



Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

OT 729
JUDGES AND RUTH*
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Fall 2008

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Due West, SC 29639

Course Description: This course examines the history, content, milieu, text, structure, and meaning of the books of Judges and Ruth. Attention is given to their ancient historical settings and the light they shed on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Prerequisite: In order to receive exegesis credit for this course, students must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis and BI 503 Introduction to the Biblical Languages (or Hebrew I & II) prior to taking this class. Exegesis/Elective. Three hours.

I. Course Goals

A. General Mission of Erskine Seminary

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to “educate persons for service in the Christian Church.” To achieve this mission, the ability to understand Judges and Ruth must be taught. How these stories point to Christ, and their implications for today, will be discovered.

B. By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Teach or preach from the narratives.
2. Relate the message of the narratives to our own contemporary setting.
3. Discuss the message and theology of the narratives.

* Note: A colorful syllabus cover can be downloaded from my website. This is worth 1% of extra credit; 2% if printed on photo-quality paper. The cover is NOT the webpage picture. Right-click on the link that says “Syllabus Cover,” download (Save Target As), then print from Microsoft Paint or some such program. *Make sure the whole image prints on one page.*


II. Required Reading

- A. The Biblical Books of Judges, Ruth, and Judith
- B. *Ruth* a commentary by George Schwab. This is not in print and will be put on reserve.
- C. Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary. Broadman and Holman, 1999. Note: This Required text may be ordered from the Erskine Theological Seminary Virtual Bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.
- D. Other smaller reading assignments, such as *Yev.* 103a, *Naz.* 23b, and the Magnificat.

III. Exams and Assignments

- A. Exams 55% total
 - 1. The first exam is worth 15% of your grade, and will cover material presented in class or assigned to be read up to the exam date.
 - 2. The second exam is worth 20% of your grade, and will cover material presented in class or assigned to be read up to the exam date.
 - 3. The third exam is worth 20% of your grade, and will cover material presented in class or assigned to be read up to the exam date.
- B. Outline 10%
 - 1. Hand in an outline of Judges and Ruth
 - 2. With it, include an argument: Is Achsah good or bad?
 - 3. Also, guess all you can about Shamgar *without reference to anything but Judges*. Just you and the Bible.
 - 4. This is due the second week of class, *it will not be accepted late*
- C. List of things God says and does 5%. This is due the 4th week of class, *it will not be accepted late*.
- D. Compare Judith with Jael 5%. Graded on detail. This is due the ___ week of class, *it will not be accepted late*
- E. Exegetical Paper 20%.
- F. Class Attendance and Participation 5%
 - 1. 5% of your grade will be class participation, attendance, and punctuality with assignments. Missing time will require makeup work. Missing more than 9 hours automatically triggers an “F”, so in that event you should drop the course.
 - 2. Every day the exegesis paper or the final exam is late, 1% will be taken off the grade.
 - 3. You will be held responsible for all material presented in class.
- G. The final numerical value for each student will be adjusted after all of the requirements are met by all of the students (i.e. you will be graded on a curve).

IV. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	9/4	Intro to Course	Come rested and ready to work!
2	9/11	Judges' Double Intro	<i>Judges chapter 1.</i> Block 21 – 73. Outline of Judges and Ruth including Achsah and Shamgar comments
3	9/16	How to Read Judges	<i>Judges chapter 2.</i> Block 75 – 141
4	9/23	Ehud	<i>Judges chapter 3.</i> Block 143 – 211
5	9/30	Deborah	<i>Judges chapter 4 – 5; Judith.</i> Block 211 – 246. Selections from the Talmud. Magnificat. Paper: Judith and Jael.
6	10/7	Exam #1 Gideon	<i>Judges chapter 6 – 9.</i> Block 247 - 307 Exam #1 (first 4 weeks)
7	10/14	Jephthah	<i>Judges chapter 10 – 12.</i> Block 307 – 379
8	10/22	Samson	<i>Judges chapter 13 – 16.</i> Block 379 – 439
9	10/28	Bethlehem Trilogy I	<i>Judges chapter 17 – 18.</i> Block 439 – 515 Paper: what God says and does.
10	11/4	Bethlehem Trilogy II	<i>Judges chapter 19 – 21.</i> Block 515 – 586
11	11/11	Bethlehem Trilogy III	<i>Ruth.</i> Schwab: the whole commentary
12	11/18	Exam #2	Exam #2 (weeks 5 – 8)
-	11/25	Thanksgiving Break 	
13	12/2	Conclusion	Final paper
14	TBA	Final Exam	Final Exam (weeks 9 – 13)

V. Bibliography, see web page

VI. Policies

A. Incompletes: The grade of 'Incomplete' can be assigned as a final grade only when two conditions are met: 1) the student has completed the majority of the requirements for the course; 2) the student has been providentially hindered from completing the remaining requirements for the course. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form well before the semester's end and ask the professor to grant the request. An 'Incomplete' will automatically become an 'F' unless requirements are fulfilled by March 1.

B. Withdrawals: Once you have completed, signed, and submitted your registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and your billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a "drop/add" form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. Erskine will make no exceptions to this policy.

C. Writing: The style guide adopted by the seminary is that of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The seminary encourages making use of inclusive language. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

D. Attendance: the student is required to attend all classes. If the student misses more than 3 classes, an F will automatically be assigned. Sleeping in class = an absence.

E. Language about God and Humanity. Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds refer to Him with masculine language. The Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

F. Conduct in Theological Discussions: There are no favorites at Erskine. Publicly rejecting this ethos with the result of making fellow students feel unwelcome will be considered unethical behavior, and is grounds for course failure on the level of cheating and plagiarism. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

G. Chapel Attendance. This class has a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the catalog or registration booklet for policy specifics. There is a fee for chapel truancy.

H. Plagiarism is using other people's wording or ideas in a way to give the impression they are yours. This is *theft*. Any borrowed text must be in quotes or clearly indented, with the source identified. Treat paraphrases of others' words or ideas similarly. List the source in a bibliography. You must obtain permission to submit work previously used for another course. At times, a source might be checked—so be accurate.

I. Exegesis Credit Policy. For exegesis credit, do a thorough exegetical study using the exegetical procedure taught in BI 502, using Hebrew (if applicable to your curriculum).

J. Office hours: Wednesday mornings. You can always reach me by email.