

OT5250
Joshua to Esther
RTS Atlanta
Spring 2026
Thursday, 6–9 PM

Instructor Information

Rev. Dr. William M. Wood
BA; MDiv; PhD
Associate Professor of Old Testament
Email: wwood@rts.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment, email to set up a time.

I. Course Description

This course is designed to 1) introduce you to issues of special introduction to the corpus of the historical books; 2) to provide a biblical-theological orientation to the whole Bible through the nature of Israel as a typological kingdom; and 3) to introduce you to concepts on how to properly exegete, preach, and teach Hebrew narrative. Topics include the literary structure, content, theology, and redemptive historical import of the historical books.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Tim 2.15)

“All experience teaches us that ignorance, next to sin, is the most fruitful source of error, and that a few well-furnished and faithful ministers are far more efficient for good than a multitude of uneducated though zealous men.” –Charles Hodge

II. Course Objective

1. To increase your knowledge of the Historical Books
2. To increase your knowledge of critical issues of the Historical Books
3. To increase your ability to exegete narrative texts for the sake of teaching and preaching
4. To orient your studies in terms of a redemptive-historical hermeneutic that sees Christ as both the center and goal of the OT
5. To give glory to God by carefully studying his word

III. Course Guidelines

1. Attendance. There are some complicated issues to discuss in class, therefore class attendance is mandatory. Any absence must be approved by the instructor beforehand via email.
2. Late-paper policy. Sometimes it will be necessary due to life situations to receive an extension on papers (see extension policy below); however, an extension is not awarded for procrastination. Papers submitted late without a viable reason (approved by the instructor) will be reduced by *one letter grade per day that they are late*. Thus, if a paper would have received an “A” grade but was submitted a day late, the grade will be reduced to an “A-”, an “A-” will become a “B+” and so on.
3. Lecture outlines will be provided for you. However, *the presence of outlines does not preclude the necessity of you taking notes*. The outlines are meant to help you keep track of where we are in the lecture, not to provide lecture notes for you.
4. Computers or handwritten notes? Studies have consistently found that hand-written note taking leads to better acquisition of the course material when compared to notes taken on computers. As such, it is recommended that you take notes *on paper*. However, this is not a requirement.
5. Computer policy. Laptops may be used in class *only for note taking*. The temptation of checking email and facebook should be resisted. It is *very distracting* to other students for you to be looking at things during class; therefore, a part of “loving your neighbor” is abstaining from these distracting acts.
6. Bring your Bible to class! You will need it!

IV. Course Assignments

Reading Assignment (10%)

All of the reading must be completed for this course. At the end of the semester you will be required to submit the final reading checklist found at the end of the syllabus. This will be done on canvas.

Book Review (10%)

You will write a 1500 word, formal and academic book review of McConville, *Grace in the End*. Plan to spend half to two-thirds of the time summarizing his work and half to one-third critically examining the book. We will discuss this in class on the due date.

Final Exam (40%)

There will be a comprehensive final exam covering all lecture and reading material on the assigned exam date. The exam will be essays only and on canvas.

Paper (40%)

You will be required to submit a Biblical-Theological paper on one of the passages detailed below. See the appendix for details.

V. Required Reading

Historiographical Reading

Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2nd ed. Westminster John Knox Press: 2015. **300pp.**

Deuteronomic History Reading

J.G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 1993. **153pp.**

Canon Specific Reading

Miles Van Pelt, ed. *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Wheaton, Crossway: 2016. Pp. 159-246, 399-418, 475-494, 515-41. **151 pp.**

Richard S. Hess, *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction* Grand Rapids, Baker Academic: 2016. Pp. 155-387. **232pp.**

The historical books in your native language.

Academic Articles

Meredith G. Kline, “The Intrusion and the Decalogue,” *WTJ* 16.1 (1953): 1–22.

Other Academic articles which will be posted to Canvas.

VI. Grade Scale

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

*The rounding up of grades is based solely on the discretion of the professor. Thus, a 96.5 does not necessarily round up to an “A.”

VII. Course Schedule

Lectures	Suggested Reading Schedule	Topics Covered
2/5	Provan, Long, & Longman, <i>A Biblical History of Israel</i>	How to Read Biblical Narrative
2/12	McConville, <i>Grace in the End</i>	The Deuteronomistic History
2/19	Kline, "Intrusion"	The Typological Kingdom
2/26	VP, "Joshua," 159-176 Hess, "Joshua," 155-193	Joshua
3/5	VP, "Judges," 177-202 Hess, "Judges," 194-219	Judges
3/12	VP, "1-2 Samuel," 203-222	1 Samuel
3/19	Hess, "1-2 Samuel," 236-274	2 Samuel
3/26	VP, "1-2 Kings," 223-246	1 Kings
4/2	Hess, "1-2 Kings," 275-316. Book Review Due!	2 Kings
4/6–4/10 Spring Break		
4/16	VP, "Ruth," 399-418 Hess, "Ruth," 220-235 VP, "Esther," 475-494 Hess, "Esther," 370-387	Ruth/Esther
4/23	VP, "E-N," 515-524 Hess, "E-N," 348-369	Ezra-Nehemiah
4/30	VP, "1-2 Chron," 525-541.	1 Chronicles
5/7	Hess, "1-2 Chron," 317-347.	2 Chronicles
Final Exam (on Canvas; open 5/8–5/14) Papers are Due by midnight on 5/14/25		

*Note: the "topics covered" outline is broad and may not reflect the actual progression of the course. Sometimes, things take longer than what is reflected on the calendar to cover.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Appendix: Paper Requirements

Overarching Requirements:

1. Writing Style: I expect a professional, readable paper with minimal grammatical and typographical errors. Too many errors will lead to a reduction of your paper grade.

2. Paper Length: The *minimum* length for your papers is 5,000 words inclusive of footnotes. The *maximum* length for your paper is 7,500 words inclusive of footnotes. This will be a roughly 15-18 page paper including engagement with scholars.

3. Title page: include a title page with your name, course number, date, and **number of words in your paper**.

4. References: You must use a *minimum* of 10 references in your paper. The bible *does not* count as a reference! No shoddy references! **Warning:** Wikipedia is *not* an academic reference tool; do ***not*** use it for your paper. References should be cited by means of the standard SBL footnote format found in the *SBL Handbook of Style*. References should come from sources such as Academic articles, commentaries, monographs, dictionary articles, and the like.

5. You must include a bibliography at the end of your paper following the SBL style. The bibliography should *not* be counted as part of your word count.

6. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. If you are asking yourself if you should cite something, be safe and cite it! If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic “F” for the course and will be subject to the Seminary’s disciplinary code of conduct.

7. Your paper should be **double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman (or similar) font. Footnotes are to be single space 10 point Times New Roman.** Note sure why, but students never follow this. Please do! It makes your professor happy, and happy professors grade happily!

8. If you know Hebrew, you *must use* Hebrew. All Hebrew must be in *Unicode*.

Specific Instructions

I. Text Options

Any text in Judges except Judges 5 may be examined. If there is another passage in a different book that you would like to examine, you may seek my approval for that passage.

II. Assignment Requirements

The task for this assignment is to closely examine a passage of scripture noting its redemptive historical import as it looks forward to Christ. As a Biblical-Theological paper *on the selected passage*, the goal is to see the specific way in which this passage in its particular historical milieu looks forward to the eschatological climax of redemption in Christ as well as relates to the preceding redemptive historical epochs.

Broad Outline for Paper

I. Introduction (expect this to take about a page)

-You should include a clear, cogent thesis statement here. The thesis statement will be what you think the main Biblical-Theological import of the passage is. While you do not need a statement like “my thesis statement is...,” I will be looking for you to present a clear thesis **and support it in the body of your paper.**

II. Structure of Passage (this section will likely be 2-3 pages)

-You should analyze the structure of the passage next, articulating the main thought-flow of the narrative and what you think the main point it is. The main point of the passage will be the main Biblical-Theological point as well!

-How does this passage fit the context of the book it is in?

-If you know Hebrew, *you must use it*. If you do not, then you will have to rely on commentaries and a close reading of the English text for this section.

III. Biblical-Theological Examination (this will be the main focus of your paper!)

-Focus on the particular redemptive historical context of your passage in relation to what the passage is trying to communicate. Why might this passage be introducing this content in this particular historical context?

-Go *backward* in redemptive history and determine what (if any) aspects are being developed from previous redemptive historical epochs in your passage.

-Go *Forward* in redemptive history and see how your passage is picked up and developed in later stages of the OT and how it climaxes in the New Covenant in Christ.

IV. Conclusion (probably around a page)

Tie the paper together in concluding remarks focused on how the evidence that you have cited for your main thesis and how that thesis has been verified.

Note: The above broad outline will likely have numerous sub-sections and you may wish to add other sections as well. That is fine! However, I will be looking for all the material just outlined when grading.

Appendix 2: Reading Checklist

Historiographical Reading

Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2nd ed. Westminster John Knox Press: 2015. **300pp**. Detail read: 12 hrs.

Deuteronomic History Reading

J.G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan: 1993). **153pp**. Moderate-detail read: 5 hrs.

Canon Specific Reading

Miles Van Pelt, ed. *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Wheaton, Crossway: 2016. Pp. 159-246, 399-418, 475-494, 515-41. **151 pages**. Detail Read: 7.5 hrs.

Richard S. Hess, *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction* Grand Rapids, Baker Academic: 2016. Pp. 155-387. **232pp**. moderate-detail read: 7.5 hrs.

Academic Articles.

The historical books in your native language.

Total Pages: 850 + Jornal Articles + Biblical Books
Reading Hours: ~40

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: OT 5250
 Professor: Rev. Dr. William Wood
 Campus: Atlanta
 Date: Spring 2025

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
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	Paper and Exam are focused on these matters.
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	It is a Bible course after all!
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	We are looking at the norming norm (norma normans) of reformed theology.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	God works by the power of the Spirit through the Word.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Not a ton of worldview discussion, but we do seek to be conformed to Scripture!
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.)	Strong	Some are <i>very</i> opinionated about some of the topics in this course; therefore, a call to charity and "winsomeness" is needed.
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-Xns.	Strong	The major part of pastoral ministry is the ministry of the Word.