Nazarene Theological Seminary
1700 E Meyer Blvd ● Kansas City, MO 64131 ● 816/268-5400

OTL611 — Genesis (Online)
Spring, 2013

Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Degree Program Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: Joseph Coleson, Ph.D.  
Email: jecoleson@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5482
Office Hours: By appointment

Catalog Description
A study of the book of Genesis, giving attention to literary analysis, Ancient Near Eastern historical backgrounds, and major theological concepts, noting especially the significance of the narrative forms of their presentation.

Course Narrative & Rationale
The Church of the Nazarene, together with the larger Wesleyan/Holiness movement and most Christian denominations, views the Bible as foundational, informing the life of the church. By virtue of its position as the first book of the canon of both the Jewish and the Christian faiths, Genesis holds a place of special importance.

A Bible without Genesis would be like any other lengthy book without its first chapter. All the great themes of the Bible may be said to have their first expressions in Genesis, explicitly or implicitly. Genesis offers a theological reflection on the beginnings of the created order on this...
earth. Important themes include: 1.) the goodness of all creation; 2.) God’s creation hopes for fellowship with human beings; 3.) the beginnings of God’s redemptive action to restore creation to its intended integrity of relationships--especially as it traces the beginnings of the family/nation through whom God worked to accomplish God’s redemptive purposes.

Jews and Christians, and the clergy of both faith traditions, always have found a rich source of reading, devotional, story-telling, and preaching/teaching material in Genesis. The stories of Genesis are riveting in their human interest and (at least as important) they reveal God as the God who loves us, moving already to begin rescue and restoration of the creation so carefully and lovingly formed. The God of Genesis is the God we need--and want--to know.

**Degree Program Objectives**

This course addresses particularly the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- **MDiv Objective 2:** Articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
- **MDiv Objective 5:** Understanding of local and global [and temporal] diversity through the investigation of cultural contexts, to enable the church to proclaim effectively and to embody the mission of God
- **MACFD Objective 1:** A deep personal commitment to God and God’s Church and a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry formed through an ecclesial understanding of the Word of God, the heritage of the faith, the doctrines of the church, and through participation in the life of the church
- **MAICS Objective 1:** Knowledge of the Christian faith understood in its biblical foundations, historical developments, and theological expressions
- **MAICS Objective 2:** Articulation of the biblical-theological understandings of the *missio Dei* in ways that assist the church’s response to God’s call to participate in that mission
- **MA(TS) General Academic and Research Tracks Objective 1:** Skill in academic research and writing
- **MA(TS) General Academic and Research Tracks Objective 2:** Knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships
- **MA(TS) General Academic and Research Tracks Objective 3:** Ability to use the theological disciplines to reflect and engage the world as informed, thinking, Christian persons
- **MA(TS) Research Track Objective 4:** Ability to do theological research, critical theological reflection, and graduate-level academic writing.

(Other degree program objectives also will be addressed, though not all so directly as these.)
Course Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Outline the content of the book of Genesis
   (accomplished by reading, and by online forum participation--i.e., assignment 1)
2. Summarize and evaluate the important positions regarding authorship, provenance, dating, occasion, and original audience of Genesis
   (accomplished by reading, and by online forum participation--i.e., assignment 1)
3. Identify the major theological themes of Genesis, and discuss their contributions to Israelite, Jewish, and Christian theology
   (accomplished by reading, and by online forum participation--i.e., assignment 1)
4. Exegete, understand, and interpret most passages in Genesis, and use resulting insight(s) in current and future ministry assignment(s)
   (accomplished by reading, by online forum participation--i.e., by assignment 1, and by assignment 2).

Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies

The following competencies will be enhanced through your participation in this course:

**CN  1** Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament  
**CN  2** Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre(s)  
**CN  3** Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section of the Old Testament  
**CN  5** Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament  
**CN  7** Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament  
**CN 15** Ability to describe how the Bible came into being, up to contemporary translations  
**CN 16** Ability to identify the steps of historical, literary, and theological analysis used in exegesis  
**CN 17** Ability to exegete a passage of Scripture using the steps referred to above  
**CN 21** Ability to demonstrate understanding of the sources of theological reflection, its historical development, and its contemporary expressions  
**CN 22** Ability to articulate the distinctive characteristics of Wesleyan theology  
**CN 23** Ability to identify and explain the Doctrine of Holiness from a Wesleyan perspective  
**CP  1** Ability to communicate publicly through multiple methods (oral, written, media, etc.) with clarity and creativity for the sake of fostering meaning  
**CP  2** Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner in the modes of discourse used in the ministry  
**CP 10** Ability to synthesize, analyze, and reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving, and to live with ambiguity  
**CP 11** Ability to analyze the validity of arguments and to identify their presuppositions and consequences  
**CP 22** Ability to prepare, organize, and deliver biblically sound sermons using appropriate techniques and skills in culturally appropriate ways (variously accomplished by course reading, by online forum participation--i.e., by assignment 1, and by assignment 2).
**Required Texts**

**Course Outline**

**Unit 1:** Introductions – Week 1
- Course introduction
- Syllabus
- Personal introductions

**Unit 2:** Creation and the antediluvian world – Weeks 2-4
- God’s cosmic Temple – Genesis 1
- Making of the ‘adam – Genesis 2
- Alienation and exile – Genesis 3-5

**Unit 3:** The deluge and its aftermath – Weeks 5-6
- Deluge – Genesis 6-8
- Aftermath – Genesis 9-11

**Unit 4:** The “Abraham Cycle” – Weeks 7-9 (including R & R week)
- God’s call of, and covenant with, Abraham – Genesis 12-17
- Birth and establishment of the promised “seed” – Genesis 18:1--25:18

**Unit 5:** The “Jacob Cycle” – Weeks 10-11
- Twins and their conflicts; Jacob’s life in Harran – Genesis 25:19--31:55
- Jacob’s return to Canaan – Genesis 32-38

**Unit 6:** The “Joseph Novella” – Weeks 12-14
- Joseph’s rise to power in Egypt – Genesis 39-42
- Family salvation and reconciliation – Genesis 43-48
- Jacob’s blessing of his sons, his death and burial; Joseph’s death – Genesis 49-50

**Course Assignments**

1. **Online interaction (70% of course grade)**
Posting to discussion forums and reading the posts of other class members is the online equivalent of attending and participating in class in an on-campus course. In the online environment--precisely because face-to-face contact is not possible--professor-with-student(s) and student(s)-with-student(s) interaction is indispensable for a positive learning experience. With this in mind, the following practices are minimal expectations for this course:
   - Remember: *minimal* does not mean “A” work, nor an “A” grade.
• Normally, each student is to write at least five (5) quality posts or responses to the professor’s or other students’ posts in discussion forums. Posts are to be spread over at least three (3) days each week.
• Each week will begin at 12:01 a.m. (U.S. Central Time) Sunday, and end at 12:00 p.m., Saturday midnight (U.S. Central Time).
• Students are strongly encouraged to read all new posts at least five (5) days per week.
• A “quality” post begins a new topic, brings to bear critical reflection on another’s post, or moves discussion in a new direction. Both number and quality of posts will influence this section of the course grade.
• A “quality” post reflects reading and study of the text of Genesis, and of the relevant course texts: Arnold’s Genesis; Coleson’s Genesis 1-11.
• The professor has learned from experience that original posts of fewer than three hundred (300) words in length almost never are “quality” posts. It simply takes that many words, or more, to develop most ideas in this dialogical format for others to see where you are going, so as to be able to respond intelligently and wisely. Thus, “normal” original posts will be counted only if they are at least three hundred words in length; “normal” response posts will be counted only if they are at least one hundred fifty (150) words in length.
• Correct and appropriate spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, usage, and other “best practices” of academic writing are expected in all posts. Plan to use the resource, “Better Academic Writing,” regularly and thoroughly.
• Students who have taken classroom courses with this professor will recognize that this on-going assignment combines weekly essay (albeit, usually with shorter “essays”) and discussion components of his classroom courses, and will continue to improve their expositional skills.

Assessment of online participation normally will be posted weekly, using letter grades. (Course Outcomes: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, variously throughout the course)

2. Exegetical paper (30% of course grade)
An exegetical paper on a single pericope, 3,500-4,000 words in length, is the culminating course assignment. Each student should request the professor’s approval of his/her chosen pericope by March 15. The paper is due by 11:55 p.m. (CDT, U.S.), Monday, May 6. (Course Outcomes: Primarily numbers 3 and 4)

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

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<tr>
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<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Online participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing of final exegetical paper</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>160</td>
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Submitting Assignments; Posting Grades
Forum postings and the final exegetical paper are to be submitted through MOODLE. The professor will assign letter grades; grade descriptions are in the NTS Student Handbook.

Form and Style Expectations
All written work, including forum posts, is to exhibit best practices for graduate-level academic writing. The NTS faculty have adopted Turabian’s Manual of Style as the Seminary standard; each student should own a copy of the latest edition of Turabian, and should use it conscientiously. A convenient summary of some of the more common issues of concern is the short style sheet, “Better Academic Writing,” included in the course materials in Moodle.

Inclusive Language
NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people often have used language to imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in writing. All written work presented to meet requirements of this course will use gender-inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work
It is not possible to make up forum postings--e.g., five (5) extra postings during Week 3 will not compensate for zero (0) postings during Week 2. Also, because of Commencement timelines, the final exegetical paper can be accepted only until 11:55 p.m. (CDT, U.S.), Monday, May 6.

Additional Costs
For this course, the professor anticipates only the costs of NTS tuition and course texts.

Course Grading
1. Online interaction will constitute seventy percent (70%) of the course grade.
2. A final exegetical paper will constitute thirty percent (30%) of the course grade.
Grades will be posted as letter grades; descriptions are included in the NTS Student Handbook.

Reasonable Modifications
In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodation(s) should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs, and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial in the past.

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**Class “Attendance”**
If a student does not meet class participation standards in our online environment for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail that student.

**Course Calendar**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| Feb. 4  | 1    | Readings: Introductions in Arnold and Coleson.  
Forum postings: Each student is to post a personal introduction by Tuesday, and is to respond to at least four other introductory posts by Friday. In your introduction, please include: 1.) Pertinent/appropriate personal information—including photo(s), if you care to; 2.) A short description of your current ministry and/or volunteer position(s); 3.) A short reflection on one or two aspects of (or insights into) Genesis, of which you hope to gain a better understanding through this course. |
| Feb. 11 | 2    | Readings: Genesis 1; Arnold and Coleson on Genesis 1.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
| Feb. 18 | 3    | Readings: Genesis 2; Arnold and Coleson on Genesis 2.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
| Feb. 25 | 4    | Readings: Genesis 3-5; Arnold and Coleson on Genesis 3-5.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
| Mar. 4  | 5    | Readings: Genesis 6-8; Arnold and Coleson on Genesis 6-8.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines.  
Final exeg. paper: Clear proposed pericope with professor by March 15. |
| Mar. 18 | 7    | Reading and Research Week |
| Mar. 25 | 8    | Readings: Genesis 12-17; Arnold on Genesis 12-17.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
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| Apr. 15 | 11   | Readings: Genesis 32-38; Arnold on Genesis 32-38.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
| Apr. 29 | 13   | Readings: Genesis 44-48; Arnold on Genesis 44-48.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines. |
| May 6   | 14   | Readings: Genesis 49-50; Arnold on Genesis 49-50.  
Forum postings: As indicated in forum guidelines.  