

4OT510: JUDGES - ESTHER

Course Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta
 Fall 2009, August 26 – December 15
 Mondays, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

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RTS Catalog Description:

This overview of the literature, history, and themes of Judges through Esther gives particular attention to the relevance of these books for the church and world today. This is a 2 credit hour course.

I. PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

To gain an adequate comprehension of the Historical Books of the Old Testament from Judges through Esther- including their background, content, interpretation, and criticism- in order to effectively communicate the revealed truths of the Old Testament as it relates to Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

This course shall attempt to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) present an expository approach to the development of redemptive history from the early history of Israel to the post-exilic period;
- 2) examine major theological themes including covenant (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic), election, the sovereignty of God, the wars of Yahweh, etc;
- 3) acquaint the student with the historical events of the Historical Books as well as pertinent literary and legal parallels found in ancient Near Eastern history;
- 4) acquaint the student to the geography and topography of Palestine;
- 5) introduce and evaluate the salient features of several interpretive methodologies to the Old Testament, including: Source Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Form Criticism, Tradition Criticism, Comparative Religions, Canonical Criticism, and New Literary Criticism;
- 6) evaluate current scholarship on critical matters such as the authorship, dating and unity of the Historical Books pertaining to the critical theory surrounding the so-called “Deuteronomistic History”;
- 7) aid the student in preparation for the preaching of the texts highlighting Christological approaches such as typology, promise/fulfillment, and redemptive-historical.

II. BOOK LIST

Required Textbooks-

Arnold, Bill T. & Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Longman III, Tremper & Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 2006.

Provan, Ian, V. Philips Long, & Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Recommended Textbooks-

[*- denotes *highly recommended*]

- Clowney, Edmund. *Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003.
- Currid, John D. *Doing Archaeology in the Land of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Dorsey, David A. *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary On Genesis-Malachi*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of the God In the Bible*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2002.
- _____. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- *Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Historical Books*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Hill, Andrew E. & John H. Walton. *Old Testament Today*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- *Howard, David. M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993.
- *Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- _____. *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?* Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.
- *Kline, Meredith G. *Kingdom Prologue*. South Hamilton, MA: M.G. Kline, 1993; reprinted by Two Age Press, 2000.
- *_____. *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975; reprinted by Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997.
- Mathewson, Steven D. *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.
- *Merrill, Eugene H. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- Pratt, Richard L., Jr. *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narrative*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1990.
- Strom, Mark. *The Symphony of Scripture*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1990.
- Thiele, Edwin R. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- VanGemeren, Willem. *The Progress of Redemption*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948.
- *Wright, Paul. *Holman QuickSource Bible Atlas*. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000.

III. COURSE SCHEDULE

- August 31-** *Syllabus Review and Course Requirements*
Prolegomena: An Introduction to the Deuteronomistic Theology of the Historical Books
- September 07-** **Labor Day, No Class**
- September 14-** **What is Old Testament Historiography?**
The Critical Theory of the “Deuteronomistic History” (DtrH) Explained and Evaluated
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapters 1-2; 10
Longman/Dillard, Chapter 1
- September 21-** **The Book of Judges**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 12 (*Judges*)
Longman/Dillard, Chapter 8
Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 7
- September 28-** **The Book of Ruth**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 12 (*Ruth*)
Longman/Dillard, Chapter 9
- October 05-** **The Book of 1 Samuel**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 13
Longman/Dillard, Chapter 10
Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 8
- October 12-** **The Book of II Samuel**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 14
Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 8
Midterm Examination Review
- October 19-** **Mid-Term Exam**
- October 26-** **The Book of 1 Kings**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 15
Longman/Dillard, Chapter 11
Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 9
- November 02-** **The Book of II Kings**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 16
Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 10
Chart of the Kings of Israel & Judah Due
- November 09-** **The Book of I & II Chronicles**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 17

Longman/Dillard, Chapter 12

- November 16-** **No Class**
- November 23-** **Thanksgiving Week, No Class**
- November 30-** **The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 18 (*Ezra-Nehemiah*)
 Longman/Dillard, Chapter 13
 Provan/Long/Longman, Chapter 11
- December 07-** **The Book of Esther**
Assignment: Arnold/Beyer, Chapter 18 (*Esther*)
 Longman/Dillard, Chapter 14
Final Examination Review
Theological Theme Paper Due
- December 14-** **Final Exam**

IV. ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be read, completed, and/turned in on or before the due dates scheduled. In fairness to students who do their work on time, late assignments will be reduced one letter grade per day. If more time is needed on any assignment, reasonable excuses will be accepted.

A. Chart of the Kings of Judah and Israel

Prepare a chart of the all the major kings of Judah and Israel, including the kings of the United Monarchy. Helpful resources include: Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); and Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). The Chart is worth 10% of your course grade.

B. Paper

Write a 10-12 page paper on a major theological theme found in the Historical Books. As an integral part of the paper, show and discuss how these themes relate to the overall narrative plot found in these books. More details will be announced. The paper is worth 30% of your course grade.

C. English Bible Reading

Each student is required to read the books of Judges through Esther during the course of this semester. The final exam will ask whether or not the student has successfully fulfilled this requirement.

D. Examinations and Attendance

There will be a mid-term and a final exam. Each exam is worth 100 points and is equivalent to 60% of the course grade collectively. Exams will not be “made up”

without previous notification. Attendance is strongly encouraged as class participation will be observed and evaluated by the instructor.

V. GRADING

A. Scale. The standard RTS grading scale will be used.

A (97-100)	C (80-82)
A- (94-96)	C- (78-79)
B+ (91-93)	D+ (75-77)
B (88-90)	D (72-74)
B- (86-87)	D- (70-71)
C+ (83-85)	F (below 70)

B. Basis for computation

Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	30%
Thematic Paper	30%
Chart of Kings	10%