

# GENESIS - DEUTERONOMY, FALL 2026

Stephen J. Smith, Ph.D. (ssmith@rts.edu)

MONDAY 1pm-4pm

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION (According to the RTS Catalogue)**

This course covers the first five books of the Bible through literary, historical, and theological analysis. Major themes are traced through the Pentateuch as each biblical book is examined. Important theological issues, such as creation, fall, covenant, and law, are examined in the context of the ANE and Israel's own historical setting. Such analysis is foundational for understanding the rest of Scripture and for how this section of Scripture has meaning for God's people today.

## **COURSE OUTCOME GOALS:**

1. To gain a general knowledge of the content and design of each individual book of the Pentateuch and the Pentateuch as a whole.
2. To develop proficiency in interpreting the Pentateuch and applying it today.
3. To understand the relationship between the Pentateuch and the rest of Scripture.
4. To gain a general understanding of key theological issues / debates related to the Pentateuch.
5. To develop original language reading comprehension / exegetical skills (for Hebrew students)

## **COURSE DETAILS**

### *Grading Scale.*

A (97-100) 4.00  
A- (94-96) 3.66  
B+ (91-93) 3.33  
B (88-90) 3.00  
B- (86-87) 2.66  
C+ (83-85) 2.33  
C (80-82) 2.00  
C- (78-79) 1.66  
D+ (75-77) 1.33

D (72-74) 1.00  
D- (70-71) 0.66  
F (below 70) 0.00  
I (incomplete) –  
W (withdraw) –  
S (satisfactory) –  
P (passing) –

*Attendance and Late work.* Students are required to both attend *and* participate in class. Failure to do either will result in a considerable negative impact on your final grade. The penalty for late work is one reduced letter grade per day. Please come to class prepared, i.e., have any assignments completed before class.

*Special Needs.* Students requiring special accommodations should contact the instructor at the beginning of the course.

*Disclaimer.* This syllabus is meant to reflect the learning objectives, format and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. But please note that I reserve the right to modify any portion of the syllabus as may become necessary.

5. I do not permit students to post class lectures, in part or in whole, to any social media platform, or to be recorded without my prior consent.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Textbooks**

#### **Required:**

\*Students will **not** be required to read all of the following. Required portions will be discussed the first day of class.

1. Standard English Translation of the Bible. **Read Gen.- Deut.**
2. Alexander, T. D. *From Paradise to the Promised Land*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022.
3. Pratt, Richard L. *He Gave us Stories: The Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narrative*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1993.
4. Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003.
5. Provan Ian, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015.
6. Rasmussen, Carl G. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible: Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
7. John D. Currid, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the Old Testament," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*,

- eds. J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, et al (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 839-878. (on reserve at the library).
8. Guy P. Waters, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the New Testament," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, eds. J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. (on reserve at the library).
  9. Richard Belcher, "The Historicity of Adam," Genesis-Deuteronomy. **Lecture 6 on the RTS mobile app.**
  10. Poythress, V. *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 1991.
  11. A copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.
    - a. **Read:** chs. 17 and 19 of the Confession; **Memorize:** 7.2, 3, 5; 19.1, 2, 5 of the Confession.
  12. Non-Hebrew track students: Currid, John D. *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. **Read all**, write a two-page, double spaced, 12 pt. font reflection paper (more details in class).

### Recommended Resources:

Recommendations will be made throughout the semester.

### Fall 2026 Academic Calendar

Registration Opens — June 15, 2026  
 Orientation — August 21, 2026  
 Classes Begin — August 24, 2026  
 Convocation — August 26, 2026  
 Last Day to Add a Class — September 4, 2026  
 Labor Day Holiday — September 7, 2026  
 Last Day to Drop a Class — September 25, 2026  
 Reading Week — October 5-9, 2026  
 Thanksgiving Holiday — November 26-27, 2026  
 Last Day of Class — December 4, 2026  
 Final Exams — December 8-10, 2026  
 Christmas Holidays — Dec. 14, 2024-Jan. 3, 2026

### Class Structure

Approximately the first two hours of class each week are devoted to lectures on the Pentateuch. The third hour will have a "workshop" or "lab" feel. Hebrew students will focus on reading / exegeting Hebrew texts from the Pentateuch, while non-Hebrew students will be given alternative assignments geared towards interpreting the Pentateuch in English. Details will be discussed on the first day of class.

## **Assignments**

Students will complete (1) reading assignments (of the Pentateuch and secondary source material), (2) take mid-term and final-exams (closed note, essay format; questions provided beforehand), and (3) write a research paper of **no more than 10** pages on a topic/text of their choice from the Pentateuch (a rubric will be provided for the paper). Additionally, students will memorize portions of scripture and the Westminster confession.

## **Required Writing Seminar**

All students are required to attend a brief writing seminar hosted by Dr. Smith and Dr. Stevens during the first month of the semester (time to be announced). The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the fundamentals of graduate-level academic writing and research. Particular attention will be given to the structure and argumentation of academic papers, the proper use of sources and citation practices, clarity and precision in writing, and common expectations for seminary-level assignments. The seminar is intended not only to clarify faculty expectations, but also to equip students with greater confidence and competence as they write research papers and prepare sermons throughout the program.

**Hebrew Requirement.** *All students* who have taken Hebrew will complete weekly Hebrew assignments from the Pentateuch. Non-Hebrew students will have alternative assignments.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)**

**Week 1** – Course Introduction, Syllabus, Introduction to the Pentateuch

**Week 2** – Introduction to the Pentateuch

**Week 3** – Genesis: Part One

**Week 4** – Genesis: Part Two

**Week 5** – Genesis: Part Three

**Week 6** – Exodus: Part One

**Week 7** – Exodus: Part Two \*

**Week 8** – Exodus: Part Three

**Week 9** – Leviticus: Part One

**Week 10** – Leviticus: Part Two

**Week 11** – Numbers

**Week 12** – Deuteronomy: Part One (Paper Due: Friday, 5pm)

**Week 13** – Deuteronomy: Part One

**Week 14** – Final Exam

## Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Genesis-Deuteronomy

Professor: Dr. Stephen J. Smith

Campus: Jackson

Date: Fall 2025

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strong</b></li> <li>• <b>Moderate</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimal</b></li> <li>• <b>None</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	understanding through lectures and reading, articulation through essay exams and writing.
<b>Scripture</b>	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	focus in the class is on understanding the original meaning, with some emphasis on language and more on hermeneutics, with the goal of understanding modern meaning
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	the class has a good dose of Reformed distinctives, such as the emphasis on creation, fall, redemption, covenants, the role of the law
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	The whole class is geared toward better understanding who God is and a proper response to God
<b>Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	several issues in class deal directly with worldview, especially the material in Genesis 1-3
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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.)	Minimal	differing views of issues are set forth in an objective, fair, and winsome way
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Very Minimal	this class will help a student understand the word so the student can minister God's word.