**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**Course Syllabus: BOT 641 Special Studies: Genesis 1-11 and Science**

**Steve Badger, PhD**

**Spring, 2008**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An examination of Genesis 1-11 in the light of the contemporary natural sciences. Readings and discussions will include the genre of Genesis, ancient creation myths and cosmogony, philosophy of science, the methods of the natural sciences, epistemology, patterns of integrating knowledge, the three most common Evangelical perspectives on origins, and others. Questions we will attempt to answer include: Should our scientific knowledge inform our understanding of the message of Genesis? If “No,” why not? If “Yes,” why and how?

**OBJECTIVES**

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Describe a personal exegetical and theological analysis of the major issues of Genesis 1-11.
2. Describe the genre of Genesis 1 and how this should inform a person’s interpretation. Posit and defend a hermeneutic for the first few chapters of Genesis.
3. Outline a generic scientific method (for the natural sciences) and describe the limitations of these methods.
4. Describe the relationship among propositions, beliefs, truth, and knowledge vis-à-vis origins.
5. List ways people attempt to integrate religious knowledge with scientific knowledge, identifying the strengths and/or weaknesses of each pattern of integration.
6. Describe the typical positions of Young Earth Creationists, Old Earth Creationists, and Evolutionary Creationists, including the strengths and weaknesses of each position.
7. Describe each of these views of creation: the 24-hour view, the Day-Age View, and the Framework View, including the strengths and weaknesses of each position.
8. Explain the variety of meanings of “evolution.”
9. Reply to those who posit that the Genesis flood was local, not global, for scientific reasons.

**TEXTBOOKS**


Moreland, J. P. *Christianity & the Nature of Science.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. (Read chapters 1-4.)

**Additional Required Readings:**


BASIC COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introductions
   A. Introductions: Professor and Students
   B. The Professor’s Presuppositions and Biases
   C. An Overview of the Course

II. Philosophical foundation: Epistemology
   A. Natural Sciences
      1. Scientific methods
      2. Philosophy of science
      3. Limitations of the scientific methods
   B. Biblical Theology
      1. Genre and hermeneutics
      2. Limitations of hermeneutics
      3. Old Testament parallels
      4. The message of Genesis

III. Origins: Creation and Evolution
   A. Age of the Earth
      1. Biblical dating
      2. Scientific dating
   B. Patterns of Integrating Religious and Scientific Knowledge
      1. No common ground
      2. Theology is always right
      3. Science is always right
      4. Theology and science are both right
      5. Theology and science are both wrong
   C. Common Western Perspectives on Origins
      1. Young earth creation (creation science)
      2. Old earth creation (progressive creation)
      3. Evolutionary creation (theistic evolution)
      4. Deistic evolution
      5. Atheistic evolution (ateleological evolution)
   D. Other Perspectives on Origins
      1. Panspermia
      2. The Gap Theory
      3. Intelligent Design

IV. The Genesis Flood
   A. The Narrative
   B. Global or Local?
   C. The Message of the Flood

V. Additional Topics
   A. Genealogies
   B. Table of Nations
   C. Tower of Babel
METHODOLOGY

The weekly class sessions will include:

- Lectures and discussions facilitated by the professor
- Discussion of readings facilitated by the professor
- Student presentations of book reviews followed by student critiques and discussion
- Guest speakers on special topics: an OT scholar, a dialogue with an evolutionist, a dramatization, etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance is expected; maximum allowable absences are two class periods during the semester. If you must be absent, please discuss this with the professor.

2. You should read Genesis 1-11 in the NIV, NASB, and the NET before the second class period. Reread portions of these passages as needed.

3. Be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each class. Complete these reading and writing assignments when due:
   a. Read the assigned portions of Matthews’ *Genesis 1-11:26* by the due dates (p.4-5).
   b. Read assigned portions of *Christianity and the Nature of Science* and write a 1-2 page critique of it.
   c. Read the assigned excerpt from Matthews’ *Old Testament Parallels*.
   d. Read Waltke’s “The Literary Genre of Genesis 1” (*Crux*) and write a 1-2 page critique of it.
   e. Read Badger & Tenneson’s *Christian Perspectives on Origins* and write a 1-2 page critique of it giving your preference of the three views and listing the major weaknesses of the rejected two views and the strengths of the chosen view.
   f. Read assigned portions of Matthews’ *The Genesis Debate* and write a 1-2 page critique of it, giving your preference of the three views and listing the major weaknesses of the rejected two views and the strengths of the chosen view.
   g. Read Hill’s “The Noachian Flood” and write a 1-2 page critique of it.
   h. Read another article or two (to be named later) in the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*.

4. Choose a book from the bibliography to read; acceptable choices are marked with a double dagger (‡). Write a summary/critique of this book and present a 15-20 minute summary/critique in class. An outline must be sent to the class at least three days before the presentation. The critique should be 5-7 pages long, and your presentation should include a PowerPoint™ presentation.

5. Write an essay final exam over the major concepts and issues of the course on 24 April.

GRADING PROCEDURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class discussions</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew’s <em>Genesis 1-1:26</em></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreland’s <em>Christianity and the Nature of Science</em> *</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew’s excerpts from <em>Old Testament Parallels</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Waltke’s “The Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One” *</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Badger &amp; Tenneson’s <em>Christian Perspectives on Origins</em> *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hagopian’s <em>The Genesis Debate</em> *</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill’s “The Noachian Flood” *</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review, critique, and presentation</td>
<td>180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay Final Exam, 24 April</td>
<td>250</td>
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</table>

*write a summary/critique Total 1000
WRITTEN WORK

1. Written work must be computer generated, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and left-justified (that is, NOT full justification).

2. Carefully proofread all written work before turning it in.

3. Writing should be in Standard English and must demonstrate a good, formal, clear writing style (see Strunk & White’s *Elements of Style*).

4. The format should follow the latest edition of Turabian. You may choose any one of the three citation methods in Turabian: footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references.

5. The length may exceed the limit by a page without penalty.

6. Put the following information at the top of the first page or on a title page: Name, assignment, course, my name, date.

7. Do not put anything but the page numbers at the top of the other pages.

8. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the due date or the grade begins to drop.

9. If you do not have an assignment ready to turn in at the beginning of class, you must leave the class during the discussion of the assignment.

10. Late work will be penalized 10% per day late but will not be accepted after the 3rd late day.

BOOK FOR REVIEW/CRITIQUE AND PRESENTATION:

Select a book in the bibliography that is marked with a double dagger (‡). Read the book (either completely or at least 250 pages) and write a 3-5 page summary/critique of it. Give a 15-20 minute presentation of your work to the class. (You must select a work you have never read before.)

DUE DATES

The dates and assignments below are tentative and will be modified if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 Jan</td>
<td>Read the course syllabus. Be certain you understand all of the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Jan</td>
<td>Read Genesis 1-2 in the NIV, NASB, and NET. Read Moreland’s <em>Christianity and the Nature of Science, chapters 1 &amp; 2</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Jan</td>
<td>* &lt;&lt; DAY OF RENEWAL &gt;&gt;*</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Jan</td>
<td>Read Moreland’s <em>Christianity and the Nature of Science, chapters 3 &amp; 4</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Feb</td>
<td>Read Matthew’s Old Testament Parallels, Pages 21-32.</td>
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<td>28 Feb</td>
<td>* &lt;&lt; SPRING STUDY WEEK &gt;&gt;*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Apr</td>
<td>An article or two in the Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch will be assigned. Presentation of book review/critiques by students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Apr</td>
<td>Essay final exam.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The professor is not intending to endorse any of these works by inclusion in this bibliography.

**Theology: Commentary on Genesis**


**Origins: Age of the Earth**


Young, Davis A. Christianity and the Age of the Earth. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
Origins: Creation-Evolution


Origins: Intelligent Design


Origins: The Flood


Philosophy of Science


Pearcey, Nancy and Charles Thaxton. The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy. Wheaton: Crossway, 1994. ‡


**Philosophy: The Science-Faith Interface**


----- Scaling the Secular City. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. ‡


**Journal Articles**


Miscellaneous Related Works


Reference Works


A Few Extraordinary References

1. Alexander & Baker’s Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch has excellent signed articles relevant to our topics. Some of these are titled:
   - Adam
   - Babel
   - Chronology
   - Cosmology
   - Creation
   - Divination, Magic
   - Flood
   - Genealogies
   - Genesis
   - Hermeneutics
   - Nations, Table of
   - Noah
   - Sons of God, Daughters of Man

These articles may be useful references for papers.

2. Google, the premier Internet search engine, has a scholarly search engine at: http://129.82.76.41:591/ASAdb/search.html

3. Finally, the journal of the American Scientific Affiliation (Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith) has articles from every Evangelical perspective on issues of science and Christianity.

Past issues are indexed on the Internet at: http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF.html

You can search key words at: http://129.82.76.41:591/ASAdb/search.html

Often you can find full-text PSCF articles online.
INTERNET RESOURCES

You may find useful materials at these web sites. (Listing them here does not constitute an endorsement.)

www.evangel.edu/Personal/badgers/Web/AGTS.htm

This portion of the professor’s web site at Evangel University contains materials specific to this AGTS course including several PDF documents.

steve-badger.net/cfnslinks.html

The information at this site was compiled years ago for CBC students in an undergraduate course titled: “Christian Faith and Natural Science.”

www.arn.org/

“We focus on such controversial topics as genetic engineering, euthanasia, computer technology, environmental issues, creation/evolution, fetal tissue research, AIDS, and so on.” The main focus is on Intelligent Design.

www.asa3.org/

This has an excellent collection of Christian thinking on Origins covering the past several decades. Many full text articles are available in their online archives of Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith (the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation).

www.icr.org/

This site provides information promoting the Young Earth Creationist perspective.

www.natcenscied.org/

The goal of this organization is to keep evolution in public school education. There is a lot of useful information here from a materialistic perspective dealing with evolution and creation.

www.talkorigins.org/

This is a Usenet newsgroup that discusses a wide range of viewpoints and evidences related to biological and physical origins.

www.creationresearch.org/

“The Creation Research Society is a professional organization of trained scientists and interested laypersons who are firmly committed to scientific special creation. The Society was organized in 1963 by a committee of ten like-minded scientists, and has grown into an organization with worldwide membership.”

www.answeringgenesis.org/home.aspx

“Answers in Genesis.” This site provides an abundance of information from a Young Earth Creation perspective. Ken Ham.

www.reasons.org/index.shtml


www.discover.org/csc/

The Discovery Institute, Center for Science & Culture: They support research by scientists and other scholars challenging of neo-Darwinian theory and supporting intelligent design.
## OFFICE HOURS

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## SPECIFIC DATA

Syllabus prepared by Steve Badger, Ph.D., November 2007.

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