isolated passages.

Purpose: This assessment cultivates devotional and formational engagement with Scripture—reading for spiritual and personal insight, not only academic analysis—and asks students to articulate the coherence of a biblical book on their own terms before they are given interpretive tools in Assignment 3.

Grading criteria:

- Evidence of having read the whole book attentively.
- Depth and honesty of personal reflection and application.
- Ability to articulate the book’s coherence/sense-making in the student’s own words.
- Clarity of writing and appropriate length (5–6 pages).
- Related learning outcome(s): #3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 5 – 6 pages
- **Due date:** December 11, 2026 @ 8:00pm SK.

3. *Book Overview Essay* (30%).

Format: Academic essay, 5–6 pages, on one book of the Pentateuch, and must be a different book from the one chosen for Assignment 2.

Description: Students will write a scholarly overview essay on their chosen book that engages relevant secondary literature to address key interpretive issues, including (as applicable): authorship, date of composition/final form, literary genre and structure, audience, and purpose. The essay should then move from these introductory/critical issues to explain how the book contributes distinctively to the overall theological framework and message of the Pentateuch—i.e., what this book adds that the others do not, and how it fits into the larger five-book witness. The student must read and engage first with the relevant chapters in the primary assigned textbook (Alexander), and then with their chosen Pentateuchal book’s overview articles/chapters in at least two of the following sources:

Alexander, T. Desmond, and Brian S. Rosner, eds. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester, UK; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000. [DTL](#)

Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003. [DTL](#)

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005. [DTL](#)

Fee, Gordon D. *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011. [DTL](#)

Students should also read relevant book introductions from at least one of the following commentary series:

- *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (NICOT)
- *NIV Application Commentary* (NIVAC)
- *New Interpreter's Bible* (NIB)
- *Bible Speaks Today* (BST)
- *Word Biblical Commentary* (WBC)
- *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament* (ZECOT)
- *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (TOTC)

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 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.

Purpose: This is the course's primary academic-literacy assessment—it requires students to move beyond personal reading into the scholarly conversation, using secondary sources responsibly to address genuinely contested questions, and then to synthesize that critical work theologically.

Grading criteria:

- Substantive, accurate engagement with relevant interpretive issues (authorship, dating, genre, purpose).
- Appropriate use and citation of secondary literature (commentaries, journal articles). Required sources to cite in the paper include: the textbook, 2 dictionaries/handbooks from the above list, one introduction for the above list of commentaries, and any other sources in the attached bibliography.
- Clear articulation of the book's theological contribution to the Pentateuch as a whole
- Logical structure, argumentation, and academic writing quality.
- Proper citation format should follow the Horizon & MCS Format Guide.
- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 2, 3 and 4.
- **Assignment length:** 5 – 6 pages.

- **Due date:** January 7, 2027 @ 8:00 PM SK.

4. *Pentateuch Summary/Synthesis Essay* (30%).

Format: Culminating academic essay, 5–8 pages, addressing all of the following in an integrated argument (not as disconnected answers):

1. What is the overarching plan of God for creation, and how does that plan unfold across the Pentateuch?
2. Who is Israel, and why does Israel exist? What is the basis and nature of Israel's identity, and what is Israel's function within the Pentateuch's own theological vision?
3. How do the Gospels fulfill the expectations and hopes generated by Israel's existence and calling in the Pentateuch?
4. In what ways can the church today be effective in carrying forward God's purposes as revealed in the Pentateuch?

To complete this assignment, students will follow these guidelines:

- During your readings throughout the semester, 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.
- The essay format must follow the Horizon & MCS Format Guide.

Purpose: This is the course's capstone assessment. It requires students to synthesize the entire semester's work—the thematic material from the primary textbook, the two book studies, and the overview essay—into a single coherent theological argument that traces God's purposes from creation through Israel to Christ and the church.

Grading criteria:

- Coherence and integration across all four questions (a unified essay, not four mini-essays).
 - Theological accuracy and depth in tracing the creation-to-Israel-to-church trajectory.
 - Appropriate grounding in specific Pentateuchal texts and themes covered in the course.
 - Thoughtful, concrete application to the contemporary church.
 - Writing quality and structure.
 - Proper citation format should follow the Horizon & MCS Format Guide.
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- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 3, 4.
 - Assignment length: 5 – 8 pages.
 - **Due date:** January 20, 2027 @ 8:00 PM SK.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is 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 and different assignment due dates as in-class students.
 - Day 1 Pre-Reading and Reflection due November 20 at 8pm
 - Day 2 Pre-Reading and Reflection due November 25 at 8pm
 - Day 3 Pre-Reading and Reflection due November 30 at 8pm
 - Day 4 Pre-Reading and Reflection due December 4 at 8pm
 - Day 5 Pre-Reading and Reflection due December 9 at 8pm
 - Book Reading and Reflection due December 18 at 8pm
 - Book Overview Essay due January 7 at 8pm (unchanged)
 - Summary / Synthesis Essay due January 20 at 8pm (unchanged)
- According to the schedule below, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities. VOD students will submit a 2–3-minute video report that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording, 2) summarizes one thing you learned that will help you reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
 - Day 1 Lectures and Report due November 20 at 8pm
 - Day 2 Lectures and Report due November 25 at 8pm
 - Day 3 Lectures and Report due November 30 at 8pm
 - Day 4 Lectures and Report due December 4 at 8pm
 - Day 5 Lectures and Report due December 9 at 8pm
- Students registered to attend by VOD will fulfill the course attendance requirements through their video report submissions. They must submit their VOD reports on time to be registered as present for class.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	Weighting
1. Pre-Reading and Reflection	30 hrs	Nov 16 – 20	20%
2. Book Reading and Reflection	14 hrs	December 11	20%
3. Book Overview Essay	30 hrs	January 7	30%
4. Summary / Synthesis Essay	23 hrs	January 20	30%
Total =		≈ 127 hrs	100%

All assignments are due at 8pm **SK time**, unless otherwise indicated.

Course Outline Schedule

Date	Session	Title	Bible Reading
	1	An Overview of the Pentateuch	Gen 1:1–2:3; Exod 19:3–6; Deut 34:1–12
	2	Eden, Sanctuary, and Sacred Space	Gen 1:26–2:25; 3:1–24; 11:1–9

Nov 16²	3	Genealogies and the Promised Seed	Gen 4:17–26; 5:1–32; 11:10–32
	4	Blessing as a Missional Thread	Gen 1:28; 12:1–3; 18:18; 22:15–18; 28:10–15
Nov 17	5	From Fractured Family to Sojourning People ³	Gen 3:1–24; 4:1–16; 6:5–9:17; 11:1–9
	6	Covenant and the Life of Abraham ⁴	Gen 12:1–9; 15:1–21; 17:1–14; 22:1–19
	7	The Exodus and the Revelation of God's Name	Exod 1:1–14; 3:1–15; 5:1–6:9; 7:1–12:36 (survey); 19:1–8
	8	Blood, Deliverance, and Memory	Exod 12:1–51; 13:1–16
Nov 18	9	The Covenant at Sinai I: The Decalogue	Exod 19:16–25; 20:1–21
	10	The Covenant at Sinai 2: The Book of the Covenant	Exod 20:22–24:18; 32:1–35
	11	A Dwelling Place for God	Exod 25:1–9; 25:10–22; 29:42–46; 40:34–38
	12	Holiness, Purity, and Israel's Camp	Lev 10:1–11; 11:1–47; 19:1–2; 20:24–26
Nov 19	13	The Sacrificial System	Lev 1:1–17; 4:1–35; 16:1–34
	14	Diet, Boundaries, and Identity	Lev 11:1–47; Deut 14:3–21
	15	Organizing the Camp for the Journey	Num 1:1–54; 2:1–34; 9:15–23; 10:11–36
	16	Rebellion and Testing in the Wilderness	Num 11:1–35; 12:1–16; 13:1–14:45; 16:1–50; 20:1–13; 21:4–9
Nov 20	17	Covenant Love in Deuteronomy	Deut 6:1–25; 10:12–22; 13:1–18
	18	Election, Identity, and Mission of Israel	Deut 4:32–40; 7:6–11; 9:4–6; 26:16–19
	19	The Pentateuch in Biblical Context	Gen 1:1–3:24; Deut 34:1–12; Rev 21:1–22:5
	20	Wrap up, Course Evaluations	

- No assignments will be accepted after the course end date: January 20, 2027.

Academic Policies

² Have all the readings for November 16 completed before the start of the module.

³ Session 5 surveys Genesis 3 through Joseph, therefore the reading should be treated as a guided skim instead of a close reading, since sessions 2, 4, and 6 cover several of its key texts in-depth.

⁴ Sessions 2–6 track Genesis thematically (temple, lineage, blessing, primeval history, Abraham) rather than sequentially.

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the [Horizon](#) & [MCS](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines. The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded. Assignments should be submitted via Populi under *Submissions* (not *Comments*). The resource at this [link](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Please contact the professor well in advance if you would like to request an adjustment to any of your due dates. No extensions will be granted beyond the course end date unless approval is granted by Horizon's Assistant Academic Dean.

A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 calendar days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 calendar days late, penalty of 20%. After six days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0.

Grading

Grade	Percentage	GPA	Descriptor
A+	97-100%	4	Exceptional
A	93-96%	4	Excellent
A-	90-92%	3.7	Excellent
B+	87-89%	3.3	Good
B	83-86%	3.0	Good
B-	80-82%	2.7	Good
C+	77-79%	2.3	Satisfactory
C	73-76%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	70-72%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	67-69%	1.3	Minimal Pass
D	63-66%	1.0	Minimal Pass
D-	60-62%	0.7	Minimal Pass
F	<60%	0	Failure

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](#).

Horizon has a subscription to software that ensures the originality of academic writing, verifies the proper citation of all sources, and detects AI-generated content. When you submit an

assignment, you will automatically receive a summary on Populi that includes your submitted files along with an originality score (a high originality score is positive).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

In keeping with the Academic Integrity policy above, students must disclose on the title page of all assignments whether or not they have used AI and how they have used it. If the assignment has no title page, the student must disclose this to the instructor by some other means, such as in a comment on Populi. Students are expected to follow the policy for acceptable use of AI that is published in the [Student Handbook](#).

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon is committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institution, programs, and courses. The application for Academic Accommodations begins with a student disclosing a medical diagnosis or professionally documented learning disability during the application process. Enrolled students may contact Horizon's Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu or library@horizon.edu. All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the [Student Handbook](#). Students with documented accommodations on file pertaining to accessing course readings in alternate formats are encouraged to contact the librarian for assistance with as much advanced notice as possible.

Class Attendance

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. Students registered to attend on-campus or via livestream must be present for the full duration of a class period to be marked as present for the class. Students registered to attend by VOD must submit their VOD reports on time to be marked as present for class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss up to twenty percent of the total class time (e.g., one day of a module course, two 3-hour classes, etc.) 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 full 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

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 Horizon College and Seminary 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 (potentially including future online video courses) 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.

Library Support and Research Assistance

Library staff are available to meet with students (online or in person) who need assistance with

- citing sources and identifying credible resources;
- developing research and information literacy skills;
- searching DTL and other library resources.

Bibliography

- Alexander, T. Desmond. *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Fourth Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.
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- Waltke, B.K. *An Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
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- Wenham, Gordon J. *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.
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