



Holy Apostles

College & Seminary

SAS 712 Pentateuch
Fall 2025
Wednesdays, 1:10 – 3:55 pm

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the content, background, purpose, composition, and structure of the books of the Pentateuch. Students will be introduced to a variety of patristic, medieval, and contemporary interpretive approaches to the Pentateuch as found in the rich Catholic spiritual and intellectual tradition. Emphasis will be placed upon the historical, theological, legal, and ceremonial aspects of the Pentateuch, as well as upon themes of creation, sin, and the redemption of Jesus Christ both promised and foreshadowed in the lives of the Patriarchs and in the precepts of the Law.

2. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. **Situate** people and events in the Pentateuch in their biblical, historical, and geographical context.
2. **Explain** the structure, content, and theological themes of the books of the Pentateuch.
3. **Evaluate** the different strengths of patristic, medieval, and contemporary interpretations of the Pentateuch.
4. **Analyze** difficult passages within the Pentateuch with the help of the Catholic Tradition and modern exegetical tools.

3. REQUIRED READINGS and RESOURCES:

- Holy Bible (most of the references I make in my lectures will rely on the RSV – 2nd Catholic Edition)
 - If you wish to use another translation in your research and writing, please do not select a “paraphrased” Bible. Other acceptable translations include (for example) the Douay-Rheims, ESV, NASB, or KJV.
- St. Bede, *On the Tabernacle*. Trans. Arthur G. Holder. Translated Texts for Historians, 18. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994. ISBN-10: 0853233780. List Price: \$49.99.
- Bergsma, John and Brant Pitre. *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: The Old Testament*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. ISBN-10: 9781586177225. List Price: \$54.95
- All other readings will be available in PDF format on Populi.

4. COURSE SCHEDULE

Lesson Content	Readings and Assignments
Week One: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Genesis 1-3 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin reading Bergsma and Pitre, chs. 3-4 (“What is the Pentateuch?” and “The Origins of the Pentateuch”) Begin reading Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 93-109
Week Two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 1-3 (continued) 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish reading Bergsma and Pitre, chs. 3-4 (“What is the Pentateuch?” and “The Origins of the Pentateuch”) Finish reading Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 93-109
Week Three: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 4-11 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 4-11 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 109-130
Week Four: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 12-36 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 12-36 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 109-130 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Proposed Passage for Exegetical Paper
Week Five: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 37-50 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis 37-50 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 145-165
Week Six: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 1-15 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 1-15 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 166-176
Week Seven: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 16-40 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exodus 16-40 Bergsma and Pitre, 176-204 Begin reading St. Bede, <i>On the Tabernacle</i>
Week Eight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Exam 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue reading St. Bede, <i>On the Tabernacle</i> Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit draft Introduction and Outline for Exegetical Paper
Week Nine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leviticus 1-15 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leviticus 1-15 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 205-214 Finish reading St. Bede, <i>On the Tabernacle</i>

Week Ten: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leviticus 16-27 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leviticus 16-27 Bergsma and Pitre, pp. 214-228
Week Eleven: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers 1-19 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers 1-19 Bergsma and Pitre, 229-242
Week Twelve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers 20-36 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers 20-36 Bergsma and Pitre, 242-257 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Exegetical Paper
Week Thirteen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deuteronomy (Part 1) 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin reading Deuteronomy Begin reading Bergsma and Pitre, ch. 10 ("Deuteronomy")
Week Fourteen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deuteronomy (Part 2) 	Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish reading Deuteronomy Finish reading Bergsma and Pitre, ch. 10 ("Deuteronomy")
Week Fifteen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Examination 	Final Examination

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Midterm Exam (25% of total grade)

2. Final Exam (25% of total grade)

3. Exegetical Paper (35% of total grade)

Students will choose a single passage from the Pentateuch and proceed to write an exegetical (i.e., biblical interpretation) paper. The paper should address the following areas:

- **Historical, Cultural, or Geographical Background**
 - What historical, cultural, or geographical information do we need to know in order to interpret this passage correctly?
- **Word Study**
 - A "word study" is a close study of a specific Hebrew word from your passage. How does knowing the full meaning of that word help us to interpret this passage correctly? Note that you do not need to know Hebrew in order to complete this portion of the paper.
- **New Testament Relationship/Fulfillment**
 - How does your passage relate to the New Testament? Are there any narratives or teachings from the New Testament that will help us to unlock the meaning of your passage?

- **The Relationship between your passage and the rest of the Pentateuch**
 - How does your passage relate to the larger story recounted in the Pentateuch? Do other passages or stories in the Pentateuch help us to interpret your passage correctly?
- **History of Interpretation**
 - How have later saints and theologians interpreted this passage? Offer at least two examples.
- **Summary and Application**
 - Summarize the meaning of the passage based on everything you have discovered.
 - Apply the passage. How does this passage apply to the Church today, or to the individual soul? What practical value does it have for living the Christian life?

Instructions for Submission:

- You must submit your proposed Scripture passage to the instructor by the end of **week four**.
- You must submit your draft introduction and outline to the instructor by the end of **week eight**.
 - The outline should include a brief (1-3 sentence) summary of what you plan to include in each section of the paper.
 - Both the introduction and outline can be edited/updated as you continue your research and writing.
- You must submit the completed paper by the end of **week twelve**.

Note:

- Do not choose a passage that is too “big” for a paper of this size (example: do not choose the entire creation account). Ideally, choose something “bite-sized,” and write with depth.
- Do not choose a passage that is relatively easy to understand, or that you have studied at great length previously. You should select a passage that you find challenging.
- Ideally, each of the six components of the paper will have its own section and heading. However, you are permitted to “blend” them at times provided each component is still given an appropriate degree of attention. For example, you may wish to blend the “History of Interpretation” section and the “New Testament Fulfillment” section into one longer, interrelated section (i.e., where an ancient commentator is commenting on the relationship of the New Testament to your passage).
- Be sure to cite any secondary sources you use (see Holy Apostles’ plagiarism policy, included at the end of the syllabus). For Scripture citations, you may simply place the references in a parenthetical note (e.g., Gen. 3:15). For all other references, use footnotes.

Requirements:

- 8-10 pages. Up to 12 pages is acceptable. Anything above 12 pages requires special permission.
- 12-point font; double-spaced
- Minimum of 8 scholarly resources
 - You must use both ancient and modern sources.
 - You must use at least *one* scholarly resource in support of each of the six components of the paper (listed above).
 - You may use scholarly resources however you wish (disagree, agree, as a point of contrast, etc.)
 - These resources must be published academic resources. You may not use Wikipedia, personal websites, blogs, church websites, YouTube, etc., except for your own personal reference.
 - You may use magisterial documents, the *Catechism*, the Missal, etc., in your paper, but these do not count toward your required number of academic resources.

4. Attendance and Participation (15% of total grade)

Come prepared each week to participate in class discussion. When reading, be sure to write down your comments and questions. You will not receive full participation points simply for being in your seat.

6. EVALUATION

GRADING SCALE:

A 94-100; **A-** 90-93; **B+** 87-89; **B** 84-86; **B-** 80-83; **C+** 77-79; **C** 74-76; **C-** 70-73 **D** 60-69; **F** 59 and below

Late Assignment Policy: Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of **5% grade deduction per day**. This applies to all assignments, from discussion posts, to learning checks, to exegetical paper assignments.

To request an extension for an assignment, please email me directly (ablaski@holypostles.edu). In your email, cite the assignment, the reason for the extension request, and (if possible) a new proposed submission date.

7. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

The effective and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to teach and learn at Holy Apostles College and Seminary must align with its mission to form missionary disciples, servant leaders, and “co-workers in the vineyard.” While using AI in some stages of your assignments will help to prepare you for your vocation, the College’s integrity policy applies in all cases. Please see the college’s AI usage policy details in the Academic Catalog.

In general, HACS permits using AI tools to help brainstorm assignments or projects or revise existing work you have written. You are responsible for making all submitted work your own, maintaining academic integrity, and avoiding plagiarism. Be aware that the accuracy or quality of AI-generated content may not meet the standards of this course, even if you only incorporate such content partially and after substantial paraphrasing, modification, and/or editing. Also, remember that AI-generated content may not provide appropriate or clear attribution to the author(s) of the original sources, while most written assignments in this course require you to find and incorporate highly relevant quality publications. You must cite your use of AI following guidelines promulgated by the College.

Before using AI in a course, check with the instructor for any restrictions on AI usage. Please be aware that HACS uses AI and plagiarism detection applications for assignments, including discussion posts. Inappropriate use of AI violates academic integrity and will be treated accordingly.

8. FOR THE DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY, THE ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY, THE ATTENDANCE POLICY, AND THE INCOMPLETE POLICY,

SEE holypostles.edu/syllabus-policies

9. ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

Dr. Andrew Blaski joined the faculty of Holy Apostles College & Seminary as Assistant Professor of Theology in 2019 after completing his doctoral work on Origen of Alexandria and early Christian biblical interpretation. From May 2021 to May 2022, he served as Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Academic Dean. He has taught Scripture, theology, and church history in a variety of academic and ecclesial settings both in the US and in the UK. Broadly speaking, Dr. Blaski’s research has been focused on the metaphysical relationship between the nature of Scripture (“what is it?”) and the hermeneutics of Scripture (“how do we interpret it?”) stressed in the writings of the Church Fathers. Dr. Blaski lives in the Farmington Valley (Connecticut) with his wife, his six children, and his many piles of partially read books.

Education

- PhD, Early Christianity, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- MA, Theology, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY
- MA, Church History, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL
- BA, English, Biblical Studies, Trinity College, Deerfield, IL