

Module Title:	Genesis 1-3
Module Code:	702 TGEN
Level:	7
Credit Rating:	20 Credits
Duration:	Student Learning Time: 200 hours
Teaching Hours:	20 Hours
Academic Responsibility:	Séamus Mulholland, OFM PhD

Module Aims:

This module aims

1. to explore of the dramas of creation and the 'Fall' as it is rehearsed in the mythopoetry of Genesis 1-3 through an in depth critical text analysis and exegesis.
2. to show the uniqueness of the Genesis creation accounts against the background of Mesopotamian mythologies
3. to reassess the theological and anthropological implications of the narrative of the 'Fall' and its consequences in the light of recent scholarly research

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. formulate a deeper critical analytical approach to theological issues surrounding Creation [inclusive of humanity] and the 'Fall'
2. demonstrate an ability to draw on a variety of advanced academic discourses in reflecting critically on the nature of the literary composition of Genesis 1-3
3. make independent and imaginative use of theological and historical and literary information and resources in relation to ongoing research on Genesis 1-3;

Indicative Module Content:

The module will examine the mytho-literary nature of Genesis 1-3 by situating its mythopoetry within the context of the creational mythologies and pantheons of other Mesopotamian cultures. Attention will be paid particularly to the Epic of Gilgamesh, to the other Babylonian myths e.g. of Marduk and Tiamat, elements of Egyptian creation/fall myths. The module will use the Hebrew text which will be translated as the module progresses. Attention will be paid to the nature of the Hebrew creation story as a national story of 'beginnings' and the theology contained within its mythic disclosure. The 'Fall' narrative will be explored in detail and compared with other 'fall' narratives to determine whether there are both literary and cultural points of intersection. And a different narrative, theological and anthropological understanding will be offered not as a challenge to more traditional renderings of the Genesis 1-3 stories but rather as an alternative authentic interpretation on the basis of text disclosure.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The basic format of presentation will be weekly lectures systematically treating the subject matter as described in the Indicative Module Content. Students are given specific weekly reading assignments as well as directed toward extra-curricular reading proposed by the instructor. Research interests are quickly identified and tutorial sessions, depending on individual needs of the students, arranged for clarification and direction, inclusive of suggested extra-curricular reading. Within the classroom context of lectures, active participation of students in terms of questions and, especially, discussion is strongly encouraged as a primary way of developing analytical skills, critical thinking, and clarity of expression.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed by the writing of one essay of 5,000 words.

Indicative Essay Titles:

1. By a close analysis of Gen. 1.1-3 show how the Hebrew writer utilises Babylonian creation mytho-poetry while at the same time through a Yahwistic polemic nullifies both its content and meaning and thus its validity.
2. Examine the Decalogue of God's creational commands in the words '..and God said..and it was..' and show how and why the Hebrew writer considered that the Sinaitic Decalogue was already present from the beginning of time.
3. By a detailed examination and exegetical analysis of Gen. 2.4b-7 show how the Hebrew writer uses poetic imagery and terms of crafting/forming/making to demonstrate the power of his deity and by extension the meaning of his poetic myth of Humanity's making against the established mythologies of the Mesopotamian basin.
4. Was Eve pushed or did she Jump? Revisit the so called 'Fall' narrative of Gen. 3.1-24 and by looking closely at vocabulary and content, paying particular attention to Gen. 3.6, discuss whether a reassessment [both literary and theological] is needed of the still prevalent interpretation of this narrative that the 'blame' for the Fall and its consequences is to be laid firmly at Eve's door.

Illustrative Bibliography

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| Allen, J. (1998) | <i>Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts</i> | Van Siclen Books |
| Andersen, F. (1987) | "On Reading Genesis 1-3." | . |
| Anderson, B. (1994) | <i>From Creation to New Creation.</i> | Fortress Press. |
| Batto, B. (1999) | <i>Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition.</i> | Westminster John Knox Press. |
| Burrell, T. and McGinn, B. eds. (1990) | <i>God and Creation.</i> | University of Notre Dame Press. |

Journals

- Breitbart, S. (2004) "Was Adam's Action Disobedience? (Its Corollary-- Responsible Freedom)," *JBQ* 32, pp. 171-73.
- Brooke, Curtis, and Healey. eds. (1994) *Ugarit and the Bible. UBL 11.* Ugarit-Verlag.
- Collins, C.J. (2001) "What Happened to Adam and Eve? A Literary-Theological Approach to Genesis 3," *Presb*, 27, pp.12-44
- Greenstein, E.L. (2002) "God's Golem: The Creation of the Human in Genesis 2," in H.G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman, eds. *Creation in Jewish and Christian Traditions. JSOT Sup* 319; Academic Press, pp. 219-39.