

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2026
Course Title	READING HEBREW NARRATIVE
Course Code	OLDT 0651 1P
Date	From January 16, 2026 to April 10, 2026 10 FRIDAYS ONLY
Time	From 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM <i>Note: No classes on January 30 or April 3.</i>
Delivery Format	IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The classes will be IN-PERSON on Fridays from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm <i>(No classes on January 30 or April 3).</i>
Instructor	PETER CHU, MD, ThM Email: pchu@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Narrative is a primary literary genre within the Hebrew Bible. This course will examine the creativity, artistry, and literary features characteristic of Hebrew narrative using texts like the book of Ruth and the Joseph story as case studies. Students will gain an understanding of how theology is communicated through the content and composition of Hebrew narrative and an appreciation of the relevance of narrative to contemporary Christian life and teaching/preaching ministry. Knowledge of Biblical Hebrew is beneficial but not essential.

Prerequisite: BIBL 0501.

Recommended: OLDT 0511.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. recognize and describe the genre, structure, and techniques of Hebrew narrative
2. identify different types and sub-types of Hebrew narratives
3. discuss the function and significance of plot development, characterization, setting, point of view, narrative speed, dialogue, and repetition in crafting a Hebrew narrative
4. identify and value the voice and influence of the narrator
5. explain the hermeneutical considerations relevant to the interpretation of Hebrew narrative
6. discuss the rhetorical effectiveness and literary artistry of Hebrew narrative

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *[Narrative Art in the Bible](#)*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
[Available as eBook from Tyndale Library or paperback from Bloomsbury Publishing or eBook from Google Play.]

Berlin, Adele. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Alter, Robert. *[The Art of Biblical Narrative](#)*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011.

Ska, Jean L. “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*”: *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narrative*. Subsidia Biblica 13. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1990.

Sternberg, Meir. *[The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading](#)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All assignments should be submitted to the instructor’s GMAIL email address (provided in Weekly Class Schedule)

Assignment #1: Reflective Reading (25%)

1. Textbook Reading

- 1.1. Students will submit by email or on an index card in class the % completion of the textbook reading by **Friday, April 10, 2026**.
- 1.2. Students who have already read one or both of the required textbooks within the past 3 years will substitute textbook(s) from the bibliography or from outside the bibliography. Substitutions must be approved by the professor.
- 1.3. Textbooks are to be read reflectively with observations, insights, and questions recorded in the “Weekly Three” (see #3).

2. Reading of Biblical Texts

- 2.1. Students will complete three readings of Ruth 1-4. The first two readings will be due before the beginning of class on **Friday, January 23, 2026**. The third reading of Ruth will be completed during the course following a reading schedule that will correspond with each week’s class.
- 2.2. Students will complete three readings of Gen 37-50. The first two readings will be due before the beginning of class on **Friday, February 27, 2026**. The third reading will be completed during the course following a reading schedule that will correspond with each week’s class.
- 2.3. Biblical texts are to be read reflectively with observations, insights, and questions recorded in the “Weekly Three” (see #3).
- 2.4. By **April 10, 2026**, students will submit by email or index card the % completion of the reading of Ruth and Genesis 37-50.

3. The “Weekly Three”

- 3.1. Each week, record at least three observations, insights or questions from your reading of the Biblical text or course textbooks.
- 3.2. Maximum of 1 page for weekly reflections from each of the Biblical texts or textbooks.
- 3.3. Each week, be prepared to share your Weekly Three with the class.
- 3.4. Submit your collection of “Weekly Three’s” as a single WORD document before the beginning of class on **Friday, April 10, 2026**.

4. Glossary of Literary Terms

- 4.1. Assemble a glossary of literary terms and definitions with a minimum of 20 entries.
- 4.2. Submit a WORD document before class on **Friday, April 3, 2026**.

Assignment #2: Synthetic Outlines (10% x 2)

1. **Construct synthetic outlines of Ruth 1-4 and Genesis 37-50** with three levels of analysis: large sections (see 2.2), sub-sections (see 2.3), and paragraphs (see 2.4).

2. Guidelines:

- 2.1. Ignore the chapter divisions and section headings in your Bible.
- 2.2. **Large Sections:** Make an initial division of Genesis into several large sections. Each of these large sections will include several chapters. Assign a title to each section along with the chapter and verse references demarcating the section. Indicate in a footnote

attached to your titles the reason(s) why you have divided where you have. You must support your choice of the large section divisions with literary elements from the Biblical text.

2.3. **Sub-Sections:** Divide each large section into smaller sub-sections. Assign a title to each sub-section along with the chapter and verse references demarcating the sub-section. Indicate in a footnote attached to your titles the reason(s) why you have divided where you have. Support your choice of the sub-section divisions with literary elements from the Biblical text.

2.4. **Paragraph Sections:** Divide each of your sub-sections into smaller paragraph sections that are 5-10 verses in length. To keep this assignment manageable, DO NOT FURTHER SUB-DIVIDE YOUR PARAGRAPH SECTIONS. Assign a title to each paragraph section. Indicate in a footnote attached to your titles the reason(s) why you have divided where you have. Support your choice of paragraph divisions with literary elements from the Biblical text.

2.5. Be creative with your titles and make them memorable.

2.6. Your supporting footnotes are NOT an explanation or commentary on the text.

2.7. You may but are not required to consult commentaries and different Bible translations. If you revise your outline as a result of consulting secondary sources, be sure to indicate that in a footnote. Cite the secondary sources in a bibliography.

2.8. The outline will be single spaced in 12-point font. Footnotes will be in 10-point font.

2.9. Synthetic outlines are discussed on pages 351-360 and 505-509 of Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Third Edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017. Sample outlines will be posted on the class webpage.

2.10. The outline will be graded on your choice of section divisions (25%), the creativity of your titles (25%), and textual support of your outline in your footnotes (50%).

3. **Discuss what you have learned about the PLOT of Ruth 1-4 or Genesis 37-50 as a result of creating your outline.**

- 3.1 events constituting the plot
- 3.2 sequence in which plot events are presented
- 3.3 plot structure
 - 3.3.1 events connected to create scenes, scenes connected to form acts
 - 3.3.2 relationships among events, scenes, and acts
- 3.4 conflicts and complications
- 3.5 climax event

4. **Maximum length of completed assignment (outline with footnotes + plot discussion) = 8 pages.**

- 4.1. Outline to be single spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins
- 4.2. Plot discussion to be double spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins

5. **Due Dates:**

- 5.1. Ruth: **Friday, February 6, 2026**
- 5.2. Genesis 37-50: **Friday, February 27, 2026.**

Assignment #3: Characterization Study (15%)

1. Discuss the characterization of **one** of the following two characters in Gen 37-50:
 - 1.1. Tamar
 - 1.2. Judah
2. Maximum length = 6 pages.
3. **Due: Friday, March 13, 2026**

Assignment #4: Message & Application (15%)

1. **CHOOSE ONE TEXT, EITHER** Ruth or Genesis 37-50
2. Ruth
 - 2.1. What is the theological message (values, virtues, principles) of Ruth?
 - 2.1.1. Support your answer with evidence from the text
 - 2.2. How can that message be appropriated and applied today?
3. Genesis 37-50
 - 3.1. What is the theological message (values, virtues, principles) of Gen 37-50?
 - 3.1.1. Support your answer with evidence from the text
 - 3.2. How can that message be appropriated and applied today?
4. This assignment is **not an exegesis** of Ruth 1-4 or Gen 37-50. Focus on the **results** of your study of Ruth 1-4 and Genesis 37-50.
5. Maximum length = 5 pages, double spaced, 12 fonts
6. **Due Dates:**
 - 6.1. Ruth = **Friday, February 13, 2026**
 - 6.2. Genesis 37-50 = **Friday, March 27, 2026**

Assignment #5: Summative Project (25%)

1. **Assignment:** Teach 16-year-old high school students how to study Hebrew narrative.
2. **Goal:**
 - 2.1. To integrate ideas, concepts, and facts learned during the semester.
 - 2.2. To encourage the exercise and development of creative and communication gifts
3. **General Guidelines:**
 - 3.1. Incorporate examples from Ruth and Gen 37-50 to illustrate teaching points
 - 3.2. Bibliography with minimum of 8 citations
 - 3.3. Grade based on clarity, comprehensiveness, and creativity of teaching method and content
4. **Options:**
 - 4.1. Lesson Plan for small group presentation such as a seminar or Bible study series
 - 4.1.1. Maximum of 10 pages in length, excluding title page and bibliography
 - 4.1.2. Single or double spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins.

4.1.3. Include any illustrations such as PowerPoint, props, video clips, etc.

4.2. Interactive Mixed Media

4.2.1. Song, spoken word, rap, (slam) poetry

4.2.2. Visual art

4.2.3. Theatre, drama

4.2.4. Game – e.g. Board game, Escape Room

4.2.5. Video

5. Guidelines for Mixed Media Projects

5.1. For song (spoken word, rap), poetry, drama, video composed by yourself

5.1.1. Submit a copy of the lyrics/screenplay/script, MP4 video of a performance and a written explanation of the lyrics/screenplay/script

5.1.2. The written explanation may be in the form of a paper, or the submitted copy of the lyrics/poem/screenplay/script can be annotated with footnotes to explain the structure and content of the project, cite sources, and provide examples from Ruth and Gen 37-50 to illustrate teaching points. There is no limit on the number or extent of footnotes

5.1.3. The explanation should demonstrate how your song, poem, drama, or video teaches the students how to study Hebrew narrative.

5.2. For visual artwork created by yourself

5.2.1. Provide a written/audio/video explanation of how your artwork teaches the students how to study Hebrew narrative. Include in your explanation, your choice of title and medium and the creative process.

5.2.2. Remember to incorporate examples from Ruth and Gen 37-50 in your explanation.

5.2.3. Submit a JPEG image of your artwork.

6. Due: Friday, April 3, 2026

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
Reading + “Weekly 3” + Glossary	Various	25%
Synthetic Outlines (Ruth & Gen 37-50)	Various	20%
Characterization	March 13	15%
Message (Ruth or Gen 37-50)	Respective	15%
Summative Project	April 3	25%
Total Grade		100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

A detailed schedule will be posted on the [class webpage](#) containing the following information:

- Scripture to be read and discussed for each class
- Textbook readings in advance of classes
- Due dates for course requirements

January 16

Devotional

Introductions: Class, Course & Syllabus
Hebrew Narrative – Big Ideas
Narrator
Ruth 1

January 23

Devotional

Narrator
Ruth 2

January 30

No Class

February 6

Devotional

Point of View
Ruth 3

February 13

Devotional

Characterization
Ruth 4

February 20

No Class – Reading Days

February 27

Devotional

Characterization
Gen 37-38

March 6

Devotional

Setting & Plot
Gen 39-41

March 13

Devotional

Rhetorical Techniques: Repetition, Contrast, Emphasis
Gen 42-45

March 20	Devotional Narrative Speed and Dialogue Gen 46-47
March 27	Devotional Genealogy, Songs and Poetry in Narrative Gen 48-49
April 3	No Class
April 10	Devotional Theology in narratives Presentation of Summative Projects Gen 50

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hebrew Narrative

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011.

Andersen, Francis I. *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*. Janua Linguarum Series Practica 231. The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 1974.

Baker, David W., and Bill T. Arnold, eds. *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Barton, John. *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

_____. ed. [*The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*](#). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

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Booker, Christopher. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. London, England: Bloomsbury, 2004.

Chisholm, Robert B. Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.

Clines, David J. A. (ed.). *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-2011.

Dearman, J. Andrew. *Reading Hebrew Bible Narratives*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Exum, J. Cheryl. *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*. Fourth edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Fokkelman, J.P. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel Volume 1: King David*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 20. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1981.

_____. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel Volume 2: Crossing Fates*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 23. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1986.

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_____. *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel Volume 4: Vow and Desire*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 31. Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1993.

Fokkelman, Jan P. *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*. Translated by Ineke Smit. Leiderdorp, The Netherlands: Deo Publishing, 1999.

Gillingham, Susan E. *One Bible, Many Voices: Different Approaches to Biblical Studies*. London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1998.

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Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Ska, Jean L. "Our Fathers Have Told Us": *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narrative*. Subsidia Biblica 13. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1990.

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Wenham, Gordon J. *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000.

Ruth

Atkinson, David. *The Message of Ruth: The Wings of Refuge*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991.

Berlin, Adele. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994. (Chapter IV: Poetics in the Book of Ruth)

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Bush, Frederic W. *Ruth/Esther*. Word Biblical Commentary 9. Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

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Holmstedt, Robert D. *Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

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Johnson, Marshall D. *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies*. Second Edition. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002.

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Genesis

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(1993): 255-70.

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VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each

other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details. Students must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in [Academic Calendar](#) and consult guidance from their course instructors.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for policies and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports courses with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or [classes.tyndale.ca](#). For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).