

Exodus and Torah
Concordia Seminary
Dr. Timothy E. Saleska

I. Course Description

This course consists of two parts

1. Introduction to the first five books of the Old Testament in which we discuss the content of the Torah and its relationship to the rest of the Canon, and
2. A close encounter with selected sections of the Torah in order to focus on relevant questions and problems that people raise in connection with these texts.

II. Course Objectives

1. To familiarize you with the themes and issues which interest other readers of Torah.
2. To learn specifically how Lutheran Christians interpret and use the Torah. In what ways does it or does it not “hold us?” How is it relevant to our lives?
3. To study selected sections of the Torah in Hebrew so that we can reflect on it more deeply and preach and teach it more effectively.

III. Brief Outline

I. Part One

A. Arguments for reading the Torah in certain ways and the assumptions that enable them

- a case for the coherence of the Torah and its relevance
- What does the Torah tell us about God and our relationship with him?

B. How do others read the Torah

- critical scholarship
- background, chronology, dates, archeology

C. Read and discuss each individual book

II. Part Two: Close reading of selected texts

IV. Texts

Required Texts

1. Single column journaling bible (www.esvbible.org) available at christianbook.com search under “journaling bible”
2. Zehr. *God Dwells with His People*. Scottdale: Herald Press. 1981.
3. Sailhamer. *The Pentateuch as Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1992.
4. BHS.

5. Williams. *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007 (or equivalent).
6. Charles, Daryl D. ed. *Reading Genesis 1-2: An Evangelical Conversation*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
7. Crouch. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*. Downer's Grove: IVP, 2008.

Optional

1. Alexander and Baker. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove: IVP.
2. Dillard-Longman. *Introduction to the Old Testament*.
3. Kitchen. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*.
4. Cole. *Exodus* (Tyndale).
5. Childs. *The Book of Exodus* (OTL).
6. Alexander. *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
7. Fox. *The Five Books of Moses*. New York: Schocken Books, 1993.
- 9) Davis. *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*.
- 10) Durham. *Exodus* (WBC).
- 11) Hummel. *The Word Becoming Flesh*.

V. Schedule

March

M 7

Topic

Introduction

Assignment Due

[How to read; questions to ask?
Narrative--what it does?
Fox. Introduction/Lecture notes]

R 10
insights

Torah Structure

Sailhamer. *TPAN*, 25-79; Write 3

that you gained from this reading.
Explain
why they are important to you. (All such
assignments will be handed in.)

M 14
page

Torah and Canon

Crouch. *Culture Making*, 101-183; 1

paper: "How does Crouch's presentation
of
the basic Christian story build upon,
change,
or detract from your reflection on key
features of Christian practice and the life
of
the Church?"

R 17 Genesis	Genesis	Using your journaling Bible, read and make note of key questions, problems, insights etc. raised by your reading. Be ready to discuss your discoveries in class. This is a graded assignment.
M 21	Genesis	Hebrew: Gen 1:1-5; 26-31 Deaconess: Read Gen 2:19-25 ; Do a little research; write a one-page reflection on this question: "How would you use this text to teach Christian women how to think about the relationship between men and women?"
R 24	EASTER	Read: <i>Reading Genesis 1-2, Chapter Four, "What Genesis 1-2 Teaches (and What It Doesn't),"</i> by T. Longman, 103-139;
M 28	EASTER	<i>Reading Genesis 1-2, Chapter Five, "Reading Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology,"</i> by J. Walton, 140-183
R 31	Genesis (Special)	Have the two above readings finished
April		
M 4	Genesis (Special)	Have the two above readings finished
R 7 Exodus	Exodus	Using your journaling Bible, read and make note of key questions, problems, insights etc. raised by your reading. Be ready to discuss your discoveries in class. This is a graded assignment.

["Exodus, Date of" *DOTP*, 258-71;
"The Rise and Fall. . ." B. Wood
(handout)]

M 11	Exodus	Hebrew: Exodus 14:24-31; 15:1-3
R 14	Exodus	Hebrew: Exodus 24:6-11
write		Deaconess: Reflect on this passage and
the		a one-page devotion which reflects on
text		relevance of the events described in this
		for modern Christians.
M 18	Leviticus	Using your journaling Bible, read
Leviticus		and make note of key questions,
		problems,
		insights etc. raised by your reading. Be
		ready to discuss your discoveries in
		class.
		This is a graded assignment.
		Open note quiz on Genesis and
		Exodus
		texts
R 21	Leviticus	Hebrew: Leviticus 26:1-7
		Deaconess: Read <i>LW</i> 35, 155, "How Christians
		Should Regard Moses" and be ready to explain
		to the class what Luther is saying about the
		relevance of the Law for modern Christians
		and how we should use it.
M 25	Numbers	Using your journaling Bible, read Numbers
and		make note of key questions, problems, insights
etc.		raised by your reading. Be ready to discuss
your		discoveries in class. This is a graded
assignment.		
R 28	Numbers	Hebrew: Numbers 24:15-17
write a		Deaconess: Pick a story from Numbers and

women		one-page devotion for modern Christian
May		
M 2	Deuteronomy	Using your journaling Bible, read
Deuteronomy		and make note of key questions, problems, insights etc. raised by your reading. Be ready to discuss your discoveries in class. This is a graded assignment.
R 5	NO CLASS	First part of exegetical study due
M 9	Deuteronomy	Hebrew: Deuteronomy 8:1-9
R 12	Deuteronomy	Hebrew: Deuteronomy 18:15-22
text in		Deaconess: Write a one-page devotion on the Deuteronomy you find most meaningful to you.
M 16	Deuteronomy	Open note quiz on Leviticus,
Numbers,		Deuteronomy texts
R 19	THE END	Wrap up; Final Project Due

VI. Class Procedure and Grading

- 1. Note:** Unless indicated otherwise, for every written assignment you have the option to **pair up** with someone else. For purposes of grading, hand in one paper with both names at the top of the page.
- 2. Reflection Papers:** See schedule for dates these are due. *Unless stated otherwise, each paper is one page, double-spaced, 12-point font.*
- 3. Two quizzes** over the grammar and syntax of the Torah texts translated in class. The tests cover grammar/syntax, themes. All quizzes are open notes. You are allowed to use *only* your own written notes for the quizzes.
- 4. Journaling** is something new I am asking all my exegetical classes to do. My goal is to encourage your devotional life and meditation of the texts we will study in class. I hope that it can develop into a life long practice. I hope that this might become the Bible you use in ministry for your personal study and for teaching. I will be interested

to hear how you like this assignment (or not). This part of the course requirements is worth 50 points (10 points for each book).

5. Project: Students have two options. You must choose 1 (one) of these.

Option One: Exegetical Study according to the Instructions Below (You may pair up for this activity) (*paper is worth 150 points*)

Option Two: Preach an actual sermon in a real church on a Torah text that we don't cover in class. (No old or already preached sermons allowed.) If you choose this option, you need to: **a.** Hand in a final copy of the sermon with information on where and when it was preached (*worth 100 points*); **b.** Write a 3-4 page reflection on the experience (*worth 50 points*). Talk about how you approached the text, why it interested you, what you saw as its main message, difficulties, problems, questions, how did the hearers react? (You may want to hand out an evaluation sheet to 5-6 members who listen and provide feedback). (This option must be done near the end of the quarter so that you can judge the impact of what we do in class on your sermon.)

6. During the Hebrew Translation parts of the course, you must have your BHS text in front of you. I want you to translate from BHS and use the notes that you have written. Do not read from a computer printout of the text with translation in the margins. Bible programs should be used outside of class to help in your preparation, but not in class. We will be focusing on translating as we read. Your own notes, *without* a fully written out English translation, will be the most helpful for you.

7: Extra Credit: Book review of Zehr. *God Dwells with His People*. Two pages maximum, typed, 12 point *Times* font, double-spaced, half summary, and half evaluation.

Exegetical Study Directions

1. In order to develop your skill at collaborating with other people, you have the option of working on the exegetical paper in groups of **two maximum** (don't ask for three). Both of you will be responsible for the finished product, and both will receive the same grade.
2. For this study use **Exodus 17.1-7**
3. **Please follow the format given below.** Be sure to mark each part of your paper clearly (Main Headings: Part I and Part II)! Check grammar and spelling! Coherence and clarity, not senseless length, are key! Again, make sure you follow the directions carefully!

Directions for textual study:

I. Part I: Translate the passage (1-2 pages)

You must double-space your translation and carefully footnote it with single-spaced footnotes! The footnotes are your comments on text critical, grammatical, lexical, and syntactical questions. *Do not use them to parse every verb.* In other words, do not multiply trivial footnotes. Use them to clarify and defend your translation. Make sure that your translation actually reflects the grammatical analysis reflected in your footnotes. I deeply appreciate notes that give insight into the meaning of the text. For the footnotes throughout the paper, use a shortened format (i.e., author, title, page=Childs, *Exodus*, 57) keyed to the **bibliography** at the end. Be sure to use the correct bibliographical form as found in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (available in your local library). I expect you to consult various commentaries, journal articles, and the standard grammars (Joüon, Waltke-O'Connor).

II. Part II: The Body of the Study (4-5 pages)

A. Constructing your interpretive argument: Some things to consider!

1. Make sense of the text. Describe the major movements of the thought of the text. In a narrative text, pay attention to the different "voices" (which voices dominate, how are they related and so on). How does the plot develop? How does each part fit in with the others and relate to the whole? How is this text connected to the context that immediately precedes or follows? Pay attention to the figurative language in the text. This task is descriptive in nature. You should emerge with a good idea of what the text is about. Be sure to look both for small particulars and for larger themes, especially things that are emphasized or repeated.
2. What is the significance of persons, events, institutions, and ideas in the text (*Level Two Significance*)? The significance found will be cultural but especially *theological*. You will establish meaning (the "facts" of the text) by reading the text in light of your interpretation of other events in the rest of the Bible and your core beliefs and assumptions. Here are some questions to ask yourself: Is the meaning of the text best seen by reading it as an allegory? If so, what does that look like? How does your knowledge of other events in Scripture or outside of it, your own experiences and your beliefs both enable and constrain your interpretation? Your understanding of typology and the Kingdom of God as you learned it in hermeneutics will prove vital. The interpretations of others may also help you in your arguments. This research must be reflected in your final work.
3. *Pragmatics*: Why does Moses include this story in Exodus? What does the Author intend to accomplish in the reader through it? How can you put this word of God to use in a sermon to accomplish something in your hearers?

- ### B. Writing the body: Present your argument about the meaning of this text in 4-5 pages of double-spaced (*Times* 12 point font) prose. Organize and present your observations in a coherent way, using concrete examples. When I read this section, I should have a good idea of what your sermon on this text, were you to write one, would look like. In this section, include a final brief summary

statement, quickly recapping the important points about the text that you want to make.