

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Fall, 2009 (Thursdays, 9:00-12:35)
OTL622 Judges

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I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A study of the book of Judges, giving special consideration to the narrative forms, to the Deuteronomistic understanding of Israel's history, and to the book's major theological concepts.

II. COURSE RATIONALE

The Church of the Nazarene, together with the larger Wesleyan/Holiness movement and most Christian denominations, views the Bible as a foundational document, informing all the life of the church. The book of Judges, narrating as it does some of the early history of Israel's settlement in the land of promise, makes a vital contribution to the whole of the Scriptures.

Most people raised in Sunday school at least have heard of Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. Becoming better acquainted with their stories, and being introduced to other, lesser-known persons from that era are reasons enough to study Judges. The larger lessons of Israel's faith and fickleness, of the depths to which humans can sink when they forget God, are graver reasons for attending to its narrative. Larger than the human history, though, and ultimately redeeming and sanctifying it, God's faithfulness and passion to and for God's people shine vividly through the darkness.

The accounts of the book of Judges have encouraged God's people to hang on when the odds seem hopeless, even when God's own people seem irremediably lost in their own waywardness. Because it deals with an important period in early Israel's history, because it depicts in vivid profile the highs and lows of the human condition, because it reminds the community of faith throughout its pages of God's unwavering commitment to human redemption--for these and many other reasons, Judges both merits and rewards careful study.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you will:

- A. Be familiar with the content of the book of Judges;
- B. Be able to summarize the important positions regarding authorship, provenance, dating, occasion, and audience of the book of Judges;
- C. Be able to identify the major theological themes of Judges, and discuss some of its contributions to the life and thought of God's people;
- D. Have experience with the exegesis of some of the book of Judges;
- E. Use your knowledge and understanding of Judges in ministry assignment(s).

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

- A. Cundall, Arthur E., and Leon Morris. *Judges and Ruth (Tyndale OT Commentaries)*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1968.
- B. King, Philip J., and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

V. STUDENT EVALUATION

Course grades will be determined by the following:

- A. Class attendance will influence your grade. Two absences will lower any grade; three absences will result in failing the course.
- B. Eleven 600-word essays will be assigned; the lowest two among these essay grades will not be counted in calculating individual course grades.
N.B.: Papers are due at class time, and cannot be accepted more than ten minutes late. Papers deficient in style, grammar, spelling, etc., cannot earn a grade of A. (Use Turabian, and the style sheet below.)
- C. A final exegetical paper will be due December 17. Details will be discussed about midway through the course.

VI. SCHEDULE OF READINGS FOR IN-CLASS LECTURE/DISCUSSION

Sept. 10 – Syllabus; course introduction; etc.

Sept. 17 – Judges 1-2

Sept. 24 – Judges 3; Ruth

Oct. 1 – Judges 4-5

Oct. 8 – Judges 6-8

Oct. 15 – Judges 9-10

Oct. 22 – Reading and Research Week; no class session

Oct. 29 – Judges 11-12

Nov. 5 – Judges 13-14

Nov. 12 – Judges 15-16

Nov. 19 – Judges 17-18

Nov. 26 – U.S. Thanksgiving; no class session

Dec. 3 – Judges 19

Dec. 10 – Judges 20-21

Dec. 17 – Summary presentations of final exegetical papers

BECOMING A BETTER ACADEMIC WRITER
Avoiding common mistakes and uninspired usages
in formal academic writing

Correct: Use past and past perfect tenses when discussing historical persons and events.

Moses approached the bush; he had seen nothing like this before!

Incorrect: Do *not* use the so-called “historical present.”

Moses approaches the bush; he hasn’t seen this before!

Correct: *Never* split *any* infinitive: Jack learned *never* to split an infinitive.

Incorrect: His professor could count on Jim to *always* split his infinitives.

Likewise, it is poor usage in most situations to split an auxiliary verb from its main verb, or a verb of being from a predicate adjective.

Good usage: Really having done her best, Jill retired from the scene.

Poor usage: Having really done her best, Jill retired from the scene.

Good usage: Recently having discovered she really is excellent at debating,
Jill plans to try out for the debate team.

Poor usage: Having recently discovered she is really excellent at debating,
Jill plans to try out for the debate team.

An exception can be “not”: I am *not* going to write, seriously, “I am going, not, to write this sentence.” or, “I not am going to write this sentence”!

Correct: Write complete sentences; use at least a subject and a predicate in each clause.

Sarah wrote at least a paragraph in her Bible-study journal every day.

Almost always incorrect: An incomplete sentence *almost* always is incorrect.

Always promising herself to really do it tomorrow.

Common issues involving the use of apostrophe:

Correct:

boys, meaning “more than one boy”

boy’s, meaning “belonging to one boy”

boys’, meaning “belonging to more
than one boy”

its, meaning “belonging to it”

it’s, meaning “it is”

Incorrect:

boys’, meaning “more than one boy”

boys/boys’, meaning “belonging to one boy”

boy’s, meaning “belonging to more than
one boy”

it’s, meaning “belonging to it”

its, meaning “it is”

A common issue with commas and periods:

Correct:

He said, “It’s over.”

He said, “It’s over,” and left.

(This is American usage; British, Canadian, and many others are opposite.)

Incorrect:

He said, “It’s over”.

He said, “It’s over”, and left.

Correct, referring to Deity: He, Him, His, You, Yours, Thy, Thine
(Lowercasing of *all* pronouns referring to Deity also is correct; just be consistent.)

Always incorrect, referring to Deity: Himself

Correct: Bible, biblical

Incorrect: bible, Biblical

Correct: None dares do it.
(Hint: “None” equals “no one.”)

Incorrect: None dare do it.

Correct: They do their own thing.
(Don’t introduce a number usage problem to solve a gender usage problem.)

Incorrect: Everyone does their own thing.

Correct/refined: as though

Incorrect/inelegant: as if

Correct/refined: concerning, regarding
(I do not judge, as though academically inferior, people who say, e.g., “As to that, we all are entitled to our own opinions and usages,” but in writing I find this an execrable usage, and these *are* tips to help you in writing papers for my courses. A word to the wise . . .)

Abominable: as to

Prune your prose judiciously:

Effective: Many people lived there.

Much less effective: There were many people who lived there.

Effective: He said she was alive.

Less effective: He said that she was alive.

Always check Turabian or Chicago for correct usage of ellipses:

Correct: The three dots themselves *always* are separated by two single spaces: . . .
What precedes and follows depends on what is left out of the quotation.

Always Incorrect: Microsoft Word’s default ellipses; they do *not* know this issue.

**Always place biblical references in the text, enclosed in parens, never as footnotes.
Always place punctuation after the second parenthesis, not before the first:**

Correct: “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). **Incorrect:** “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

These commonly are misused and/or misspelled--*always* check before submitting:
affect/effect; prophecy/prophesy; than/then; whose/who’s; might/may; to/too/two;
for/four/fore; Canaan; Isaac; Israel; Ezekiel; Brueggemann; canon; desert

These commonly are misused--*always* check before submitting:
“Jew/Jewish” instead of Israel/Israelite before end of Northern Kingdom, 721 B.C.;
“church” instead of Israel in Old Testament period; “Palestine” before A.D. 135