

Joshua to Esther OT5250
Spring 2026
Wednesdays 8:30-10:30; 11:00-Noon

Instructor: Richard Belcher, Jr. (rbelcher@rts.edu)

TA: michamueller98@gmail.com

Course Description

This course offers an analysis of each book in this section of the canon from a literary, historical, and theological perspective. Each book is placed in the context of redemptive history to show its relationship to what has gone before and how it furthers the progress of redemption, which ultimately leads to Christ. There is an emphasis on how to interpret narrative and characters in a story.

Course Goals

- 1) To understand the structure and message of each book covered in this course.
- 2) To understand how each book fits into the progress of the unfolding history of God's people.
- 3) To understand how these books lay a foundation for the coming of Christ.
- 4) To become comfortable teaching and preaching from narrative, with special attention given to how to deal with characters in a story.

Textbooks

- 1) *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament (BTIOT)*, ed. Miles Van Pelt (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016); chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 21, 23, 24
- 2) *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed., Eugene H. Merrill (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); pp. 19–36, 110–527
- 3) *He Gave Us Stories*, Richard L. Pratt, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1990); pp. 107-305
- 4) A collection of articles from different sources that will cover the topic of Christ in these books. These articles will be made available to students on Canvas.
- 5) Recommended: *The ESV Bible Atlas*, John Currid and David Barrett

Assignments

- 1) The biblical books Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther must all be read.
- 2) The assigned reading must be read.
- 3) Quizzes will be on outlines of the books given to the students and memory verses.

- 4) There will be two exams: each exam will be composed of essay questions and key terms (given to the students ahead of time)
- 5) A research paper is required that will focus on a character in a narrative (see the Guidelines for the Research Paper).

Grades

Quizzes	10%
Exams	50%
Paper	30%
Reading	10%

Extensions Policy for Assignments:

In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.

- e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Joshua to Esther

Professor: Richard P. Belcher, Jr

Campus: Charlotte

Date: November 2025

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <i>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.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		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.	Moderate	articulation of essential biblical, theological, and historical information is covered, but mostly written, not oral
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	the original meaning of the historical books is covered with an emphasis on research in a paper and substantial time spent on meaning for today
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	there is an emphasis on the theological message of the historical books, but not as directly tied to the Westminster Standards
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	More indirect in seeing how God relates to his people
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.	None	
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.)	None	
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church 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 leadership both good and bad