



AMERICAN
NATIONAL
CATHOLIC
THEOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE

Pentateuch Fall

Old Testament: Pentateuch Fall Semester 2026

Course Syllabus

COURSE TITLE

TH 102: Old Testament: Pentateuch

Credit Hours: 3

Class Meeting Time: Saturdays, 11 am EST via ZOOM

Semester: Fall 2026

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Fr. Kerry Walters, Ph.D

Email address: kwalters@gettysburg.edu

Phone: (570) 713-8558

Office hours: The course instructor prefers to be contacted first by email unless the matter is urgent. The instructor will respond to email communications as soon as possible. If you would like the instructor to contact you by phone, please include your number in your email. Also, please indicate if the matter is urgent.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This ten-week course is an introductory exploration of the five books comprising the Pentateuch (Gr: "five books") or Torah (Heb: "the teaching"): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch is a foundational text for Hebrew, Christian, and Muslim faith traditions. Believed for centuries to have been authored by Moses, scholarly consensus is that the Pentateuch in its final form is an editorial amalgamation of at least four different sources stitched together after the Babylonian Exile. But its ascription to Moses is an indication of the esteem in which the Pentateuch has been held.

The esteem is deserved, because the Pentateuch communicates fundamental topics and themes essential to the life of faith: the character of God, cosmic creation, human nature, holiness and sinfulness, freedom and bondage, and covenantal loyalty and betrayal. We will lean heavily on these themes throughout our study of the Pentateuch.

Finally, in addition to its historical importance and theological wisdom, there is a stylistic grandeur to parts of the Pentateuch, especially in Genesis and Exodus, that places it squarely within the Western literary canon. Our study of it, therefore, will focus on its artistic beauty as well as its theological insight.

In addition to the weekly Zoom sessions, participants are asked to view pre-recorded mini-lectures that offer background information to prepare us for our Saturday gatherings. The lectures will be sent to students no later than the Thursdays before our Zoom meetings.

Seminary students are presumed to have read the entire Pentateuch some time in their careers before this course begins. If you haven't, please do so prior to our opening session.

Participants, by the end of the course, should acquire the following:

- Familiarity with the major topics/themes in the Pentateuch;
- Ability to draw connections between those topics/themes and the Christian tradition;
- Ability to distinguish between the four primary editorial sources of the Pentateuch, and to appreciate the way they complement one another;
- Ability to preach about and/or facilitate parish bible studies on the Pentateuch.

TEXTS

In addition to the required texts listed below, supplemental readings may be assigned and will be provided by the instructor as handouts at no cost to the participants.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *New American Bible* (Revised Edition)
- Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*. **2nd Edition only, please.** Paulist Press. ISBN 13-978-0809147809

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS (NOT REQUIRED)

- John Bergsma and Brant Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament*. Ignatius Press, 2018. ISBN 13- 978-1586177225
- Walter Brueggemann & Tod Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (3rd ed). Westminster John Knox Press, 2021. ISBN 13- 978-0664264413. Pp. 1-125.
- Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN 13- 978-0195305050. Entire book.
- Brent A. Strawn, *The Old Testament: A Concise Introduction*. Routledge, 2020. ISBN 13- 978-0415643009. Pp. 1-70.

ASSIGNMENTS AND HOMEWORK

All participants, including auditors, are expected to participate in class discussions and to complete the assigned readings in advance of each class. Throughout the course, the instructor will ask participants, including auditors, to take a role in presenting a particular subtopic, which will require additional preparation.

Students who are auditing the course are exempt from the course requirements but are asked to be diligent in attendance and reading and to participate fully in class discussions. While not required, auditors are encouraged to complete homework and other assignments.

Participants in formation and all those taking this course for credit are required to complete the following:

Five essays (4-5 pages in length), one pertaining to each of the course's central foci.

- (1) Structure and authorship of the Pentateuch;
- (2) Book of Genesis;
- (3) Book of Exodus;
- (4) Books of Leviticus/Numbers; and
- (5) Book of Deuteronomy.

Specific topics for each of the essay assignments will be provided by the instructor.

Formatting and Submission of Papers: Papers must be prepared using Microsoft Word or a Microsoft Word compatible/equivalent word processor. All papers must conform to the following format:

Type font: Times New Roman 12 point. Text should be typed in regular face except for emphasis, which may be done using boldface, underlining, italics, or a combination of the three. Headings and subheadings should be no larger than 16 point.

Margins, Paragraphs, and line spacing: Papers should use a one-inch margin on all four sides. Using the "Paragraph" dropdown menu, select "0" space before each paragraph and 6 pt. space after each paragraph. Doing this eliminates hard breaks that take up unnecessary space (in other words, there should be no paragraph space holders between each paragraph). Set the line spacing to 1.5.

Page numbering: Insert and center page numbers in the footer of each page (using the page number dropdown menu from the "Insert" menu tab allows you to insert and center page numbers automatically).

Citations and Notes: Documentation of your sources and ideas is essential in academic writing. Please use a standard style for uniform citations; you may wish to consult one of several style books for this purpose. You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

Submission of your papers: All papers should be converted to PDF files and emailed to the instructor before 5 PM Eastern time on the due date. Papers that do not meet the formatting requirements outlined above will not be accepted and will be returned for proper formatting.

PLAGIARISM AND USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Refer to the ANCTI Policies and Procedures for the ANCTI policy on plagiarism and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in courses.

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Participants are expected to attend all ten classes of the course. Perfect attendance, while desirable, is not always achievable due to factors beyond a participant's control. Nonetheless, a participant may have one unexcused class absence. Additional unexcused absences will result in a reduction in the participant's grade. Absence from more than 3 classes, whether excused or unexcused, will automatically withdraw the participant from the course, and the final evaluation will reflect this.

All participants are expected to actively engage in the course material and class discussions. Class participation is part of the grade for participants taking the course for credit, but even those not taking the course for credit are encouraged to participate fully, as discussion is a vital part of the learning experience.

Presence in Class on Cams. All course participants should be aware of the requirement for live online instruction: Unless specifically excused by the instructor, each participant must be seen on camera and remain actively present in the class view. A static screenshot or similar static symbol is not permitted except for very brief periods of less than five minutes if a participant needs to step away from the class for personal care. Should a somewhat longer period be required, the participant must secure the instructor's permission, preferably in advance, and may be taken only with the instructor's approval. Use of this exception should not be abused during any class session.

Because all classes are conducted via Zoom, participants must mute their microphones once the class has begun and unmute to ask a question,

make a comment, or respond to something raised during the class. Care must be taken not to “speak over” one another.

Participants are expected to always show the utmost courtesy and respect for others participating in the course.

Other policies and procedures: Participants should consult the ANCTI website (<https://antci.org>) for additional policies and procedures pertaining to Institute courses.

Withdrawal: Participants should also refer to the Institute’s Policy and Procedures (available on the Institute’s website at <https://ancti.org>) regarding course withdrawals.

GRADING

Grades for this course will be determined through evaluation of class participation, assignments, and presentations, both written and oral.

Participants will be evaluated using the following indicators of performance:

GRADING SCALE

Percent	Letter Grade	4.0 Scale
93-100	A	4.0
90-92	A-	3.7
87-89	B+	3.3
83-86	B	3.0
80-82	B-	2.7
77-79	C+	2.3
73-76	C	2.0
70-72	C-	1.7
69 or less	F	1.3

Rubrics:

A: exceptional work; high level of comprehension; well-written arguments; extra-class references; innovative

B: solid performance; good comprehension; reasonably well-written arguments

C: average performance; fair comprehension; acceptable arguments

Pluses and Minuses in A, B, and C level work are judgment calls based on careful scrutiny and comparison that will be explained to individual students as occasions arise.

Weighted elements of your grade:

Each of the five essays carry equal weight in the final calculation of course grades. At the end of the term, letter grades will be converted to their numerical equivalent, added together, and divided by 5. So, for example, if your grades are a C+ (2.3), B (3.0), B+ (3.3), A (4.0) and A- (3.7), the numerical total is $16.2/5 = 3.24$. Hence your course grade is somewhere between a B and a B+. In in-between cases like this, final determination of your grade will be based on my estimation of your overall improvement, conscientiousness, participation in class discussions, class presentation, and command of the readings.

Final grades for this course will be reported to the Registrar. Participants receive official notification of their grade and Certificate of Completion from the Rector.

Late Work: If a participant is aware of a situation that will cause work to be submitted late or a presentation not to be made on time, the participant should inform the instructor as soon as possible to request an excusal from the work deadline or the presentation date. If excused, the instructor will assign a new due date no later than two weeks after the announced deadline. Unexcused work/presentations will result in no credit for that work or presentation. Unexcused work/presentations submitted late because of an unforeseen emergency will be accepted when a reasonable explanation, as determined in the instructor's sole discretion, is provided.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topics/Assigned Readings/Homework	Major Deadlines
Class 1 09/19	Hebrew Bible: Structure, Critical Tools, & the Augustinian Principle <u>Reading</u> : Boadt, Chapters 1 & 4	
Class 2 09/26	The Pentateuch: A Palimpsest <u>Reading</u> : NAB, pp. 5-6; Boadt, Chapter 5	1 st Essay Assigned

Class 3 10/03	The Pentateuch: Theological Themes <u>Reading:</u> Boadt, Chapter 26	1 st Essay Due
Class 4 10/10	Genesis I: The Primordial History <u>Reading:</u> NAB Preface, pp. 7-8; Genesis 1-11; Boadt, Chapter 6	2 nd Essay Assigned
Class 5 10/17	Genesis II: The Patriarchal History <i>Reading:</i> Genesis 12-50; Boadt, Chapter 7	2 nd Essay Due
Class 6 10/24	Exodus I: Bondage to Freedom <u>Reading:</u> NAB Preface, p. 65; Exodus 1-15; Boadt, Chapter 8	3 rd Essay Assigned
Class 7 10/31	Exodus II: Sinai Covenant <u>Reading:</u> Genesis 16-20, 22-24, 32-34, 40:34-38; Boadt, pp. 144-145, 230-233	3 rd Essay Due
Class 8 11/07	Leviticus & Numbers: Laws & Rebellions <u>Reading:</u> NAB Preface, pp. 107, 139; Leviticus 17-26; Boadt, pp. 145-159; Numbers 6, 11-17, 22-25, 35:9-15; Boadt, pp. 158-162	4 th Essay Assigned
Class 9 11/14	Deuteronomy: Blessings & Curses <u>Reading:</u> NAB Preface p. 179; Deuteronomy 15, 20, 28, 29-34; Boadt, pp. 162-163, 174-175	4 th Essay Due
Class 10 11/21	Conclusion: The Augustinian Principle Redivivus <u>Reading:</u> Boadt, pp. 465-481	5 th Essay Assigned Due: 11/30