

OT 2063 Exegesis of Judges
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.
Schlegel 120

Instructor

Steve Cook
Email: scook@lpts.edu
Phone: 615-463-7562 (cell)

Office Hours

Schlegel 100
Tues. and Thurs. 2-4 PM

Course Description

Focusing on the book of Judges, this course is designed to help students improve their Biblical Hebrew and exegesis skills. The class also attends to issues in the history of interpretation of major characters and events in Judges.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, each student should be able to:

1. Competently practice skills important for vocalizing and translating Biblical Hebrew – especially parsing and transliteration skills.
2. Translate the Masoretic Text's presentation of characters and events in the book of Judges aware of possibilities presented by Biblical Hebrew.
3. Evaluate the biblical text's presentation of characters and events in conversation with various means of interpretation (other manuscripts and translations of Judges, artistic adaptations, and critical and theological scholarship).
4. Speak cogently and responsibly about Judges as a book that presents challenges and opportunities for Christians committed to preaching and teaching the Hebrew Bible.

Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance,

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can

find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

While not a substitute, here is a useful hyperlink: [Turabian Quick Guide](#)

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation	30%
Transliteration and Parsing Exercises	10%
Three Short Translation Papers	30% (10% each)
Due Dates: March 4, April 1, and April 20 (dates negotiable)	
Final Paper	30 %

Details about exercises and papers will be provided separately.

Books

Students will need BHS and an English language translation of the Hebrew Bible (NRSV, NJPS, NIV, NASB, NEB). The class will read one “commentary” together. Students are also asked to read a commentary of their choosing (with approval of the instructor). The one required book is:

Gunn, David M. *Judges*. Blackwell Bible Commentaries. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.

Other articles and book chapters assigned will be placed on Reserve and/or posted to CAMS.

Possibly Helpful Resources

Commentaries

- Boling, Robert G. *Judges*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975.
- Hamlin, E. John. *At Risk in the Promised Land: A Commentary on the Book of Judges*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990.
- McCann, J. Clinton. *Judges*. Interpretation. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- Niditch, Susan. *Judges: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- Schneider, Tammi. *Judges*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. *Judges: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981.

Other Judges Materials

- Bal, Mieke. *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Brenner, Athalya, ed. *A Feminist Companion to Judges*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1993.
- , ed. *Judges: A Feminist Companion to the Bible: Second Series*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. *The Book of Judges*. Old Testament Readings. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Yee, Gale A., ed. *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

Web-based Bibliographies for Judges

1. http://journalofbiblicalstudies.org/Links/Bibliographies/judges_bibliography.htm
2. <http://courses.missouristate.edu/VictorMatthews/bib/JUDGES.html>
3. http://www.postnebraslux.com/adobe%20pdf%20files/judges/The%20Book%20of%20Judges_A%20Bibliography.pdf

Reference Resources

NOTE: Some Reference materials might be on the Reserve shelves for other courses.

- Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- , ed. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Hayes, John H., ed. *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. 2 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999.
- Meyers, Carol, Toni Craven, and Ross S. Kraemer, eds. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. (FYI, iTunes U has an excellent podcast of a lecture by Carol Meyers about the making of *Women in Scripture*.)
- Newsom, Carol A. and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *Women's Bible Commentary*. Expanded ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998.
- Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006-.
- Sasson, Jack M., ed. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 4 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995.

Bibliography of Assigned Articles and Book Chapters

- Ackerman, Susan. "Digging up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66 (2003): 172-184.
- Bos, Johanna W. H. "Out of the Shadows: Genesis 38; Judges 4:17-22; Ruth 2." *Semeia* 42 (1988): 37-67.
- , "A Blow for Freedom: Judges 4:17-22." In *Reformed and Feminist: A Challenge to the Church*, 70-77. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991.
- Exum, J. Cheryl. "Why, Why, Why, Delilah?" In *Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women*, 175-237. Gender, Culture, and Theory 3. JSOT Supplement Series 215. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996.
- Fewell, Danna Nolan. "Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men, and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4-5." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58.3 (1990): 389-411.
- , "Judges." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, 73-83. Expanded Edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998.
- Hackett, Jo Ann. "Women's Studies and the Hebrew Bible." In *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures*, edited by Richard E. Friedman and H.G.M. Williamson, 141-164. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.
- Sasson, Jack M. "Ethically Cultured Interpretations: The Case of Eglon's Murder (Judges 3)." In *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded*, edited by Gershon Galil, Mark Geller, and Alan Millard, 571-595. *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 130. Leiden: Brill, 2009. Available at: http://discoverarchive.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/3905/Eth_Cultered_final_small.pdf?sequence=5
- Trible, Phyllis. "The Daughter of Jephthah." In *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, 92-116. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- , "An Unnamed Woman: The Extravagance of Violence." In *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, 64-91. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- West, Gerald. "The Bible and the Female Body in the Ibandla lamaNazaretha: Isaiah Shembe and Jephthah's Daughter." *Old Testament Essays* 20.2 (2007): 489-509.

Schedule of Classes (Some Changes and Additions might be made during the term.)

Week One

February 10

Translation: Judges 1:1-7

Reading: Transliteration material

Week Two

February 15

Reading: Book of Judges (English)
Gunn: Introduction
Other Commentary: Introductory material

Question: What "problems" confront a reader of Judges? Ask this question when reading the introductory material in Gunn and other commentaries.

February 17

Reading: Ackerman, "Digging Up Deborah"
Fewell, "Judges"
Hackett, "Women's Studies and the Hebrew Bible"

Question: Who are the women characters of the book of Judges and why are they important in feminist biblical scholarship?

Week Three

February 22

Translation: Judges 1:11-15, 2:11-23

February 24

Reading: Judges 1:1-3:11 (English)
Gunn: Judges 1-3
Other Commentary: Related material

Question: What is a "judge" and what do they do? How does Achsah (not a judge) compare with Othniel (a judge) as a character in the narrative of Judges?

Week Four

March 1

Translation: Judges 3:12-25

March 3

Reading: Judges 3 (English)
Gunn: Judges 3
Other Commentary: Related material
Sasson: "Ethically Cultured Interpretations"

Question: How are we to understand the history of interpretation of Eglon?

Week Five

March 8

Translation: Judges 4:4-16, 5:6-9

March 10

Reading: Judges 4 and 5 (English)
Gunn: Judges 4 -5
Other Commentary: Related material

Question: How does the biblical text portray Deborah as a leader vis-à-vis Barak?

Week Six

March 15

Translation: Judges 4:17-22, 5:24-30

March 17

Reading: Judges 4 and 5 (English)
Fewell: "Controlling Perspectives"
Bos: "Out of the Shadows;" "A Blow for Freedom"
Question: Is Jael a hero? If so, what is gained and/or risked by this assessment?

Week Seven

March 22 No Class – Reading and Study Week

March 24 No Class – Reading and Study Week

Week Eight

March 29

Translation: Judges 6:11-24

March 31

Reading: Judges 6-8 (English)
Gunn: Judges 6-8
Other Commentary: Related material
Question: What makes Gideon special, or not, as a prospective judge and as an actual judge?

Week Nine

April 5

Translation: Judges 9:7-21

April 7

Reading: Judges 9 (English)
Gunn: Judges 9
Other Commentary: Related material
Question: Is Jotham the most (only?) moral character in the book of Judges?

Week Ten

April 12

Translation: Judges 11:29-40

April 14

Reading: Judges 10-12 (English)
Gunn: Judges 10-12
Other Commentary: Related material
Question: What can we say nice about Jephthah? Why would one want to do such a thing?

Week Eleven

April 19

Reading: Trible: “The Daughter of Jephthah”
 West: “Isaiah Shembe and Jephthah’s Daughter”
Question: How should we remember Jephthah’s Daughter?

April 21 No Class – Easter Recess

Week Twelve

April 26

Translation: Judges 16:4-9, 15-22

April 28

Reading: Judges 13-16 (English)
 Gunn: Judges 13-16
 Other Commentary: Related material
 Exum: “Why, Why, Why Delilah?”
Question: Who is Delilah and how/why has the history of interpretation read her as it has?

Week Thirteen

May 3

Translation: Judges 17:1-13

May 5

Reading: Judges 17-18 (English)
 Gunn: Judges 17-18
 Other Commentary: Related material
Question: Consider Micah and his mother: who does the biblical narrator like better? How does Micah’s mother compare with other “mothers” in Judges (e.g., Deborah, Samson’s mother)?

Week Fourteen

May 10

Translation: Judges 19:22-30, 21:25

May 12

Reading: Judges 19-21 (English)
 Gunn: Judges 19-21
 Other Commentary: Related material
 Trible: “An Unnamed Woman”
Question: How should, can, or do readers respond to the violence of Judges?