

Exposition of Deuteronomy

BIB 625 WC

The mission of MB Seminary is to educate and equip men and women to help lead the church in reaching Canada and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: None
Course Term: January 26 - March 28, 2026
Instruction: February 5-7, 2026 at Willingdon Church

Course Description

How can legal and ritual stipulations established 3000 years ago still have relevance for Jesus-followers today? The book of Deuteronomy is a story of covenant renewal for the people of God as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. In this study of Deuteronomy, emphasis will be placed on understanding how covenant law and Israel's story integrate to illuminate God's character, plans and purposes for his people. The overarching goal will be to understand how the message of Deuteronomy spoke to its original audience, and then see how it continues to impact the church today.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and describe the intended message, key themes, and the theological significance of the book of Deuteronomy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the book's place in past and present discussions of issues such as applying Old Testament commands, Israel's conquest of Canaan, the relationship of grace, faith and obedience, etc.
- Demonstrate the skill to study the Bible inductively (observation, question articulation, critical reflection) as well as exegete, interpret, and apply the biblical text with hermeneutical sensitivity and skill.
- Appreciate the importance of integrating biblical content and themes with contemporary questions and challenges.
- Demonstrate the ability and skill to compose a small group study aid or a short sermon presentation from Deuteronomy.
- Exhibit a growing level of competence in thinking about and articulating the applicability of the message of Deuteronomy in current church, Canadian and global societal contexts.

The most effective learning takes place as you carefully process information through higher-order thinking skills. Your performance and evaluation in this course will be based on demonstrating your engagement and learning, not by simply repeating back basic facts. In all that you do in this class, you should always remember to use higher-order thinking skills, as described below:

- Comprehension: demonstrates the ability to grasp meaning, explain, and restate ideas,
- Application: demonstrates the ability to use learned material in new situations,
- Analysis: demonstrates the ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between the parts,
- Synthesis: demonstrates the ability to put together the separate ideas to form a new whole, to establish new relationships, and
- Evaluation: demonstrates the ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

Required Texts

- Born, J. Bryan. *“Walking in His Ways” – Story and Command in Deuteronomy’s “Way” Language*. MDiv Thesis. Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (Fresno), 1989. (113 pages)
- Millar, J. Gary. *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*. InterVarsity Press, 1998. (183 pages)
- Ryken, Philip Graham. *Written in Stone. The Ten Commandments and Today’s Moral Crisis*. Crossway Books, 2003. Reissued by P & R Blomberg, 2010. (227 pages)
- Wright, Christopher J.H. *Deuteronomy*. (Understanding the Bible Commentary Series). Baker Books, 1996. (315 Pages)

Articles and Chapters

- Block, Daniel I. “The Nature of the Covenant Rituals and Laws on the Plains of Moab” in *Covenant: The Framework of God’s Grand Plan of Redemption*. Baker Academic, 2021. Available on the course site (Pages 259-272).
- Dorsey, David A. “The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34.3 (January 1991): 321-334. (13 pages). https://etsjets.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/files_JETS-PDFs_34_34-3_34-3-pp321-334_JETS.pdf
- Martens, Elmer A. The Problem of Old Testament Ethics. *Direction* 6.3 (July 1977): 23-35. (12 pages) <https://directionjournal.org/6/3/problem-of-old-testament-ethics.html>
- Wright, Christopher J.H. “What About the Canaanites?” in *The God i Don’t Understand*. Zondervan. 2008. Available on the course site (Pages 76-108).

Recommended

- Block, Daniel I. *Deuteronomy*. (NIV Application Commentary). Zondervan., 2012.
- Bratcher, Dennis. “Torah as Holiness: Old Testament ‘Law’ as Response to Divine Grace.” *The Voice*. A Paper Presented to the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, Dayton, Ohio, November 5, 1994. (26 Pages). <https://www.cVOICE.org/torahholiness.html>
- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Eerdmans, 1976.
- Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1-11*. (Word Biblical Commentary). Word Books, 1991.
- McConville, J. Gordon. *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Apollos Old Testament Commentary). Apollos, 2011.

- Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy*. (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching). John Knox Press, 1990.
- Wright, Christopher J.H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Learning Intensive Schedule

This course's instructional content will take place through an intensive teaching weekend at Willingdon Church, February 5-7, 2026. Please note that attending all sessions of the course intensive is a requirement for passing the course.

Teaching Weekend (Willingdon Church)	
Thursday, February 5, 2026	6:30 – 9:30 pm
Session 1	Course Introduction – Nature of <i>Torah</i>
Session 2	Covenant and Monotheism (<i>Shema</i>)
Friday, February 6, 2026	6:30 - 9:30 pm
Session 3	Israel and the Nations (Mission)
Session 4	The Land and Memory (Promise)
Session 5	Israel and the Canaanites (Election)
Saturday, February 7, 2026	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
Session 6	Commands and Worship (Festivals)
Session 7	Leadership and Revelation (Prophecy)
Session 8	Blessings and Curses (Decision)
Lunch	
Session 9	OT Law for NT Christians
Session 10	A Song for the Future

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm (your time) on the Saturday they are due. Please submit your assignments in Populi. Late assignments may be accepted, but please note that a deduction of 5% of an assignment's total possible value for each week that it is late (assignments submitted more than two weeks beyond the due date will not be accepted) may be incurred. Please consult with the professor directly regarding any potential due date extensions. Below is an overview of the course assignments:

Week	Due Date	Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade	Cumulative Percentage
Week 1	Jan 31	Pre-Course Reading Report	10%	10%
Week 2	Feb 5-7	Learning Intensive		
Week 3	Feb 14	Reflection Paper #1	10%	20%
Week 4	Feb 16-21	Discussion Group #1		
Week 5	Feb 28	Reflection Paper #2	10%	30%
Week 6	Mar 2-7	Discussion Group #2		
Week 7	Mar 14	Reflection Paper #3	10%	40%
Week 8	Mar 16-21	Discussion Group #3	5%	45%
Week 9	Mar 21	Interpreting OT Torah Project	25%	70%
Week 10	Mar 28	Research Paper	30%	100%
Week 10	Mar 28	Course Evaluation	-----	-----

1. Pre-Intensive Reading Report (10%)

Prior to the beginning of the course, students are to read the book of Deuteronomy, the two required articles written by David Dorsey and Elmer Martens (available online), and submit a 4-page report. The report should focus on identifying on key ideas, questions and themes discussed within the articles. Be sure to include a discussion of how the ideas and arguments presented could impact the way you

approach and apply Old Testament law. In the concluding section of the report, provide a list of at least three questions or issues raised during your reading of Deuteronomy, and explain their significance.
Due January 31, 2025.

2. Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups

There are three sets of Reflection Papers and Discussion Groups, with grading based on two components for each Paper/Group set. During three weeks of the course, you will write a 1,000-word reflection paper in response to the instructional content and the required readings. Your reflection paper should answer the questions assigned to each of the three weeks (see below). The week after your reflection paper is due, you will meet in church-based discussion groups to discuss your responses to the questions and explore other related topics.

Reflection Papers (30%): The following are the questions you should address in your three reflection papers:

- **Reflection #1** (due Feb 14) – review the required reading on the topic of the Deuteronomic covenant in Block’s text (available on the course site), chapter 1 of Millar’s text, chapters 1-3 of Ryken’s text, and sections 6-9 and 33 (Deuteronomy 4:44-6:25 and 29:1-30:20) in Wright’s commentary on Deuteronomy.
 1. What are the implications of approaching Deuteronomic *torah* (teaching) from a relational viewpoint (‘way of life’) rather than in legal/forensic terms (law)? What benefits and potential problems exist in this shift of perspective?
 2. Daniel Block (265) argues that obedience to the commands of the *torah* would have been completely reasonable to ancient Near Eastern peoples. Furthermore, he posits that forgiveness of sin was possible through “the divinely revealed system of ritual” (271). Provide a biblical rationale for why you do, or do not, agree with Block’s argument.
 3. If the *torah* was intended to lead to a flourishing life for those who have been redeemed (see 30:15-16), should anyone outside of the covenant people of God be expected to obey its commands? Why or why not? How does your answer impact the way Christians use biblical material when engaging in public debates and decision-making?
- **Reflection #2** (due Feb 28) - review the material found in Wright’s commentary (sections 5,11,13 and 15) and Ryken’s text (chapters 4-6) dealing with the nature and character of God as revealed in Deuteronomy (especially in chapters 4,8,10 and 12).
 4. What are some of the key aspects of God’s nature and character revealed in Deuteronomy? What is communicated to the reader about God through the words that he speaks and through the descriptions of his actions and emotions?
 5. How does the material dealing with blessings and curses in response to Israel’s covenant faithfulness impact your understanding of God (see Deuteronomy 11, 27-28)?
 6. The sin of idolatry receives considerable attention throughout the book of Deuteronomy. Comment on the connection between Moses reminding the Israelites that they had heard from God directly, and the command forbidding them from making

images of God (see Deuteronomy 4). Why does the sin of idolatry feature so prominently in Deuteronomy?

- **Reflection #3** (due Mar 14) – read chapters 4 and 5 of Wright’s book, *The God i Don’t Understand* (available on the course site). Then review the material found in Wright’s *Deuteronomy* commentary (pages 8-14, and sections 10,12 and 15), as well as Millar’s text (chapters 4 and 5) dealing with the relationship between Israel and the nations as instructed in Deuteronomy.

7. Wright argues that the Deuteronomic *torah* provided the Israelites with missional guidance for shining as a ‘light to the nations.’ He draws a connection between election, ethics and mission in Deuteronomy. What in his analysis of God’s mission in Deuteronomy do you find compelling, and what, if any, questions still remain?
8. The topic of the divinely mandated destruction of the Canaanites in Deuteronomy has become a hotly debated issue in interfaith and political conversations. How do you understand this troubling aspect of Israelite history? What did you find helpful in the explanations provided by Wright and Millar? How does the Christocentric hermeneutic of Mennonite Brethren affect the way we read these texts?
9. Describe how the land functions as “the context and measure of decision” for the people of Israel in Deuteronomy (see Millar, pp. 60-62).

Discussion Groups (5%): During Weeks 4, 6, and 8, you will meet in a church-based or virtual discussion group to discuss the questions you addressed in your reflection paper, explore other related topics, and contextualize ideas to your ministry setting. The assessment of participation in discussion groups involves attendance and actual participation in the group sessions (both are worth 50% of the discussion group mark). The discussion group leaders will use the following rubric to assess each group member’s participation and provide the grade to the instructor:

Excellent participation	47-50/50	The group member consistently engaged in the group conversations. The person did an excellent job listening to other group members and consistently added meaningful content to the conversations.
Great participation	43-46/50	The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.
Good participation	40-43/50	The group member sometimes engaged in the group conversations. The person was somewhat attentive to the group conversation and would add relevant content periodically.
Fair participation	35-39/50	The group member did not often engage in group conversations. The person seemed out of touch with the group conversation and would rarely add relevant content.
Poor participation	<35/50	The group member rarely, if ever, engaged in the group conversations. The person seemed distant and uninterested in the group discussion and even other group members.

3. Interpreting Old Testament Torah Project (30% of final grade)

For this hermeneutical project students will need to have read the following required texts: Born, Ryken, and Millar (chapter 3), with an eye to developing an interpretive model for Christians to apply Old Testament laws (*torah*) to contemporary life. This 8-page paper should have the following structure:

- a. In the first half of the paper, the student should describe and explain their chosen model for interpreting Old Testament law. Note the key issues, and explain each element of the interpretive process.
- b. In the second half of the paper, students are to choose a specific law from the material found in Deuteronomy 12-26, and use their chosen interpretive model to explain and apply that law to current realities. This section of the paper should include the following elements:
 - i. Cite the biblical text in two different translations.
 - ii. Discuss the specific law within its original historic context - explore the literary, cultural, religious and political elements. If possible, compare it to other ancient near-eastern law codes.
 - iii. Make the interpretative step to application for the 21st century. Describe what the law teaches us about God, and how it might apply to our current context.
 - iv. Finally, the student should conclude with an outline (one-page maximum) for teaching their interpretative method to a small group Bible study (should include 5 discussion questions based on the Deuteronomic law example employed in their paper).

Due March 21, 2025

4. Research Paper (35% of final grade):

Students will write a 12-15 page research paper on an important theological theme found in Deuteronomy. The maximum length of this paper is 3,000 words. Potential topics include a study of blessings and curses, the importance of memory/remembrance, divine war in the conquest of Canaan, God's design for leadership, or the significance of the Land. Students are free to choose other topics in consultation with the instructor.

The purpose of this assignment is to help students gain in-depth knowledge of a specific subject within the book of Deuteronomy, develop their research skills in the field of biblical studies, sharpen their analytical and communication skills, and grow in their understanding of how their chosen Deuteronomic topic relates to and impacts the discipleship journey of contemporary followers of Jesus.

In the paper, you must:

- identify primary passages dealing with the topic in Deuteronomy, and explain both their meaning and importance;
- discuss relevant biblical, historical, cultural or literary backgrounds that contribute to your understanding of the topic;
- describe other significant points/ideas/themes related to the topic in your discussion of its overall message/meaning;
- explain how your understanding of the topic is, or is not, impacted by New Testament teaching;

- attach a brief sermon outline (one-page maximum) that includes at least one specific, contemporary application/illustration that you would use to underscore the relevance of this topic when expositing it in your home church congregation.

This paper is to be well researched, properly footnoted, and is to include a bibliography with a minimum of ten reference sources. This is an academic paper – be sure to provide a clear thesis statement, and to include an outline of your paper on the first page. The grade for this assignment will be based on both the content of the paper and the quality of your writing.

Due March 28, 2026

Course Evaluation

Near the conclusion of this course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation. Because feedback is very important to us, the course evaluation is a required part of the course and is tied to the submission of your last assignment. The course evaluation will be integrated into the Populi classroom in Week 7.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Description	Grade Point	Meaning in Graduate Work
A+	Superior	4.30	Exceptionally well-reasoned, compelling development of position. Outstanding incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Strikingly appropriate examples. Extraordinary insight, critical analytical and evaluative ability, and creativity. Superlative style and language usage. Makes an original contribution and is potentially publishable.
A	Excellent	4.00	Well-argued and convincing development of position. Insightful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Notably appropriate examples. Excellent insight, critical analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Impressive style and language use.
A-	Very Good	3.70	Thorough and plausible development of position. Skillful incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Very good examples. Very good insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Commendable and fluent style and language usage.
B+	Proficient	3.30	Proficient development of position. Appropriate incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Relevant examples. Good quality insight, analytic and evaluative ability, and creativity. Clear and correct style and language usage.

B	Good	3.00	Competent development of position, but possibly with some gaps and/or limitations. Good incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Good examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally good style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
B-	Average	2.70	Average development of position, but with obvious gaps and/or limitations. Satisfactory incorporation of personal vision as well as of references and resources. Satisfactory examples. Reasonable insight, analytic and evaluative ability. Little creativity. Generally satisfactory style and language usage, but possibly with some minor flaws.
C+	Adequate	2.30	Adequate development of position with significant gaps and/or limitations. Some incorporation of personal vision as well as references and resources. Adequate use of examples. Very little creativity. Considerable number of issues related to coherence and style.
C	Acceptable	2.00	Limited development of position with a noticeable lack of consistency with personal vision or references. Limited integration with external sources. Acceptable analytic and evaluative ability. Numerous weaknesses in terms of clarity, coherence, and grammar.
C-	Needs Work	1.70	Passable but unimpressive development of position. Position not completely consistent with personal vision or references and resources not taken fully into account or examples are basic or not completely convincing or barely acceptable insight and analytic and evaluative ability. Adequate style and language usage, but with weaknesses in some respects (e.g., clarity, coherence, grammar). Overall quality shows noticeable deficiencies.
F	Below Standard	0.00	Unacceptable work at graduate level. Shows lack of understanding and/or competence in several of the criteria described above. This grade is a failing grade at the graduate level.

Important Academic Notes

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire MB Seminary community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and must abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at MB Seminary.

Artificial Intelligence

Where students make use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bing, among others) to complete any course-related work, the generated material must be clearly and correctly indicated, and cited/referenced using the Chicago/Turabian referencing style for generative AI. (Information about the required reference style is listed in the course syllabus.) Citation is not required to document the use of simple proof-reading and editing tools (e.g., Grammarly).

Failure to clearly indicate and reference AI-generated material will be reported as academic misconduct.

Students should consult the Instructor if they have any questions about using generative AI tools.

Paper Formatting

Students are required to adhere to the Turabian Notes (Bibliography) format for all papers. Please consult the [Purdue Owl](https://www.purdue.edu/owl) website for information or:

Turabian, Kate, L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Assignment Grade Appeals

Students may appeal their grade to the course instructor by stating their reasons for contesting it in writing. The deadline for such appeals is one week after the student receives their grade. Subsequent to this initial grade appeal to the instructor, students may then request a formal appeal directly to Dr. Brian Cooper, Director of Student Development, briancooper@mbseminary.ca.

Web Support-Student Portal — <https://mbseminary.populiweb.com>

All students at MBS will receive a MBS-Populi username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application. If any difficulty with a password or login credentials is experienced, please contact Keith Reed, Director of Church Equipping (keithreed@mbseminary.ca) for assistance.

Course Intensive/Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions or other emergencies, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to your church host and contact.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to notify the MB Seminary Director of Student Development (briancooper@mbseminary.ca) before the commencement of a course so that appropriate accommodations can be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. Students must inform the Director of Student Development of their disability before the class begins. Failure to do so may result in missed opportunities for necessary accommodations.