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Course Description

This course approaches the theological message and historical background of the historical books from the perspective of canonical hermeneutics. Classroom lectures will focus upon helping students gain familiarity with the literary structure, content, and theology of these books, as well as the hermeneutical issues surrounding their interpretation. The historical realities of conquest, settlement, monarchy, exile and restoration, as well as the topic of Israelite historiography, will be approached from a theological perspective for the purpose of equipping students to exegete and preach these books within their canonical context.

Course Objectives

The course aims at the following objectives:

1. To introduce students to the literary structure, historical context, and theological stance of the Historical Books with a view toward preaching them in the life of the church.

2. To gain familiarity with the interpretive issues raised by contemporary approaches to biblical historiography and their significance for our understanding the role of the Historical Books as Christian scripture in the present life of the church.

Course Texts

Required texts


**Recommended texts on historical background and geography**


**Grading and Course Requirements**

All students will complete a book review of *The Art of Biblical History* by V. Philips Long (6 to 8 double-spaced pages). For this reason, it would be a very good idea to start reading this book as soon as possible (preferably before the first day of class). In addition to the book review, students will complete a 15-20 page paper on a particular topic in Judges – Esther (double-spaced, including bibliography). Proposed topics must be submitted to me for approval by Friday, January 25th. The book review will constitute 35 percent of your final grade and the paper will be 65 percent. *All written coursework will be due three weeks after the last day of classes* (by midnight on Friday, February 15th).

**Course Schedule**

Jan 21  
Introduction  
A. Syllabus overview  
B. Approaches to the historical books  
   i. Their place in the Hebrew canon  
   ii. Their place in modern scholarship  

Judges  
A. Authorship and date  
B. Literary structure and theology  
   Excursus: Jephthah’s daughter

Samuel  
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology

Readings for Monday, January 21st
1) Longman and Dillard, 133-166
2) Vanhoozer, 92-118

Jan 22  Samuel
A. The theology of Samuel (continued)
   Excursus: Saul’s kingship

Kings
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology
   Excursus: Solomon’s kingship

Readings for Tuesday, January 22nd
1) Longman and Dillard, 167-189
2) Vanhoozer, 119-123

Jan 23  Chronicles
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology
   Excursus: Davidic hope in Chronicles

Ezra
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology

Readings for Wednesday, January 23rd
1) Longman and Dillard, 190-212
2) Vanhoozer, 124-136

Jan 24  Ezra
A. The theology of Ezra (continued)

Nehemiah
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology

Esther
A. Authorship and date
B. Literary structure and theology

Readings for Thursday, January 24th
1) Longman and Dillard, 213-223
2) Vanhoozer, 137-147