Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington, D. C. Campus

Course Syllabus

Joshua to Esther 6OT5250

Winter Term

Instructor: Peter Y. Lee Email: [plee@rts.edu](mailto:plee@rts.edu)

Professor of Old Testament

* **Course Description**: This overview of the literature, history and themes of Joshua through Esther gives particular attention to the relevance of these books for the church and world today
* **Course Objectives:**
* Comprehension:

1. To increase your knowledge of the English Bible from Judges to Esther.
2. To increase your knowledge of introductory issues in each book from Judges to Esther.
3. To increase your knowledge of the history of Israel from the period of the Judges to the post-exilic community.

* Competence

1. To sharpen your ability to interpret Judges to Esther in their historical, theological, and literary contexts.
2. To sharpen your ability to apply the teaching of Judges to Esther in your own life and in the life of the local church.

* Character

1. To be a person of growing faith.
2. To be a person of increasing hope.
3. To be a person of deepening love.

* **Office Hours:**
  + By appointment (contact the instructor to setup a time and place).
* **Required Readings:**
* The historical books of the Old Testament Scriptures: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.
* Miles V. Van Pelt, editor. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: Gospel Promised*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. Pages 159-246, 399-418, 475-494, 515-541.
* Iain Provan, V. Philips Longs, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Pages 1-107.
* Eugene Merrill. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
* Victor P. Hamilton. *Handbook on the Historical Books*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
* Meredith G. Kline. *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997 [originally self-published, 1989]
* Barry J. Beitzel. *The Moody Altas of Bible Lands*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985. Selections.
* Collection of articles and essays
* S. L. Richter, “Deuteronomistic History” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books* (eds. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson; Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 219-230.
* Dominique Charpin, “History of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Overview” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol. 2* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 807-829
* “Archeology and Biblical Studies” in *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (ed. Tremper Longman; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 100-109
* Gerhard Von Rad, “The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel” in Gerhard Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other essays* (transl. E. W. Trueman Dicken; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 166-204
* P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., “The Apology of David,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980) 489-504; = *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville;Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, 8; Winona Lake, IN: 2000), 260-275
* Gary Knoppers, “The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments and Detours” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (ed. David W. Baker, Bill T. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 207-235
* A. Kirk Grayson, “Assyrian Rule of Conquered Territory in Ancient Western Asia” *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol. 2* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 959-968
* Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol. 2* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 969-979
* Niels Peter Lemche, “History of Ancient Syria and Palestine: An Overview” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol. 2* (ed. Jack M. Sasson; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 1195-1218
* H. G. M. Williamson, “Exile and After: Historical Study” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (ed. David W. Baker, Bill T. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 236-265
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, “The Composition of Ezra i-vi,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1983) 1-30

**Requirements:**

* + *Attendance*: Students are required to attend each class. Lectures will be recorded for those who have to miss portions of any day of classes.
  + *Exam*: Due **January 20 (Friday)**. See below.
  + *Research Paper*: Due **February 3 (Friday)**. See below.
  + *Reading Report*: Due **February 24 (Friday)**. See below.
  + *Total Grade:*
* Reading Report: 10% of total grade
* Exam: 40% of total grade
* Research Paper: 50% of total grade

**Exam**

Instead of taking a traditional final exam at the end of the course, these seven questions will compose the entire exam. Students are required to respond to these seven questions. The nature of these questions vary. Some are taken directly from the lectures. Others are not addressed directly in lectures, but rather requires you to apply lecture materials for a thoughtful answer. 20 points per question.

Since this is open notes, I expect the answers to be clear and thoughtful with adequate support from Scripture

You may submit your responses at any time, but all questions must be answered by **January 20 (Friday**).

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|  |  | Questions |
|  | 1 | Describe three messages that can be found in the book of Deuteronomy. |
|  | 2 | Describe how Othniel and Samson are evaluated as a judge. |
|  | 3 | What is distinctive about the prophetic movement after Samuel? |
|  | 4 | How does Saul manifest the fact that he does not have a proper heart for the Lord in 1 Sam. 13-15? |
|  | 5 | How does 1 Sam. 16-2 Sam. 5 defend the legitimacy of David's monarchy? |
|  | 6 | How does 1 Chronicles 17 use 2 Samuel 7 to portray the ideal coming son of David? |
|  | 7 | Explain the similarity/difference between Kings and Chronicles on the description of the Judean king Manasseh (2 Kgs. 21:1-18; 2 Chr. 33:1-20). Why do they differ? |

**Guidelines**

1. Retype the question before answering
2. Your response should be no longer than a one-page, single-spaced lines.
3. You may use your lecture notes, textbooks, and Bible.
4. You do not need to footnote sources.

**Reading Report Form**

Provide the date in which you completed each of the required reading assignments and turn this form in on the due date for Reading Reports (**February 24, Friday**).

NAME:

* Miles Van Pelt

*A Biblical-Theological Introduction*

*to the Old Testament* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Iain Provan, V. Philips Longs. T. Longman

*A Biblical History of Israel* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Eugene Merrill

*Kingdom of Priests* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Victor Hamilton

*Handbook on the Historical Books* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Barry Beitzel

*Moody Atlas* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* S. L. Richter

“Deuteronomistic History” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Dominique Charpin

“History of Ancient Mesopotamia” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* “Archeology and Biblical Studies”

*The Baker Bible Dictionary*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Gerhard Von Rad

“The Beginnings of Historical Writing” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.

“The Apology of David” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Gary Knoppers

“The Historical Study of the Monarchy” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* A. Kirk Grayson

“Assyrian Rule of Conquered Territory” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Paul-Alain Beaulieu

“King Nabonidus” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Niels Peter Lemche

“History of Ancient Syria” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* H. G. M. Williamson

“Exile and After: Historical Study” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* H. G. M. Williamson

The Composition of Ezra i-vi” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Research Paper**

Provided below are the specific details of your Research Paper assignment. Cite passages from Scripture as needed. Proofread your papers for spelling and grammatical errors. The topic of each papers and their due dates are provided below.

* **Paper Topic**
  + *Describe the parallel between the ministry of Elijah and Moses and explain the reason for this*.

Students who have not taken Biblical Hebrew must choose this paper topic. This paper should be approximately 12 pages in length. Use at least 8 scholarly resources. **Due Feb 3 (Friday)**.

OR

* + *Write a Hebrew exegetical paper that also provides an historical-redemptive analysis on a Joshua 1:1-9*

For students who have taken Biblical Hebrew. This paper should be approximately 12 pages in length. You will follow a verse-by-verse approach while focusing on the major theme/message of the passage in your comments. Use at least 8 scholarly sources. **Due Feb 3 (Friday)**.

* **Research Paper Requirements.**
  + Meet the minimum page requirement.
  + Double-spaced lines.
  + No title page.
  + A bibliography as the last page of the paper (this is not to be counted as part of the page-count) which uses at least eight good (solid scholarly, not popular theological, non-internet) sources.
  + **DUE DATE**: An electronic copy of the paper is to be turned in (emailed to plee@rts.edu) on the due date (**Feb 26**) either as a Word document or PDF. Late papers will not be accepted.
  + Papers will be marked down due to spelling and grammatical errors.

**Grading Criteria**: A successful paper will conform to the following standards.

* **Thesis**: The thesis is well stated without any ambiguity and reflects accurately the message/theology of the passage/theme in question.
* **Organization**: The paper is well organized and thoughtful in its presentation. The structure of the paper flows from the thesis and the paragraphs interconnect seamlessly where the author’s development of thought can be clearly seen.
* **Content**: The paper shows a command of the subject matter and an academic and scholarly level of analysis that is insightful and fresh. The arguments used to defend and/or describe the thesis were persuasive. The paper shows an understanding of the current issues with the theme/paper in question. The paper interacts with the relevant Biblical materials (in the original language) and demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the theme/passage in its grammatical-historical context. Although originality is desired, a new contribution is not always a necessary ingredient in a successful academic paper. The paper interacts with a variety (ancient and modern, commentaries, monographs, journal articles) of relevant and useful resources, which are used to enhance the thesis of the paper – not substitute for it. Minimal to none of the paper focuses on introductory matters (date, authorship, etc.), unless it is absolutely required. There is no question about plagiarism or any other dishonest or academically questionable activity.
* **Style**: The writing style is *cogent* (logical), *clear* (easy to understand), and *concise* (stating thoughts without redundancy, or treading into irrelevant materials).
* **Proof-read**: There are no spelling errors or run on sentences.
* **Logistics**: The paper meets the minimum page requirement, minimum resources in bibliography. The pages are numbered. Formatting of the paper follows the guidelines found in either *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.; Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 2003) or *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

**Lecture Schedule**

Provided below is a tentative lecture schedule with relevant required reading assignments. The instructor reserves the privilege to change these lectures and schedule as he sees fit. Students are NOT required to prepare these readings before class.

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|  | **DATE** | **LECTURE** | **REQUIRED READING** |
|  | Monday | * Introductory Matters * Deuteronomy | * Lemche, “History of Ancient Syria” * Provan, pg. 1-107 |
|  |  |  | * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 1-69 * Merrill, ch. 3 |
|  | Tuesday | * Joshua * Judges | * Baker, “Archeology” * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 94-103 |
|  |  |  | * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 104-113 * Van Pelt, “Judges,” “Ruth” |
|  |  |  | * Charpin, “History of Ancient Mesopotamia” * Merrill, ch. 4 |
|  | Wednesday | * Samuel | * Merrill, chs. 5-7 * Van Pelt, “Samuel” |
|  |  |  | * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 112-121 * McCarter, “Apology” * Merrill, chs. 8-9 |
|  | Thursday | * Samuel (continued) * Davidic Covenant | * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 122-139 |
|  |  |  | * Knoppers, “The Historical Study” |
|  | Friday | * Kings and Chronicles * Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther | * Van Pelt, “Kings” |
|  |  |  | * Van Pelt, “Chronicles” |
|  |  |  | * Beitzel, *Atlas*, 140-148 * Merrill, chs. 10-13 |
|  |  |  | * Beaulieu, “King Nabonidus |
|  |  |  | * Grayson, “Assyrian Rule” |
|  |  |  | * Merrill, ch. 14 * Van Pelt, “Ezra,” “Nehemiah”; “Esther” * Williamson, “Exile and After” |

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|  | Jan 20 | **EXAM** |
|  | Feb 3 | **RESEARCH PAPER** |
|  | Feb 24 | **READING REPORT** |

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: Joshua to Esther

Professor: Peter Y. Lee

Campus: Washington, D. C.

Date: Dec. 12, 2019

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| **MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**  *In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.*  *\*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.* | | **Rubric**   * **Strong** * **Moderate** * **Minimal** * **None** | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | Understanding through lectures and reading, articulation through essay exams and a research paper |
| **Scripture** | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | Strong | Focus in the class is on understanding the original meaning, with some emphasis on language and more on hermeneutics, with the goal of understanding modern meaning |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate | The class has a good dose of Reformed distinctives, such as the emphasis on covenants, historiography, and kingship. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | One conscious goal is to see students benefit personally in their faith from their understanding of the historical books |
| **Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Minimal | Several issues in class deal directly with world view, especially the materials on the total kingship of God. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.) | Minimal | Differing views of issues are set forth in an objective, fair, and winsome way. |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Minimal | There is an emphasis on how to preach/teach different segments of the course, but no hands-on experience. |

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