

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – WASHINGTON, D. C.

COURSE SYLLABUS
Judges-Esther OT510

Spring Semester, 2010
Friday, 7:30pm to 10:00pm and Saturday 9:00am-4:00pm
Feb. 12-13, Mar. 12-13, Apr. 9-10

Chapelgate Presbyterian Church, Marriottsville, MD

INSTRUCTOR: William Fullilove
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McLean, VA 22101

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: A Biblical-theological study and analysis of the message and times of the Biblical books from Judges-Esther, emphasizing major themes found within this portion of the Holy Scriptures with a goal of how to understand, exegete, preach, and teach this portion of the Scriptures.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Comprehension:

1. To increase your knowledge of the English Bible of the books Judges-Esther.
2. To increase your understanding of the message(s) of the books Judges-Esther, both separately and together.
3. To increase your knowledge of the development of redemptive history through the periods covered in these books.
4. To introduce the basic trends in scholarly research regarding these books.

Competence:

1. To sharpen your ability to interpret the books Judges-Esther in their historical, theological, and literary contexts.
2. To sharpen your ability to teach and preach the books Judges-Esther in the context of the local church.
3. To prepare those called to pastoral ministry for licensure and ordination exams at their local church assemblies and examination boards.

Character:

1. To sharpen your application of the themes of the books Judges-Esther in your personal spiritual life.
2. To be a person of growing faith, hope, and love based on the work of God as revealed in these books.

REQUIRED READINGS.

- Biblical books of Judges-Esther in an English translation of the student's choice.
- Biblical book of Deuteronomy in an English translation of the student's choice.
- Iain W. Provan, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pgs. 1-104.
- K.A. Kitchen. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, 2006. Pgs. 1-239, 449-500.
- A. Hurvitz. "Can Biblical Texts be Dated Linguistically? Chronological Perspectives in the Historical Study of Biblical Hebrew." Pgs. 143-160 in *Congress Volume, Oslo, 1998*. Ed. A. Lemaire and M. Saebo. Supplement to *Vetus Testamentum* 80. Leiden: Brill, 2000. (Note: This reading will be provided to students in .pdf format.)

REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: Students are required to attend class lectures and discussions. If you know you cannot make it to a class session, notify the instructor in advance. Because of the schedule of this class, students must be available all three weekends. Missing a full weekend of the course is not permitted.

Reading: Students are required to complete all readings according to the course schedule below.

Quizzes: At the **beginning** of class each Friday, students will be quizzed covering the reading of the Biblical books as indicated on the course schedule. (Students should not expect to arrive late and be able to take the quiz.) The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. The book of Deuteronomy is assigned reading for this class but will not be quizzed. To provide students with a sense of the level of difficulty of these quizzes, a sample quiz on the book of Deuteronomy is appended to this syllabus as Appendix A. Students are encouraged to read Deuteronomy *before* looking at this sample quiz in order to assess their effectiveness in reading.

Critical Review: Students will write a critical review of the historiographical methodology proposed in *A Biblical History of Israel* pages 1-104. Paper should be approximately 8 pages, double-spaced. For instructions on writing a critical review, see Appendix B. Due: March 12, at the **beginning** of class.

Major Project: Students may choose one of three options:

1. Write an exegetical paper on a passage from one of the Biblical books covered in this course. Students who have not yet completed Hebrew language study may still choose this option, however they are encouraged to speak with the instructor to be certain they understand what is expected in an exegetical paper. This exegetical paper must demonstrate interaction with and use of the methodologies discussed in this class. Expected length: 15-20 pages, double-spaced. *Note: Students may not, per RTS policy, submit the same exegetical paper as used for their Hebrew Exegesis class. This paper must represent new work for this class.*
2. Create a small-group Bible study guide covering the Elijah/Elisha narratives from 1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 13. For a model which would represent an excellent completion of this assignment, students should review the study on *Judges* at <http://www.redeemer2.com/rstore/category.cfm?Category=2&CFID=4346873&CFTOKEN=3046642>.
3. Write a thematic paper on the nature of kingship as reflected in the Biblical books covered in this course. This paper should be carefully anchored in the Biblical text, including specific citations of Biblical passages. Further, it must represent research of and interaction with secondary sources regarding the nature of kingship in Israel and in the Ancient Near East. Expected length: 25-30 pages, double-spaced.

Topic due to instructor March 12 **in writing**: one page describing the student's intended major project. Final project due: April 30, 9:00 PM via e-mail to bill@mcleanpres.org.

Note: Students who are interested in doing additional graduate study beyond their RTS degree **MUST** contact the instructor in advance, as these requirements may be adjusted to better prepare the student for his or her future course of study.

TOTAL GRADE: The final grade for the course will be the total of each of the required assignments listed above.

Quizzes (25%)

Critical Review (25%)

Major Project (50%)

Grades will be assigned according to the RTS grading system. The instructor reserves the right to adjust grades based on each student's attendance at class and participation in classroom discussion.

Late papers without **advance** excuse from the instructor will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per 24 hours late. Advance excuse will only be given in exceptional cases.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The majority of this class will focus on an exegetical study of the books Judges-Esther. Particularly important topics in academic or pastoral study of these books will also be covered.

NOTE: Course schedule is ALWAYS subject to revision based on the needs of the class.

February 12-13

Topics:

- Reading Biblical Narrative
- Judges
- Ruth

Reading Due:

- Deuteronomy
- Judges
- Ruth

Quizzes:

- Judges
- Ruth

March 12-13

Topics:

- History of Israel / Historiography in the Ancient Near East
- 1-2 Samuel
- 1-2 Kings

Reading Due:

- 1-2 Samuel
- 1-2 Kings
- Provan, Long, and Longman

Quizzes:

- 1-2 Samuel
- 1-2 Kings

Assignments Due:

- Critical Review of Provan, Long, and Longman
- Topic for Major Project Due

April 9-10

Topics:

- Compositional History Issues
- 1-2 Chronicles
- Ezra-Nehemiah
- Esther

Reading Due:

- 1-2 Chronicles
- Ezra-Nehemiah
- Esther
- Kitchen
- Hurvitz

Quizzes:

- 1-2 Chronicles
- Ezra-Nehemiah
- Esther

April 30

- Major project due

OFFICE HOURS:

By appointment (contact the instructor to setup a time and place). I enjoy sharing thoughts with students, so do not hesitate to contact me. The contact information given above is for your use, and you should feel free to contact me as much as you wish. I will respond as promptly as possible.

Appendix A: Sample Quiz on the book of Deuteronomy

1. Deuteronomy 1-3 summarizes events reported in the book of:
 - a. Genesis
 - b. Exodus
 - c. Leviticus
 - d. Numbers

2. Which tribe did *not* receive its inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River?
 - a. Reuben
 - b. Dan
 - c. Gad
 - d. The half tribe of Manasseh

3. The book of Deuteronomy prescribes that Israel should worship God
 - a. By taking over the pagan altars of Canaan
 - b. At new high places Israel will construct in Canaan
 - c. At the one place God will choose
 - d. Everywhere

4. According to Deuteronomy, the first duty of a king when he takes the throne of his kingdom is:
 - a. To acquire horses and chariots for his kingdom
 - b. To lead a pilgrimage to Mount Nebo
 - c. To write out a copy of the law
 - d. To engage in holy war to rid the land of the Canaanites

5. In Deuteronomy 1 the Israelites disobey God by:
 - a. Refusing to go up to fight to take the promised land
 - b. Going up to fight to take the promised land
 - c. Both a and b
 - d. Neither a nor b

6. Feasts commanded in the book of Deuteronomy include all but:
 - a. Passover
 - b. Weeks
 - c. Purim
 - d. Tabernacles

7. In the book of Deuteronomy Moses indicates that the Lord does not permit him to enter the promised land because:
 - a. He killed the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew
 - b. The people did not go up to fight to take the promised land
 - c. He disobeyed God at the waters of Meribah

8. Regarding a future rebellion of the people against God, the book of Deuteronomy
 - a. Sees no future rebellion
 - b. Commands the Levites to put down future rebellions with armed force
 - c. Commands the law be placed in the ark of God as a witness
 - d. Sees future rebellion, but without disastrous punishment by the Lord

9. The Ten Commandments are reported in:
 - a. Deuteronomy 5
 - b. Deuteronomy 8
 - c. Deuteronomy 12
 - d. Deuteronomy 13

10. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." This verse is:
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:4-5
 - b. Deuteronomy 10:1-2
 - c. Deuteronomy 15:3-4
 - d. Deuteronomy 32:22-23

11. Appendix B: Instructions on Writing a Critical Review*

The **FIRST** part of your critical book review is a *statement of the contents*. Here you want to indicate both subject and theme. The subject can be loosely defined as what the author is talking about, and the theme loosely defined as what the author says about the subject. What you are interested in doing here is informing your reader of what he or she will find when picking up the book. Put another way, this section includes both a statement of the factual content of the book and a discussion of the author's bias. Here you are simply giving the facts: the contents of the book and the author's point of view. Your own opinions are irrelevant. Your end is simply to inform the reader objectively.

The **SECOND** part of your review is a critical evaluation of the book's strengths. Here it is your opinions that matter and your reaction to the book. What did you like about the book? Which sections were especially strong? Why? Which themes or topics were addressed well? How did the author make his or her case? Was it convincing? What was especially valuable about the treatment?

The **THIRD** section of your review is a critical evaluation of the book's weaknesses. Were there any sections that were particularly unsatisfactory? Did you find contradictions in what the author said in different parts? Does the work conflict with some other work that you have read?

In a word, in the last two sections you give your reactions to the book. The first part of the book review is somewhat mechanical. The second and third parts are for your evaluation. Obviously, it is not enough simply to say, "I like the book; I didn't like the book." Statements must be concrete and backed up with citations and arguments. Approximately one-third of your paper should be devoted to each section.

* Adapted from Dr. Bruce Waltke.