OT 610 Exegesis of Genesis

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1. Course description

This course explores selected exegetical issues in the Book of Genesis, and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to the book’s strategic passages. The focus will be on developing appropriate interpretive skills for the pastoral ministry.

2. Course objectives

Students in this course will:
2.1. confirm and refine by recourse to the Hebrew text of Genesis literary analysis of longer units previously studied in translation,
2.2. assess the textual integrity of shorter pericopes of Genesis employing the BHS text and apparatus and basic text-critical methodology,
2.3. analyze the significance of the grammar and sentence structure of brief pericopes using primarily the Hebrew text,
2.4. present the significance of key terms in a given brief passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,
2.5. identify the function of brief passages of Genesis in the framework of immediate context, function in the literary flow of the book and in the section of the canon within which the appear,
2.6. situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Genesis in the context of the Old Testament’s unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,
2.7. demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Genesis, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one’s own interpretation in the ongoing discussion of biblical interpretation,
2.8. illustrate the contribution of exegetical study of the Hebrew text to biblical exposition, instruction, theological reflection, and spiritual formation in order to construct an appropriation of the passage that is integrative and coherent.

3. Course procedures and requirements

3.1. Class presentations will hope to model direct study of Genesis, relying primarily on exegetical skills introduced in OT 501 and IBS-I. After an introduction overviewing the contents of the book as a whole, class sessions will walk systematically through the four units of Genesis (Primeval History, and the Abrahamic, Jacob, and Joseph narratives), highlighting specific passages that make notable contributions to the meaning of each unit. Grammatical and linguistic details of selected passages will be highlighted in order to illustrate the chosen pericope’s contribution to the message of the larger unit. Students will be required to read selected sections of Genesis in preparation for each class period. Attendance at all class sessions is expected, and no passing grade will be granted for students missing more than three sessions.
3.2. Students will take brief quizzes weekly (Tuesdays) to review and reinforce elementary grammar and vocabulary. The central requirements during the term will be four exegetical papers on assigned texts from Genesis, utilizing the skills acquired in the course in conjunction with exegetical skills acquired previously in OT 501 and IBS-1. These papers should be double-spaced, and no more than approximately 1200-1300 words in length. No secondary resources are to be consulted for these papers, since the student will be encouraged to rely on his or her own reading of the text. However, the resources listed in §4.1 and §4.2 below may be used for these papers, in which case full bibliography and footnotes need to be used in proper form and style. On questions of form and style, either of the following may be used.


Each paper should present the student’s observations of the text’s components, including for example, causal and temporal particles, connotations of the verbal derived stems and aspects, significance of word order, and where appropriate, implications of a specific word’s usage elsewhere in the Old Testament. Also where appropriate to the specific pericope, students should show sensitivity to sociohistorical, canonical, and theological issues arising from the text itself. All papers submitted for this class shall be the student’s own work done specifically for this course, printed on white paper, stapled at the upper-left corner with no folders or binders of any sort, and with the student’s PIN and SPO numbers clearly visible. The four passages assigned will be Genesis 1.26-28; 12.1-4; 28.13-15; and 49.8-12.

3.3. Students will write a final paper on Genesis 35:9-15 using the methods and skills acquired in the course. Secondary sources should be consulted, beginning with the preliminary bibliography provided in §4.3 below. The paper should also conclude in a brief sermon outline or lesson plan based on the specific observations raised in the paper. These papers should be double-spaced, and no more than approximately 2000 words in length. Full bibliography and footnotes should be used in proper form and style, as per §3.2 above.

4. Course texts

4.1. Required specifically for OT 610.


4.2. Required in previous courses (OT 501).


4.3. Recommended for final exercise (see §3.3 above).


5. Student evaluation

5.1. Class attendance, preparation, and participation Required
5.2. Vocabulary quizzes 15%
5.3. Exegetical assignments 60%
5.4. Final paper 25%
6. Tentative Schedule of Assignments

Sept 5 – Class introduction
Sept 7 – Quiz #1 – Vocabulary (List 1).
Class prep: Genesis 1-2 (English), and Gen 1:1-8 (Hebrew)

Sept 12 – Quiz #2 (List 2).
Sept 14 – First exegetical exercise due: Genesis 1:26-28

Sept 19 – Quiz #3 (List 3). Class prep: Genesis 3:1-11:26 (English), and Gen 6:5-10 (Hebrew)
Sept 21 – continue Genesis 3:1-11:26 (English), and Gen 6:5-10 (Hebrew)

Sept 26 – Quiz #4 (List 4). Class prep: Gen 11:27-25:18 (English) and Gen 15.1-6 (Hebrew)
Sept 28 – continue Gen 11:27-25:18 (English) and Gen 15.1-6 (Hebrew)

Oct 3 – Quiz #5 (List 5). Class prep: Gen 15:7-21 (Hebrew)
Oct 5 – Second exegetical exercise due: Genesis 12:1-4

Oct 10 – Quiz #6 (List 6). Class prep: Gen 17:1-8 (Hebrew)
Oct 12 – continue Gen 17:1-8 (Hebrew)

Oct 17 – Quiz #7 (List 7). Class prep: Gen 22:1-14 (Hebrew)
Oct 19 – continue Gen 22:1-14 (Hebrew)

Oct 24 – Quiz #8 (List 8). Class prep: Genesis 25:19-37:1 (English)

Oct 31 – Quiz #9 (List 9). Class prep: Genesis 26:1-6 (Hebrew)
Nov 2 – continue Genesis 26:1-6 (Hebrew)

Nov 7 – Quiz #10 (List 10). Class prep: Genesis 37:2-50:26 (English)
Nov 9 – Fourth exegetical exercise due: Genesis 49:8-12

Nov 14 – Quiz #11 (List 11). Class prep: Genesis 32:22-32 (Hebrew)
Nov 16 – NO CLASS

Nov 28 – Quiz #12 (List 12). Class prep: Genesis 50:15-21 (Hebrew)
Nov 30 – continue Genesis 50:15-21 (Hebrew)

Dec 5 – Concluding lectures & class discussion
Dec 7 – Concluding lectures & class discussion

Dec 12 – Final Paper on Genesis 35:9-15 due at 8:00 am