

*“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.”*

<b>Course</b>	<b>EZRA-NEHEMIAH</b> OLDT 0670 1S
<b>Date and Time</b>	JUNE 3 TO JUNE 7, 2024 MONDAY – FRIDAY 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>MARK FRANCOIS, Ph.D.</b> Email: <a href="mailto:mfrancois@tyndale.ca">mfrancois@tyndale.ca</a>
<b>Class Information</b>	The classes will be livestreamed Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM EST.  Office Hours: You may contact me through email to arrange a time to connect online.
<b>Course Material</b>	Access course material at <a href="https://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="#">Tyndale One</a> . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Though considered separate books in Christian Bibles, Ezra and Nehemiah have long been viewed as a single book in Jewish tradition—the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. This course deals with Ezra-Nehemiah and the nearly one-hundred-year period it covers. Emphasis will be placed on its chronology, its historical context, its central theological themes, its place in redemptive history, and its practical relevance for the Church today.

*Recommended: Biblical Interpretation (BIBL 0501)*

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Situate Ezra-Nehemiah in its historical, political, and redemptive-historical contexts.
2. Explain the sequence of events in the nearly one-hundred-year period covered by Ezra-Nehemiah.
3. Describe the roles played by Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah in the restoration of Judah.
4. Identify and evaluate key issues about the history behind Ezra-Nehemiah.
5. Describe the state of Jewish diaspora communities in the period covered by Ezra-Nehemiah.
6. Analyze individual passages and explain what significance they might have for Christians today.
7. Identify specific ways that Ezra-Nehemiah can be helpful for Christians today in both their moral and spiritual formation.
8. Explain how Ezra-Nehemiah can help Christians today effectively engage our culture with the message of the Gospel.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED READING

Smith, Gary V. *Ezra and Nehemiah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. ZECOT. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022. [ISBN – 978-0-310-94226-9]

Ulrich, Dean R. *Now and Not Yet: Theology and Mission in Ezra-Nehemiah*. NSBT 57. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021. [ISBN – 978-1514004074]

#### B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Kalimi, Isaac, ed. *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. [ISBN – 978-1-57506-233-4]

Redditt, Paul L. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. SHBC. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2014. [ISBN – 978-1-57312-750-9]

Tyndale recommends [www.stepbible.org](http://www.stepbible.org) – 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. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 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

### D. 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](https://classes.tyndale.ca).

### E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The following written assignments will help foster the skills of critical analysis and exegesis, the ability to evaluate various approaches and perspectives taken to Ezra-Nehemiah and deepen the student’s understanding of the overall message of Ezra-Nehemiah.

**1. Chronology and Ezra-Nehemiah Reading Assignment:** Students will be required to complete the Ezra-Nehemiah chronology worksheet. The purpose of this assignment is to help students situate Ezra-Nehemiah in its historical context, explain the sequence of events in Ezra-Nehemiah, and situate each chapter within this framework. At the end of your chronology assignment, there will be a place to indicate whether you have read the book of Ezra-Nehemiah in its entirety while enrolled in the course.

Due date: Friday, June 14, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (5%)

**2. Interactive Reading Assignment:** Students will be required to read *Now and Not Yet* in its entirety and the introduction and the Ezra section of *Ezra and Nehemiah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible* (pp. 35–242) and answer the questions on the assignment sheet on the course page. The purpose of this assignment is to help students (a) actively engage with the material they are reading so that the material can be better absorbed and (b) give them a broad understanding of the key topics, themes, and theological emphases of Ezra-Nehemiah. Answers cannot simply be a word-for-word repetition of the material found in the books.

Citations in the form of footnotes are only necessary when (a) quoting from other books, (b) paraphrasing other books, or (c) citing authorities for your statements from other books. However, the assignment may be completed without referring to other books. Answers must be given in full sentences and paragraphs and should be free from grammatical and spelling errors. Answers should be double-spaced and written with a 12-point font. The total word count for your assignment, minus the word count for the questions themselves, should be between 4200 and 5250 words (12-15 pages). The assignment will be graded based on the level of understanding of the material reflected in the student's answers and, when applicable, the level/quality of engagement with the material. At the end of the assignment, there will be a place to indicate what percentage of each book you have read. It is recommended that students create a reading plan that requires them to cover a set number of pages per day to make the reading manageable. The questions for each book will be available on the Moodle course page before the course begins.

Due date: Friday, July 12, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (worth 45% of the final grade).

**3. Research Paper:** Students will write a research paper on a topic approved by the instructor (12-15 pages double-spaced, 4200-5250 words including footnotes but not including the bibliography). The purpose of this assignment is to help students (a) gain an in-depth knowledge of a particular subject within Ezra-Nehemiah, (b) gain experience interacting with critical scholarship on Ezra-Nehemiah, (c) develop their research skills in the field of biblical studies, (d) sharpen both their analytic and writing skills as they put their ideas into writing, and (e) understand the significance of their chosen topic for engaging our culture with both the message and implications of the Gospel. The paper needs to include footnotes and a bibliography with a minimum of ten academic sources including at least three peer-reviewed journal articles. Instructions for writing the research paper as well as suggested topics for the paper will be given in class and will also be available on the Moodle course page before the course begins. Students may also propose a topic not included on the list.

Due date: Friday, August 2, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (worth 50% of the final grade).

## F. 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.

## G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Chronology and Ezra-Nehemiah Reading	5 %
Interactive Reading	45 %
Research Paper	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

## H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- **Accuracy** (a fair and accurate presentation of scholarly judgment on the issues) – Is what I say correct? Is it valid? Have I understood the topic or question?
- **Critical Analysis** – Have I understood the main issues? Have I done sufficient research on the topic? Does my paper show critical reflection, interaction and dialogue with the biblical text and with authors writing on the subject?
- **Organization** – Does my paper follow a clear outline? Does my paper have a thesis statement? Is there a clear progression and development of an idea or an argument in the paper? Does my argument have a meaningful order?
- **Clarity** – Does what I say make sense? Will others clearly understand what I am seeking to express?
- **Good Grammar and Writing** – Is my paper clean of spelling mistakes? Is the text punctuated correctly? Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar? Do I use inclusive language?
- **Well Documented** (thorough) – Is my work complete? Does my bibliography reflect sufficient research? Have I fully and accurately documented where I have relied upon the work of others? Have I provided complete information about my research sources? Will others be able to locate these sources on the strength of my documentation? Do my footnotes and bibliography follow the proper citation style required?

2. Matters of Style

You should submit written work in a style consistent with either the model outlined in *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (P. H. Alexander, et al, eds. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999; 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) or the Chicago Manual of Style Online. (Footnotes are preferred). For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straightforward style of academic prose (cf. the guidelines in Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*). Written work ought to betray clear organization, argument and coherent thought. The use of inclusive language is expected.

The title page for all written work ought to include the following: The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

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

### 3. 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 ([aa@tyndale.ca](mailto:aa@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

### 4. 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.

In all work, you are obliged to pay careful attention to matters of intellectual property, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. Plagiarism, by definition, is the use of the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following: copying a sentence or part of a sentence from a book or article without using quotation marks and citing the source; rephrasing another person's words without giving credit for the idea that you have borrowed by citing the source; copying the work of someone else and handing it in as your own. It is assumed that each assignment required for this course will be written independently. Please note that plagiarism in any form on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission.

## 5. Late Assignments

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on and before the corresponding due dates. Should this not occur, the following policy shall govern the evaluation of your work. For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one week late: 82 % A- becomes 77 % B+; two weeks late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations, or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the professor explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted prior to the due date.

## 6. Criteria for the Evaluation of Written Work

Your work will be evaluated on whether you answered the specific questions given and whether you followed the general guidelines for submitting written work. For example, the evaluation of your Interactive Reading Assignments will be based on whether you followed the specific instructions given for the assignments.

## 7. Submission of Written Work

Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version). All work must be sent to the instructor in PDF format at [mfrancois@tyndale.ca](mailto:mfrancois@tyndale.ca). Assignments will be returned to students by e-mail through their @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account.

## I. 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.

## V. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

<b>Session Outline (Subject to Minor Adjustments)</b>	
Day 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A New Beginning for the People of God: Introduction to Ezra–Nehemiah</li> <li>2. From Ruin to Prosperity: The Fall of Judah and Life in Exile</li> <li>3. The Achaemenid Empire: Sources and History</li> <li>4. The Word of Our God Stands Forever: The Edict of King Cyrus (Ezra 1:1–4)</li> <li>5. By the Rivers of Babylon: Judean Exiles and the Call of God (Ezra 1:5–11)</li> <li>6. A Community Constituted for Worship: The List of Those Who Returned (Ezra 2)</li> </ol>
Day 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joy and Disappointment in the Land of Promise (Ezra 3)</li> <li>2. Slander, Spin, and Truth: A Brief Flashforward to a Time of Conflict (Ezra 4:1–23)</li> <li>3. Some Needed Help in a Time of Discouragement (Ezra 5:1–6:15)</li> <li>4. A Teacher Well Versed in the Law of Moses: Ezra Arrives in Jerusalem (Ezra 7)</li> <li>5. Treasures for the Temple of the Lord: Ezra’s Journey to Jerusalem (Ezra 8)</li> <li>6. A Penitential Prayer for the People of Judah (Ezra 9)</li> </ol>
Day 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Controversial Act of Contrition: The Foreign Wives are Sent Away (Ezra 10)</li> <li>2. Introduction to Nehemiah</li> <li>3. Excursus: Near Contemporaries of Nehemiah: The Military Colony in Egypt</li> <li>4. A Cupbearer’s Prayer for Mercy (Neh 1)</li> <li>5. The Gracious Hand of God: Nehemiah’s Journey to Jerusalem (Neh 2)</li> <li>6. A Guided Tour of the Gates of Jerusalem (Neh 3)</li> </ol>
Day 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The God of the Gaps: Opposition to Nehemiah’s Mission (Neh 4)</li> <li>2. The Enemy Within: Disobedience in a Time of Famine (Neh 5)</li> <li>3. The Plots Thicken: Multiple Attempts to Remove Nehemiah (Neh 6)</li> <li>4. Safe, Secure, But Empty: Registering the People of Jerusalem (Neh 7)</li> <li>5. The Joy of the Lord Was Their Strength: Ezra Reads the Book of the Law (Neh 8)</li> <li>6. Slaves in the Land of Our Ancestors: The Levites’ Confession of Sin (Neh 9)</li> </ol>
Day 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aftermath of Confession: The Commitments of the Priests and Levites (Neh 10)</li> <li>2. Lots of Choices: The Settling of the City of Jerusalem (Neh 11:1–12:26)</li> <li>3. Choirs and Contributions: Worship in Jerusalem (Neh 12:27–47)</li> <li>4. Keeping the City Sacred: Storerooms, Sabbath, and Foreign Wives (Neh 13)</li> <li>5. The Aftermath of Ezra–Nehemiah</li> <li>6. Catch Up, Assignments, Questions</li> </ol>



## V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

### Commentaries

Ackroyd, Peter R. *I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*. TBC. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Allen, Leslie C., and Timothy S. Laniak. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.

Batten, Loring W. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. ICC. Edinburgh: Scribner's, 1913.

Becking, Bob. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. HCOT. Leuven: Peeters, 2018.

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- Steinmann, Andrew E. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. ConcC. St. Louis: Concordia, 2010.
- Thomas, Derek W. H. *Ezra & Nehemiah*. REC. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2016.
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### **Monographs, Articles, and Other Resources**

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Becking, Bob. "Nehemiah 9 and the Problematic Concept of Context (Sitz Im Leben)." Pages 253–65 in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by M. Sweeny and Ehud Ben Zvi, 2003.

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