



Steinbach Bible College
BI327 Jesus, Moses, and the Church:
The Role of The Torah as Christian Scripture
Three Credit Hours

Course Syllabus

Spring Term 2024

Monday -Thursday, 8:00a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

April 29 – May 2, 2024

Campus & Hybrid

Instructor: Cameron S. McKenzie

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Course Description

Should the Church pay more attention to the Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy)? By examining select readings from Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, this course will explore the apostles' understanding of the Torah in the context of Jesus's identity as the Messiah of God. Paul's writings about circumcision, justification by faith, and the difference between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles, along with selections from the Book of Hebrews, will provide a window into the early Church's understanding of how Torah functioned as authoritative scripture. This, in turn, will help answer such questions as: What does obedience to the Torah mean for Christians today? How can we recover Paul's understanding of the Law in our worship? How might we respond to calls for the church to return to a performative Judaism, such as in the "Hebrew Roots" movement?

Knowing what to do theologically with all things Jewish, Zionist and Hebrew in our evangelical churches is a perennial challenge. The war in the Middle East always presses those questions in close. Cameron will be going to the roots of the New Testament's perspective on the Law with a study of Galatians, Romans and Hebrews, asking what role the Torah should play in our churches. This could make an excellent part of your personal devotion, professional development, or sermon prep for the coming year. Please forward this to anyone you think might be interested. Call SBC if you would like to register.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain how Jesus and the writers of the New Testament understood the function of the Torah in the proclamation of the New Covenant
2. Exhibit knowledge of the various factors influencing the interpretation of biblical texts.
3. Show competence in the application of principles of interpretation to specific texts.
4. Articulate a coherent theological response to the question: How does the Torah function as Christian Scripture
5. Formulate a vital Christian praxis relating to the Torah.

N.B. In addition to these assessed objectives, I sincerely hope that through the process of interaction with variety of interpretative ideas, along with an exploration of the history of the Church's use of the Bible, you will develop an appreciation for the diverse ways in which the scriptures speak to people. The instructor does not expect that students will accept or embrace every methodology presented or that the students will affirm everything that the Church has attributed to the Bible over time. Rather it is my hope as your instructor that you will begin to perceive the value of community to the faithful and intelligent reading of scripture.

Required Textbooks

There are no required textbooks. The instructor will post a series of readings to the Course Portal in Populi that will enhance lectures and class discussions and form the basis of other assigned work.

Learning Activities and Assessments

Instructor Contacts: The instructor will be available from April 15, 2024 - to answer specific questions about the course. While the instructor has an SBC email address, the best point of contact is by **text at 204 223 1495** or by **email at cameron.mckenzie@fortgarryemc.ca**

Class Attendance and Participation: The regularly scheduled class period will be largely lecture and discussion-oriented. While no credit is given for attendance in assessment, the instructor reserves the right to penalize a student up to 10% of their final grade for poor attendance or participation.

Reading Response Papers. Because of the intensive nature of the course, students are encouraged to complete as much reading as possible before the course begins. It is not mandatory to do so, but daily reading requirements will feel heavier if some still need to be completed in advance. Each student will write four 750-word reading response papers focused on the topics discussed in a class session. They should follow the rubric provided for them. Plan to write for sessions that matter to you or challenge you. **The first response paper**

must be written for the sessions on May 1st. The second response paper must be written by May 2nd. The 3rd and 4th responses are due at the end of June 2024. 40% of Course Grade

Graduate students will also complete a **self-guided supplementary reading of approximately 350 pages**. Graduate students are expected to choose a specific topic or passage related to the issue of Torah as Christian scripture that they would like to explore further, different from the topic or passage they explore in their written research assignment. They should develop an annotated bibliography of readings and provide a report of 500-750 words on the completed reading.

Resource Bibliography on Torah Observant Christianity—Each student will research and prepare an annotated bibliography of 25 entries relating to various forms of Torah Observant Christianity movements and critical responses to them. The assignment should envision the creation of a virtual resource that could be shared with an adult Sunday School class or Young Adult study group. The assignment should be created as an online resource and submitted electronically. **Due June 30, 2024 – 20% of Course Grade** (*Graduate students will replace this assignment with the requirements listed below*)

Written Research Assignment.

Undergraduate and graduate students must complete one of the following research options. Each assignment must be written in good English with full sentences and accompanied by appropriate in-text citations of sources and relevant bibliography. **Due, June 30, 2024 - 40% of Course Grade**

1. **Annotated Sermon Series** - Create a six-week annotated sermon series outline for the book of Galatians focusing on the question of Paul, the Torah and contemporary Christian living. The sermon series outline should include a 700 – 1000 word rationale for the series (Why, Which Texts, Main Idea, etc.). The individual sermons will include an outline of the sermon, an outline of the biblical text, a thesis statement, and a two-paragraph summary of the sermon's big point
2. **Letters to an Inquiring Student** - Write a series of letters to a university student from your church, helping them navigate their growing interest in the Hebrew Roots movement. Your letters will contain detailed interactions with various aspects of Hebrew Roots/Torah Observant Christianity, drawing on the class lectures and discussions, relevant excerpts from the course readings, and additional information from your own research.

3. **Exegetical or Thematic Essay** – Write a 3000-word double-spaced essay on any passage (about 15 verses) in the Pauline letters or the Gospels with specific historical or theological relevance to the topic of *The Torah as Christian Scripture*. The paper should focus on the text's main exegetical issues or the important historical and/or theological issues surrounding the text and include a closing treatment of theological implications and practical application deriving from the exegesis. This assignment is not a sermon but an academic paper and should be formulated accordingly.
4. **Bible Study Guide** - Drawing on the class lectures and discussions, relevant excerpts from the course readings, and additional information from your own research, create a 3000-word, double-spaced Bible Study Guide. Choose any passage (about 15 verses) in the Pauline letters or the Gospels with specific historical or theological relevance to the topic of *The Torah as Christian Scripture* develop a Bible study guide for the passage. Begin by briefly describing your audience and stating the primary learning goals of the study. Include the questions that you will use to frame the discussion. For each question, provide brief summaries of the things you would like to bring out of the group in each question.

Please note the following instructions: Include relevant information that would help the group understand the passage's social and literary context. You may utilize handouts or visual aids to supplement your presentation. Also, create "so what" questions relating the passage to the group's current situation. Please remember that this assignment should not be a sermon but a guide to facilitate group discussion. However, you are expected to use full sentences and an academic style when discussing exegetical and contextual issues for each question.

Graduate Student Requirements:

In place of the *Resource Bibliography on Torah Observant Christianity*, Students taking the course for graduate credit will submit a 1500-word, double-spaced **Reflective Autobiography** of their personal engagement with the Torah. This essay should evince a high level of critical reflection on issues such as personal spirituality, denominational/confession context, influential voices (books, movements, mentors), gender-related questions, ethnicity, ministry experience, and such. **Due June 30, 2024 – 20% of Course Grade**

General Note on assessment and grading.

When I assess assignments, I strive to evaluate whether a student has presented ideas in such a way that reflects the integration of course material and critical thinking skills. I give grades not according to competition among students (who is "the best")

but according to my expectations for a particular assignment relative to the material covered in class up to that point.

The following characteristics reflected in the assignment are taken into account in grading papers:

- Overall clarity
- Clear thesis statement
- Understanding of issues
- Interaction with material
- Analytic ability
- Synthesis of material
- Formulation of ideas
- Use of arguments
- Use of resources
- Clear conclusion
- Structure and organization
- Style
- Grammar and Spelling
- Footnotes and Bibliography

Note: Content items are weighted more than stylistic items.

I do not use numeric grades and will assign a letter grade to each assignment. The following represents what each letter grade communicates about the assignment.

A+, Publishable. The assignment is of sufficient substance and style to be submitted to a refereed journal for publication.

A, Outstanding. Superior understanding of the subject matter. Evidence of original thinking and an extensive knowledge base. Careful, concise, critical analysis with a clear and well-argued hypothesis based on the material. Capability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material. Grip of all the scholarly issues involved. Evidence of learning being extended beyond the initial learning situation. Clear thesis and conclusion. Well-researched and documented. Stylistically flawless.

A-, Excellent. Superior understanding of the subject matter. A careful analysis with some precision and attention to the details of the material. Shows some critical capacity and analytic ability and some original thinking. Needs a bit of fine-tuning of the details. Clear thesis and conclusion. Good research and documentation. Stylistically flawless.

B+, Very Good. Solid understanding of the subject matter. Good analysis and some critical reasoning. Reasonable understanding of relevant issues and familiarity with the material. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the relationship or connections among the basic concepts. The student needs to be more concise or precise in details and more careful in forming arguments. Stylistically sound.

B, Good. Generally accurate account of the subject matter with acceptable analysis and some critical reasoning. Some interaction with relevant material. Demonstrates some understanding of the relationship or connection among the basic concepts. Needs more precision and attention to detail and greater precision in arguments. There are some careless stylistic errors.

B-, Fine. The assignment generally accurately describes the subject matter and adequately grasps the critical issues and ideas involved. It also demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of the relationship or connection among the basic concepts. However, it needs more attention to detail and better use of arguments. There are some careless stylistic errors.

C+, Average. The assignment acceptably treats the subject matter. He or she demonstrates an understanding of the basic facts, vocabulary, details, and elemental concepts. The student shows an ability to deal with simple issues arising out of the material. However, the student needs to explore the subject matter more fully and formulate ideas more clearly. Closer attention should be given to stylistic elements, including sentence structure and paragraph organization.

C, Adequate. Generally acceptable treatment of the subject matter and issues. Demonstrates an awareness of the basic facts, vocabulary, details, and elemental concepts. Impressionistic or vague at points. Shows that the learning experience was profitable. Lacks clarity in formulating the issues and shows little or no evidence of critical reflection on the issues or data. Closer attention should be given to grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

C-, Minimally Acceptable. The writing communicates an adequate understanding and treatment of the data and issues, but it is imprecise, impressionistic or vague. It lacks clarity in expressing the issues and shows no evidence of critical reflection. There are major problems related to style.

F, Inadequate. It is a sloppy, imprecise or careless discussion of the material with little or no evidence of critical reflection. It is stylistically flawed.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
April 29, 2024	<p>Course Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Professor and Student expectations • Introduction to the Question • Historical Backgrounds • Contemporary Expressions 	<p>Daniel I. Block, <i>The Gospel According to Moses: Theological and Ethical Reflections on the Book of Deuteronomy</i>, Eugene, OR: Cascade Boks, 2012, pp 104 - 136</p>
April 30, 2024	<p>Jesus and the Torah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism in 1st Century Palestine • Jesus as a 1st Century Jewish Man • Jesus' Attitudes to the Old Testament • The Torah and the Sermon on the Mount 	<p>Meier, John P.. A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume IV: Law and Love. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, pp 26-73.</p> <p><i>Magness, Jodi. Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus. United Kingdom: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011, pp 32-53</i></p>
May 1, 2024	<p>Paul and the Torah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul and the Pharisees • Old Perspectives and New Perspectives • Romans – Paul, the Torah and Election • Galations – Paul, Moses and the Torah 	<p>O'Connor, Jerome Murphy. <i>Paul: His Story. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp 97-119.</i></p> <p>Blazosky, Bryan. <i>The Law's Universal Condemning and Enslaving Power: Reading Paul, the Old Testament, and Second Temple Jewish Literature.</i> Winina Lake:</p>

		Eisenbraun’s, 2019. Pp 25-49; 115-135.
May 2, 2024	<p>The Church and The Torah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrews 3-5: Jesus Embodies Torah • Paul’s “Works of the Law” in the 2nd century – The thesis of Matthew J. Thomas • The Torah in Luther, Calvin, and Early Anabaptism • What Have we learned and Where do we go? 	<p>Brevard S. Child. <i>Biblical theology of the Old and New Testaments</i>. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, pp. 532-565.</p> <p>Matthew J. Thomas. <i>Paul’s “Works of the Law” in the Perspective of Second Century Receptions</i>, Downer’s Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2020, pp. 265-289.</p>

SBC Academic Policies

1. Assignments

Assignments will be submitted to the instructor on the due date by 11:59 pm unless stated otherwise. Assignments submitted late will receive a 10% deduction per week to a maximum of two weeks. Assignments submitted more than two weeks after the due date will not be accepted. Assignments will not be accepted after the second-last day of the term without an official course extension. Grades can be anticipated about two weeks after the assignment deadline.

2. Format

All assignments are formatted in **Times New Roman 12 point** and follow the **Turabian Style Guide** <<https://sbccanada.sharepoint.com/sites/students/SitePages/Style-Guide-and-Word-Template.aspx>> unless otherwise noted. The college requires the use of inclusive language when referring to people in general. This practice includes both written and oral communication.

3. Populi

The course will require the use of the Populi Learner Management System. If you are enrolled in the course, you already have access. Populi will provide a place for you to check your grades. You may also be requested to submit assignments electronically. **Please make sure that all electronic submissions are in Adobe PDF format.** Check Populi for further

assignment information, discussion forums, reports, tests, etc. To access the class, login at <https://sbcollege.populiweb.com/index.php> and follow the links to your course.

4. Academic Integrity

Academic honesty requires proper documentation of sources. Academic dishonesty involves inadequate documentation, substantial plagiarism without documentation, complete plagiarism or copying, direct quotations and borrowed ideas without citations, cheating on exams, writing a paper for another student, and submitting the same paper for two courses.

The improper use of AI tools is also dishonest. This can include: 1) using AI to generate text, outlines, or content for an assignment; 2) using AI to rephrase quotations to avoid having to cite; 3) using editing tools that go beyond pointing out problems with the student's writing to actual rewriting.

It is appropriate to have help in writing well, from both human and electronic editors. However, as part of citation in assignments, the bibliography should have an "Assistance in Writing" section that states the assistance the assignment received from human and electronic editors in writing.

Consequences for academic dishonesty range from verbal warnings to expulsion from college. See your instructor for details.

5. Attendance

Class attendance is required because learning in a community enhances your college education. The college will notify students of cancellations due to weather. Students with five (75 minute) class absences (more than 20% of the course) will be dismissed and fail the course. Two lates equals an absence. Keep informed of your class attendance on Populi.

Students will declare their modality (campus, online synchronous, or online asynchronous) at registration and are expected to remain in that modality for the duration of the semester.

- Campus students are expected to attend in-person classes and may join on Teams only with instructor approval.
- Students are considered online for a course when they attend more than 50% of classes on Teams.
- Online synchronous students are expected to attend with their cameras on.
- Online asynchronous students are required to view the video recordings within one week of the class and submit class notes to the instructor. Notes submitted within one-two weeks of the class will be recorded as late.
- Students with exceptional circumstances may request an exemption to this policy through the Registration Office.

6. Technology

Student learning is enhanced when all class participants are engaged in the learning process. Technology that supports the learning environment is encouraged. But technological diversions like mobile phones, text messaging, non-class related web browsing, gaming, etc., distract from classroom learning. Distracting use of technology will result in losing the use of your device.

7. Course Changes

Students may change courses for a full refund and without a grade penalty until **April 29**. A student can switch from taking the course for credit to audit till **May 2**. If a student drops the course by **May 1**, a grade of W is issued, and 60% of the tuition is refunded. A student may withdraw from the course by **May 9** with a grade of W and no refund. After that date, a course withdrawal results in a failure. The last day to request course extensions is the day the last assignment is due.

Select Bibliography

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