

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

TITLE: Genesis through Esther

TERM: Fall 2025-2026

PROFESSOR: Kimberly Russaw

CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: _____
AUDITORS: 3

UNLIMITED X
NO AUDITORS _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to the books of Genesis through Esther. The course will explore factors that gave rise to and helped shaped this material, and will focus on the canonical shape of the books and their contribution to the theology and life of the church.

CLASS OBJECTIVES: In this course, students will:

- 1) read significant portions of each these books, develop a first-hand knowledge of the basic context of each book, and consider the theological relationships between the various books;
- 2) become conversant with scholarly methods of studying these books in the modern period;
- 3) become familiar with major movements in the study of these books throughout Christian history, and with figures in the area of biblical studies who, over the last century, have analyzed this specific portion of the canon;
- 4) consider issues related to textual and literary analyses, such as problems of historical and sociological reconstruction, the applicability of various archaeological data to the study of the Bible, and the larger world of Israel's neighbors and their literary traditions (i.e., ancient Israel's cultural context);
- 5) assess the impact that the various socio-cultural environments and traditions had upon the formation and development of ancient Israel and its literature;
- 6) develop an understanding of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture;
- 7) gain ability to read and analyze an Old Testament passage for its theological message by using appropriate secondary sources, including but not limited to biblical commentaries, Bible dictionaries, academic and professional journals.

PREREQUISITES:

None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/READING:

- Bird, Jennifer. *Permission Granted: Take the Bible into Your Own Hands*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015. ISBN: 978-0664260408, \$12.21.
- Collins, John J. *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Third Edition). Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018. ISBN: 978-1506445991, \$18.15
- Book review assignment book (chosen from list)
- An NRSV or NRSVue Bible
- Other articles and essays will be posted on Canvas learning management system

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Map assignment | Discussion leadership | Midterm exam | Writing assignments | Contemporary Issue Group assignment | Popular Culture assignment

ATTENDANCE: Required.