

**RS-2DD3, Five Books of Moses, 2004**  
**Instructions for Short Paper (25% of total grade)**

**Due date:** Monday, November 1st, 2004 in the lecture. Late papers will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per every day late. Papers handed in after the lecture will be considered late. If a situation arises such that you will be unable to make this deadline, you must make arrangements with me at least a week before the due date.

**Length:** 3–5 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt or equivalent)

**Assignment:** The paper will consist of an analysis of two parallel stories in Genesis that are attributed to different sources by the Documentary Hypothesis. Students should choose one of the following topics:

1. Contrast Gen 1:1-2:4a and Gen 2:4b-3:24
2. Contrast J and P versions of the Flood narrative interwoven in Gen 6:9-9:29
3. Contrast two or all of the following: Gen 12:10-20; Gen 20; Gen 26:1-22
4. Contrast J and E versions of the sale of Joseph interwoven in Gen 37

Students who are interested in comparing stories that are not on this list should consult with me at least two weeks prior to the due date.

The primary focus should be source-critical. The bulk of the paper should be dedicated to analyzing the two passages with attention to the differences between them and the ways that scholars explain such differences. Attention to detail is critical; make sure to read your passages carefully, attentive to the use of specific words as well as to the overall impression made by the characters, action, etc. It is up to you whether to write about the entirety of the two passages that you choose, or whether to focus in on a couple of verses in each and pursue a closer analysis of them.

The Documentary Hypothesis is the most dominant scholarly theory in the study of the Pentateuch and forms the foundation of its scholarly study, so it is important to learn how it works, even if you're skeptical about it. In the conclusion of your paper, you are welcome also to consider what may be lost or overlooked in a source-critical analysis—e.g., how new levels of meaning or nuance are introduced by the redactional combination of material from different sources, how the stories contribute to broader themes in Genesis, and so on.

This paper is an exercise in the academic reading of a biblical text. Thus, it is critical that you avoid making confessional statements. I am both unwilling and unable to put a grade on statements about your personal faith, so if you hand in a paper that is confessional in tone, I will return it to you.

**Biblical translation:**

Analysis should be based on one of the following English translations:

- New Revised Standard Version (NRSV); e.g. HarperCollins Study Bible
- Revised Standard Version (RSV): <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/rsv/browse.html>
- Revised English Bible; e.g., Oxford Study Bible.
- Jewish Publication Society translation (JPS); e.g., *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Jewish Publication Society, 1985); *Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford UP, 2003); see also <http://www.hareidi.org/bible/index.html>

Students should also consult the translations given by Friedman, where relevant. You might also wish to compare the above translations or to consult the translations in the commentaries listed below.

Other English translations (e.g., NIV; King James) are not acceptable for the purposes of this paper, since this type of analysis requires literal translations that are very close to the original Hebrew. This is very important; hence, if you do use another translation for the paper, I will deduct 3 points from your paper grade.

Feel free to quote from the biblical text, especially when pointing out details. Make sure to include chapter and verse citations when discussing (and especially when quoting) biblical texts. References should look like this → (Gen 3:24).

**Secondary sources:**

The primary focus of the paper should be the primary sources (i.e., Genesis), but discussions should reflect the lectures and assigned textbook readings (esp. Blenkinsopp). Students are not required to consult any additional sources.

For those who do wish to consult additional sources, the following scholarly commentaries have been placed on reserve at Mills:

- E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964).
- Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A commentary* (Minneapolis.: Augsburg, 1984).
- Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985)
- Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A commentary* (London : SCM Press, 1961)

If you wish to use another commentary or secondary source, you must first consult with me. If you use a source that you haven't first cleared with me, I will deduct 3 points from your paper grade.

Since there are a limited number of secondary sources, those who choose to use them should compile a bibliography (following the format above) at the end of your paper. In the body of your paper, you can put short references in parenthesis, like this → (Friedman, p. 10)

**Further guidelines:**

Do your best to be attentive to the text itself. Read with an eye for detail, and – most importantly – try to read with an eye for differences despite the temptation to harmonize.

In addition, try to set aside your own beliefs and opinions while reading and writing about it. If you would like to express your own opinions about the passages that you're discussing, you should do this *only after dealing with the texts on their own terms*. Moreover, you should put such comments, not in the body of your paper, but at the very end.

Where possible, students are encouraged to integrate ideas and themes from the lectures and tutorials. You are also encouraged to bring in concepts and ideas from the assigned readings in Friedman and Blenkinsopp (always noting, of course, the relevant page numbers). Perhaps needless to say: if your chosen passages are discussed by one of these authors, you should especially make mention of it, even as you should feel free to disagree with their interpretations and approaches.

Make sure to spell-check your paper and to proofread it carefully before turning it in!

**Plagiarism & Responsible Referencing:**

You should be warned that I take plagiarism extremely seriously. As stressed also in the syllabus, academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means, and it can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty") and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Please be aware that Plagiarism includes quoting and paraphrasing other people's writings or ideas – whether from a book, commentary, website, etc. – without proper citation of the author, book, URL, or so on. I cannot stress this enough: whenever in doubt, always add a reference (whether in a footnote or in parentheses in the body of your paper) making clear the source of your information.