
REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
GLOBAL



GENESIS - DEUTERONOMY
DR. RICHARD P. BELCHER, JR.

Course Overview

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Course Description:

00OT5200 Genesis - Deuteronomy, 3 hours
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:
Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

This course covers creation to the promised land through literary, historical, and theological analysis. Major themes are traced through redemptive history 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 Objectives:

- Acquire a general knowledge of the content of the first five books of the Bible.
- Help the student look at the broad picture of this section of the canon.
- Understand the foundational importance of the Pentateuch for the rest of Scripture.
- Appreciate the richness of the Pentateuch in light of the culture and history of the ANE.

Required Textbooks:

Belcher, Richard P., Jr. *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*. Ross-shire, SCT: Christian Focus, 2020.

_____. *Genesis: The Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation*. Ross-shire, SCT: Christian Focus, 2012.

_____. *Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today*. Phillipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 2011.

Buck, Mary E. *The Canaanites: Their History and Culture from Texts and Artifacts*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019.

Currid, John D. "Theistic Evolution is Incompatible with the Teachings of the Old Testament." In *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, edited by J.P. Moreland, Stephen Meyer, et al. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017. 831-870. [Available for download on the LMS]

_____. *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

Nevin, Norman C. ed. *Should Christians Embrace Evolution? Biblical and Scientific Responses*. Phillipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 2011.

Poythress, Vern. *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 1991.

Sandy, D. Brent, and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., eds. *Cracking Old Testament Codes*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Van Pelt, Miles V. and J. Ligon Duncan, et. al. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

Walton, John H. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

Online Student Handbook:

The Online Student Handbook (can be [downloaded here](#)) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

Summary of Requirements:

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Required Reading Report](#)
7. Submit [Research Paper](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report/Course Application Paper](#)

Meet the Professor

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:



Dr. Richard P. Belcher is the Professor of Old Testament and Academic Dean of RTS Charlotte. He is an ordained minister in the PCA and pastored an urban nondenominational church in Rochester, NY for ten years before pursuing the Ph. D. This pastoral experience in an unusual and challenging setting gives him great insight into the practical, modern issues that will be faced by future pastors studying with him at RTS. He graduated from Covenant College and received his M. Div from Covenant Seminary. He also received an S.T.M. from Concordia Theological Seminary, and his Ph. D. is from Westminster Theological Seminary. He has served as stated supply for numerous churches in the area since coming to RTS Charlotte in 1995.

Publications by Dr. Belcher:

The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology: Christian Focus, 2020.

The Messiah and the Psalms. Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2006.

Genesis: The Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation: Christian Focus, 2012.

Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today: P&R, 2016.

Job: The Mystery of Suffering and God's Sovereignty: Christian Focus, 2017.

Ecclesiastes: A Mentor Commentary. Christian Focus, 2017.

Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018.

"Thanksgiving, Psalms of" in *The Dictionary of Old Testament: Wisdom, Writings, and Poetry.* Edited by T. Longman and P. Enns; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2008.

"Suffering" in *The Dictionary of Old Testament: Wisdom, Writings, and Poetry.* Edited by T. Longman and P. Enns; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2008.

"The King, the Law, and Righteousness in the Psalms" in *The Law is not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant.* Philipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 2008.

Grades

Forum Discussion (15%):

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
 - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
 - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
 - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
 - A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (Midterm 25%, Final 25%):

There are two examinations for this course. No helps are allowed, including Bibles. The midterm examination will cover the lectures from Lessons 1-10. The final examination will cover the lectures from Lessons 11-23. The exam will include multiple-choice identification questions, which consist of terms, names, or concepts that have been discussed in class. There are also short essay questions and long essay questions. Students should use the Lesson Review Questions and Topical Discussion Questions to guide them in their study for the exam.

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (25%):

The research paper must deal with one of the law passages in the Pentateuch. However, it cannot focus on one of the ten commandments, but must examine a civil or ceremonial law (found primarily from Exod 20:22 through Deuteronomy, particularly Deut 12-25). See section titled "[Research Paper Instructions](#)" in this syllabus.

Reading Report (5%):

Read the assigned reading from your textbooks plus the Biblical books of Genesis through Joshua. To receive full credit, the student must read all of the required readings listed at the beginning of each lesson.

Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree or certificate program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.) or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education
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Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 900-1257
1-855-854-6920
FAX: (704) 366-9295
E-mail: dess@rts.edu
Web site: www.rts.edu/distance

Lessons

Lesson One

Historical, Theological, and Literary

Lesson Two

Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch

Lesson Three

An Ancient Text with Modern Implications

Lesson Four

The Days in Genesis

Lesson Five

Genesis 1 and the Meaning of Yôm

Lesson Six

The Historicity of Adam

Lesson Seven

Genesis 2-3

Lesson Eight

Genesis 4-11

Lesson Nine

Covenant

Lesson Ten

Abraham

Lesson Eleven

Jacob

Lesson Twelve

Joseph

Lesson Thirteen

God at Work for the Sake of His People

Lesson Fourteen

Israel in Egypt

Lesson Fifteen

The Plagues

Lesson Sixteen

Redemption

Lesson Seventeen

The Mosaic Covenant

Lesson Eighteen

Different Approaches to the Role of Law

Lesson Nineteen

Sacrifices and Priesthood

Lesson Twenty

Cultic Purity

Lesson Twenty-one

The Holiness Code

Lesson Twenty-two

Israel and the Army of God

Lesson Twenty-three

Covenant Renewal

Research Paper Instructions

The following questions need to be addressed in the paper:

- Where does this law occur in the Pentateuch?
- What is the significance of its context for its meaning?
- Does this particular law occur multiple times in the Pentateuch?
- If it appears multiple times, what is the significance of the law occurring a second time?
- What is the meaning of this law to the original audience?
- Are there any significant literary, historical, or theological issues related to this law?
- How does this law relate to Jesus Christ?
- What is the meaning of this law for God's people today?

Note: If you use these questions as an outline or as a guide for content, be sure to use these considerations to strengthen and develop a single, coherent argument. Do not address these questions independent from the main argument of your paper.

The following are criteria that will be used to evaluate the paper:

Cogency of argument:

- Is there a thesis statement?
- How well does the argument hang together?
- How well are pertinent and fundamental points brought out?

The use of sources:

- This is a research paper so avoid study Bibles as a source
- At least one journal article must be cited.
- Use a variety of commentaries (older vs. modern, critical vs. conservative). Read as many commentaries as you can, including conservative commentaries, those from a critical perspective, and at least one older commentary, such as Calvin, Geneva series, etc.
- Research is important and can be included in footnotes. Think of at least 8 sources.
- Discussions of historical context, genre, and redemptive history (where these are appropriate but do not go overboard); just give the reader enough information to understand your paper. Some issues, like authorship, can be omitted or issues and bibliography related to authorship can be given in footnotes.

Biblical Languages:

- You are expected to use as much Hebrew as you are able.
- Make a note on your paper regarding previous coursework in Greek and Hebrew.

Format:

- Use the 8th edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.
- Do not make a Scripture reference as a footnote, but put it in parenthesis in the paper.
- The paper should be 10-15 pages, double-spaced, numbered, and with one inch margins on all sides, except the left margin should have a 1 1/4 inch margin.
- Do not leave extra space between paragraphs

Here are sample footnote references that you need to follow or you could lose points on your paper. These footnotes follow Turabian, 8thed.. The following examples give sample first references for books, journal articles, and an article in a book, followed by second references to a work, which are shortened.

Please note: When citing various works (journals, commentary series, reference works, ancient documents, etc.), you must follow the given abbreviations found in section 8 of the SBL Handbook of Style, 2nd ed. This resource is available in a digital format at library.rts.edu

¹Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 120-25.

²David M. Howard, Jr., "The Case for Kingship in the Old Testament Narrative Books and the Psalms," *TrinJ* 9 (1988): 19-35.

³Gary N. Knoppers, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments and Detours," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, ed. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 207-35.

⁴Michael J. Glodo, "Judges," in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, ed. Miles V. Van Pelt (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 177-202.

Second footnote references shortened:

⁵Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 122.

⁶Howard, "The Case for Kingship," 34.

⁷Knoppers, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy," 222-25.

⁸Glodo, "Judges," 180.

Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Genesis - Joshua

Professor: Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
In order to measure the success of the 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 outcomes.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Understanding through lectures and reading, articulation through essay exams and a research paper
Scripture	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
Reformed Theology	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
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Although everything in the class is geared toward better understanding who God is and a proper response to God
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	Several issues in class deal directly with world view, especially the material in Genesis 1-3
Winsomely Reformed	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
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	There is an emphasis on how to preach/teach different segments of the course, but no hands-on experience
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Some of the issues in Genesis 1-3 are significant public issues