

<b>Week 1 9/10</b>	<p>Year 1 Orientation Materials in RRG</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Harvey Cox: how to read the Bible Yale Online Course on Old Testament Oxford Website biblegateway.com <i>God: A Biography</i>, Jack Miles</p>	<p>Year 2 Orientation Materials in RRG</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Harvey Cox: how to read the Bible (NT section) Yale Online Course on New Testament Oxford Website biblegateway.com</p>	<p>Year 3 Orientation Materials in RRG</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> McColloch DVDs Oxford Website Didache</p>	<p>Year 4 Orientation Materials in RRG</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Diogenes Allen: Philosophy for Theology Oxford Website</p>
<b>Week 2 9/17</b>	<p>Year 1 RRG on Spiritual Autobiographies</p> <p>Group Spiritual Autobiography of David</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> <a href="http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/">http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/</a></p>	<p>Year 2 RRG on Spiritual Autobiographies</p> <p>Group Spiritual Autobiography of David</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> <a href="http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/">http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/</a></p>	<p>Year 3 RRG on Spiritual Autobiographies</p> <p>Group Spiritual Autobiography of David</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> <a href="http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/">http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/</a></p>	<p>Year 4 RRG on Spiritual Autobiographies</p> <p>Group Spiritual Autobiography of David</p> <p><u>Additional Reading:</u> <a href="http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/">http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/</a></p>

<b>Week 3</b> <b>9/24</b>	<p>Year 1</p> <p><u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Chapter 1 – Near East Context  Chapter 2 – Nature of the Pentateuchal Narrative</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u>  Geographical Evolution of the OT Region (SJW)  Yale OT Course-Lectures 1 and 2  Nature of the Pentateuch (SJW)  Tanakh (SJW)  Overview of Sumer (SJW)</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p><u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Chapter 1 – New Testament World  Chapter 2 – New Testament Writings</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u>  Yale NT Course-Lectures 1-3</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p><u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Chapter 1 – Greece and Rome</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u>  Yale NT Course-Lecture 3</p>	<p>Year 4</p> <p><u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Ballard “On Being Theologically Literate: in RRG  Ford, Chapter 1 – Introduction: theology and the religions in transformation</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>
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Week 3 Sample Focus Questions:

- How important is context when evaluating the narrative basis of the Bible?
- Has the evolution from an oral tradition to a written book change how people understand theology? How have personal stories shaped our shared and individual history and theology? What stories have shaped your life and do you find similarities to stories in the Bible?
- How do ancient Greek philosophers still shape the way we view the world today?
- What are the pros and cons of becoming more literate and “studied” as a Christian? What do you do to keep your faith alive and traditions deliberately sustained?
- One of the learnings in our studies is that the Judeo-Christian faith tradition is counter-cultural. Is the church today continuing to create and sustain a counter-culture? If so, how? If not, how could we as the body of the church support a counter-culture?
- What purposes, attitudes and assumptions do you bring to your reading and study? Identify barriers and/or attitudes that block listening and openness to new ideas.
- Given the extraordinary diversity of influences on the birth and development of the Hebrew and Christian religions (Sumeria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Rome, Greece, etc.), why should the challenge of multi-culturalism come as a surprise to anyone today? Why, after more than 5000 years of human development, is it still a challenge?
- Can we perceive God’s presence directly or only indirectly? Can pursuit of knowledge bring you closer to God? Is God ultimately knowable by any of our efforts?

<b>Week 4 10/1</b>	<p>Year 1 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Genesis 1-11 Chapter 3 – Primeval History</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale OT Course-Lectures 3-4 Bereshit Commentaries (SJW) Attributes of God (SJW)</p>	<p>Year 2 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Chapter 3 -- Jesus Chapter 4 – The Gospels</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale NT Course Lectures 4-5</p>	<p>Year 3 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Chaper 2 – Israel</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>	<p>Year 4 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Ford, Chapter 2 – Theology and religious studies: how is the field shaped?</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>
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Week 4 Sample Focus Questions:

- How does the meaning of Israel as “one who struggles with God” enhance/change/challenge your ideas of Christianity?
- Is there a difference between fact and truth? Where do you find tension between these two ideas?
- Does one need to struggle with and conquer chaos to have creation? Or to create?
- If all our history began in the middle of a sentence, as Genesis begins, where are we now in the recitation of history?
- How do different ideas of creation shape belief and practice?
- What is your understanding of ex nilo and how does it shape this week’s readings?
- What happens to dissenting/diverse voices when they are not written down? How would our understanding change if we heard more women’s voices? Non-Pauline voices? Non-dualist voices?
- What is theology and where is it found? Who has the right to say what is “good” or “bad” theology?
- Embracing and living paradox is the key to better understanding God made flesh. How do you respond to this statement? Where do you find paradox hard to live with?
- Is it actually important to listen to and build understanding with someone who has a different and conflicting opinion? What does that look like?

<b>Week 5 10/8</b>	<p>Year 1 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Priestly Creation Story Essay in RRG</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale OT Course Lectures 3-4 Genesis 1 &amp; Theologies of Creation (SJW)</p>	<p>Year 2 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Matthew</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale NT Course Lecture 7 Gospels Side by Side (SJW)</p>	<p>Year 3 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Chapter 3 – Crucified Messiah</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>	<p>Year 4 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Ford, Chapter 3 – Thinking of God</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>
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Week 5 Sample Focus Questions:

- Is creation still ongoing?
- If Christ delivered us from sin, what was the sin in the first place?
- The Western “church” has been dominated by traditions associated with Paul and Peter. Is theology shaped by geography and culture? How do the Ethiopian and Indian churches, whose traditions are associated with different apostles differ and how do you reconcile the differences? Could Maritana Christianity have developed outside of India?
- Can you see our lives in current society in your lesson? Matthew 5: The beatitudes was the teachings given to his disciples from the mountainside. How can we better practice Verses 3-10 in our day to day lives? Do you find the theology of the *Beattitudes* only in this passage?
- Is religion man-made or divinely given?
- Why are there four gospels? Multiple histories? Divergent prophetic writings?
- How was/is religion structured and how did/does it serve or impede God’s purpose? What is God’s purpose?
- If Jesus is called the Son of Man, why don’t we call Adam the Son of Man? Cain? Able? Each of us?
- Are we losing critical messages from God because we are not focusing on traditions and ensuring that the original stories are being handed down to the next generations?

<b>Week 6 10/15</b>	<p>Year 1 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Genesis 12-50 Chapter 4 – Patriarchs</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale OT Course Lectures 5-6 Kierkegaard and Abraham (SJW) <a href="#"><i>Learning to Walk in the Dark</i></a>, Barbara Brown Taylor</p>	<p>Year 2 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Chapter 5 – Matthew</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u> Yale NT Course Lecture 7</p>	<p>Year 3 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Chaper 4 – Boundaries Defined</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>	<p>Year 4 <u>RRG Assignment:</u> Ford, Chapter 4 – Living before God: worship and ethics</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>
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Week 6 Sample Focus Questions:

- Much of the Bible imparts messages sent through men (patriarchs, judges, kings, Jesus, apostles). Does this impact the theology? Does the context of time impact theology? Would God’s word be given to a man today?
- What does being “people of the Book” mean to you?
- How does the idea that a people united by a religion named themselves after their struggle with their God relate to our readings? To what extent is that struggle still important throughout history and today?
- Matthew 16:18-19 – Who is responsible for binding and loosing today? The Church? The church? Who is the church?
- How do we reconcile the history of hostility toward Judaism using Matthew as rationale reconcile with the ideas behind the “Beattitudes”?
- What are the differences between worldly peace and spiritual peace? Where do we find examples of either or both in this week’s readings? In today’s news?
- Professor Bleicher’s interpretation of Kierkegard’s understanding of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is, “You must kill the one thing you love more than God. The moment you raise the knife – that is the existential moment when you can hear God and God tells you, ‘There is the Ram.’” Answer either question: Where do you find people/situations that were loved more than God in your reading? What is something that you love more than God? Or Can you remember a time when God showed you the Ram?

<b>Week 7</b> <b>10/22</b>	<p>Year 1  <u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Exodus 1-15  Chapter 5 – Exodus from Egypt</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u>  Yale OT Course Lectures 7-8  Kushner on Exodus (SJW)  Saner on God in Exodus (SJW)  Commentary on Exodus 3 (SJW)  Cohen on Image and Nature of God (SJW)  <i>The Five Books Of Moses: An Easy To Read Torah Translation</i>, Sol Scharfstein  <i>The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary</i>, Brevard Childs</p>	<p>Year 2  <u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Mark  Chapter 6 – Mark</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u>  Yale NT Course Lecture 6  Mark’s Gospel with Max McLean (SJW)  Gospel of Mark (SJW)</p>	<p>Year 3  <u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Chaper 5 – Prince – Ally or Enemy</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>	<p>Year 4  <u>RRG Assignment:</u>  Ford, Chapter 5 – Facing Evil</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p>
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Week 7 Sample Focus Questions:

- Why is violence so prevalent in the Bible? Is it a mere representation of the world in which it was written or does it have something to teach us today?
- Why do you think the prevalence of violence to settle theological disputes is so prevalent in church history?
- What is evil?
- Does the canon limit faith?
- In Judaism, when experiencing the Passover, Jews are asked to live back into their history—be a part of the story. How was that experienced in your readings this week? How is the Exodus continuing today for you?
- Does God’s word require a response?
- What sorts of imagery were used in readings and why? Would different imagery evoke different reactions/theology? Does image influence metaphor or does metaphor influence image?
- Moses used many excuses to deny his calling. Have you used any of these excuses in your life to deny your call to ministry? How does God pursue you when you have?
- What is meant by God? In Exodus? In Mark? In the emergence of a religion or power? In philosophy and theology?
- Do people need signs (as recorded in the Bible and in Church history) to be able to believe in God? Did Jesus perform signs to authenticate his divinity or from compassion? Are signs a teaching tool to show the power of God’s love? Does God send signs today?
- What is the relationship of civil authority to theology? How do you balance the two? What happens when your theology is in conflict with civil authority?

