



B320 Old Testament History

3 credits. Prerequisites: B110 & B119

 Saskatoon Campus  Livestream  Video on Demand

March 3-7, 2025

Module D

Mon-Fri 9:00 am to 4:00 pm SK time

10:00 am to 5:00 pm ET

Ryan Ball, Ph.D.

ball.ryanb@gmail.com

Please note: This course includes reading before the module.

Course Goals

Course Description

This course explores Israel's life in the land through characters and events from covenant gift to covenant failure and restoration. This course focuses on either the pre-exilic corpus (Joshua-Kings) or the post-exilic corpus (Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah). Attention will be given to narrative art and theological themes, as well as critical questions of composition, history, and archeology. Consideration will be given to the text's anticipatory role in Christian Scripture.

This specific course instance will focus on books from the pre-exilic corpus (Joshua, Judges, Ruth) with attention also given to Esther.

Relationship to MCS-Horizon's Missions

To help equip Christian leaders for life and ministry, this course seeks to provide a learning community in which themes, topics, and issues in Scripture and their relation to life and ministry can be explored and God's truth applied. Through the study of God's word and actions in redemption history to accomplish his purposes, this course aims to demonstrate the Old Testament historical books as God's living word for the church today.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



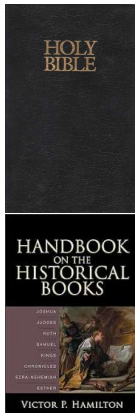
To demonstrate competency in **Biblical & Theological Literacy**, students will

1. Interpret the Old Testament Historical Books in light of their literary and socio-historical contexts and distinct theological perspective with the assistance of relevant secondary literature.
 - *Assessment:* Exegetical Paper; Thematic Study

2. Describe the key interpretive issues that are critical for understanding the Old Testament Historical Books.
 - *Assessment:* Exegetical Paper
3. Identify and explain key emphases and their significance within the Old Testament Historical Books.
 - *Assessment:* Reading Notes; Reflection Essay; Thematic Study
4. Explain how the theological witness of the Old Testament Historical Books speaks to the way we think, live, and minister today.
 - *Assessment:* Reflection Essay; Exegetical Paper; Thematic Study

Course Work

Required Readings



An English translation of the Bible. A translation that is more literal (e.g. LSB, NASB, ESV, CSB, etc.) is preferable to one that is more paraphrased (e.g. NLT, MSG, etc.).

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001. ISBN: 978-0801036149.

DTL: <https://thedtl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/884594928>

**While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.

Course Assignments and Activities

Part I: Pre-Module Assignments

1. *Reading Notes* – 15%

Before the module, students are to read Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Esther and write a paragraph (approx. 1/3 pg; 1/2 pg. max) on each book, detailing 1) the book's primary message/purpose for its first audience, and 2) the book's primary message/purpose for the church today. This should not be a summary of the book's plot line but a consideration of the larger picture. Please keep your paragraph on each book to the designated length—more is not better. Students are encouraged to reflect on what they would like to include in each paragraph and then articulate concisely.

In addition to the paragraph on each biblical book, students will write two critical observations and two questions that arise from each of the following passages:

- Jos 1:1-18 – God commissions Joshua
- Jos 7:10-26 – The sin of Achan
- Judg 11:29-40 – Jephthah's vow
- Judg 19:1-30 – A Levite and his concubine
- Ruth 1:6-18 – A journey of three women
- Ruth 3:1-18 – At the threshing floor
- Est 2:1-18 – Esther becomes queen
- Est 9:1-19 – The Jews destroy their enemies

These observations and questions should reflect meaningful engagement with the text. These passages—and student observations and questions—will be used for class discussion. Students are welcome to provide some context/explanation to their questions, but these should not be long. The four paragraphs (one for each book) and the observations and questions (two observations and two questions for each passage) should all be submitted as a single assignment.

- Related learning outcome: #3.
- **Assignment length:** 1/3 pg. per book; observations and questions will vary.
- **Due date:** Mar 2, 2025.

Part II: Post-Module Assignments

2. Reflection Essay – 20%

Students will read the chapters on Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Esther from Hamilton's *Handbook on the Historical Books* and will write a 1.5-2-page reflection essay on each biblical book (6-8 pgs. total). *The assignment should begin with a short initial statement confirming that the student has read the relevant chapters from Hamilton.* The reflections should be guided by the following questions: Now that the lectures have been completed and the course text read, do these books make more sense? Do you see various sections in a new light? Do you better see how the diverse parts fit together? What stands out to you now? What new insights have you gained through this reading? What questions remain for you about the book? These questions are not meant to constitute an outline but are rather illustrative of the type of questions the student should consider. *The reflection should demonstrate meaningful engagement with each biblical book, being sure to touch on some of the key emphases and their significance and how the message of these books speaks to us today.* Include citations in footnotes when paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting from Hamilton. For this assignment, no bibliography is necessary.

- Related learning outcomes: #3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 1.5-2 pgs./book; 6-8 pgs. total.
- **Due date:** Mar 17, 2025.

3. Exegetical Paper – 30%

Each student will write an exegetical essay on a select passage from Joshua, Judges, Ruth, or Esther. *Passages must be approved by the instructor in advance.* This paper will consist of three sections (please use the following headings for your paper and please note the page length/weight given to each section):

Part I: Context of the Passage (1 pgs.) In this first section, discuss the historical and literary context of the chosen passage. Ask the following types of questions: when

did it occur; who were the ruling powers at that time; were there specific events that occasioned the passage; who is the writer speaking to; etc. For the literary context, be sure to consider the more immediate literary context (it is connected to a preceding or following section?) as well as its larger literary context; that is, the place and function of this passage within the book as a whole. Note: this section is not a detailed examination of the passage itself; that will be the focus of the next section.

Part II: Examination of the Passage (4 pgs.) In this section, examine the chosen passage, covering its main point(s) and how it makes them, its literary structure/design and features, and its theological claims and implications. In the process, be sure to adequately address interpretive difficulties: describe the difficulty; outline and weigh the options; present an approach/resolution that helps to ensure correct interpretation. Note: since this section is a study of the passage itself, do not talk about Jesus or NT connections yet; save that for Part III.

Part III: Looking Forward (1 pg.) Discuss how the passage relates to the larger biblical narrative of God's redemptive work in history, how it relates to the NT and Christ's work, and how it speaks to the church today.

Students are encouraged to study the passage first by themselves before turning to secondary sources. Cite (engage) a minimum of five scholarly secondary sources. Include a bibliography.

- Related learning outcomes: # 1, 2, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 6 pgs.
- **Due date:** Mar 26, 2025.

4. *Thematic Study* – 35%

For the final paper in this course, students will write on a select theme/issue found in one or more of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, or Esther. Optional themes include the issue of violence and holy war, God's heart for foreigners, and God's acting in history. *Other themes are welcome but must be approved in advance by the instructor.* Students are encouraged to pursue a theme or question encountered in class or readings that draws their interest.

The student's essay will present the theme, analyze the key texts, outline any interpretive difficulties, engage with various views, and propose a helpful way forward. Strong papers will also give sufficient attention to the historical, literary, and canonical context of the theme. While students are encouraged to trace the theme into the NT, in conversation with Christ's work, and to apply it to the church today, please reserve such discussion for the final (smaller) portion of the paper. The majority of the study should focus on the theme in its OT context. Cite (engage) a minimum of five scholarly secondary sources. Include a bibliography.

- Related learning outcome(s): # 1, 3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 6 pgs.
- **Due date:** April 9, 2025.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is being offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have *some* different assignment due dates than in-class students:
 - *Reading Notes* due Mar 2, 2025 (no change).
 - *Reflection Essay* due Mar 26, 2025.
 - Students are encouraged to complete the reading for this assignment while working through the lecture videos (below).
 - *Exegetical Paper* due Apr 3, 2025.
 - *Thematic Study* due Apr 11, 2025.
- Students will watch the lectures according to the following schedule:
 - Day 1 Lectures and Report due Sat, Mar 8.
 - Day 2 Lectures and Report due Wed, Mar 12.
 - Day 3 Lectures and Report due Sat, Mar 15.
 - Day 4 Lectures and Report due Wed, Mar 19.
 - Day 5 Lectures and Report due Sat, Mar 22.
- By 11:59 pm on each of the dates noted above, VOD students will submit a short 2-3 min video to Padlet that 1) affirms that you watched the lecture; 2) summarizes on thing you learned that will help you reach the course learning outcomes; and 3) explains one question you had after watching the class recording. In lieu of a report, such as the first one, VOD students are encouraged to arrange a time to meet with the instructor on Zoom.
- In order to pass the course, VOD students must submit all of their VOD weekly submissions. These submissions are marked as pass/fail based on whether or not they demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the lecture content and in-class activities.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Component	Hours	Due Date	Assignment Weighting
Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	N/A
1. Reading notes	5 hrs	Mar 02	15%
2. Reflection essay	27 hrs	Mar 17	20%
3. Exegetical paper	18 hrs	Mar 26	30%
4. Thematic study	18 hrs	Apr 09	35%
Total =	98 hrs		

Assessment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Course Schedule

**The following schedule is a guideline. Adjustments may occur.*

Day	Time	Topics
Monday	9:00 – 9:30	• Course Introductions
	9:30 – 12:00	• Introduction to the OT Historical Books
Tuesday	1:00 – 4:00	• Introduction to Joshua
	9:00 – 12:00	• Joshua cont.
Wednesday	1:00 – 4:00	• Violence in the OT
	9:00 – 12:00	• Introduction to Judges
Thursday	1:00 – 4:00	• Judges cont.
	9:00 – 10:30	• Introduction to Ruth
Friday	1:15 – 4:00	• Ruth cont.
	9:00 – 12:00	• Introduction to Esther
	1:00 – 4:00	• Esther cont.

- First submissions of assignments will not be accepted after **April 11, 2025**.
- Revision week is **April 14-17** (April 18 is Good Friday).
- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after **April 17, 2025**.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the [MCS-Horizon](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Assignment Extension Request Form* on Populi and *before the due date*. Professors may grant extensions in the case of extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or a family emergency. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late submissions will be tracked across each student's program. If a student incurs multiple instances of late submissions, it will result in academic discipline, such as required tutoring, academic probation, failure of the course, or failure to qualify for graduation. Similar to standard human resource employment practices, students will receive warnings and conditions with increasing severity of academic discipline. If one assignment is submitted more than five days late, the student will fail the course.

Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Assignment Revisions

Students can generally submit up to two revisions for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward achieving competency.

MCS-Horizon College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, not earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment rubric. Once a student's assignment has met all competency requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. Likewise, a final course grade is not calculated until the end of the course. Students pass a course (with a B- or higher) only after they have demonstrated that they have *met or exceeded all competency requirements* for that course and, therefore, only after they have passed all assignments.

MCS-Horizon CBE Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
			A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated good achievement of all learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

If the student does not meet all competency requirements in a course and, therefore, does not pass all the assignments in a course, the course will not be sufficient to fulfill their program requirements at MCS-Horizon. Nevertheless, for transferability purposes, the student will receive a letter grade of C+ or below according to the scale below.

BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student was beginning to meet one or more learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
			F	0.0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Accessible Learning Services Information

MCS-Horizon aims to provide an accessible learning environment for all our students. If you would benefit from learning accommodations due to temporary or ongoing physical or mental health conditions or learning disabilities, please contact us as soon as possible to schedule a conversation. In all cases we ask that you provide current documentation of the disability or condition you wish to disclose. MCS-Horizon takes appropriate care to ensure confidentiality about any such disclosures. For more information, contact Wendy Holmes, MCS's Director of Academic Success (wendy.holmes@mcs.edu), or Richelle Bekkattla, Horizon's Library Technician and Academic Accommodations Coordinator (library@horizon.edu).

Class Attendance

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for, either on campus or through livestreaming with their camera on. A student must be present for the full duration of a class period in order to be registered as present for the class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss the equivalent of six hours of class (e.g., one day of a module course or two three-hours classes) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

MCS-Horizon encourages the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

Bibliography

Allen, Leslie C., and Timothy S. Laniak. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. Understanding the Bible Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Rev. ed. New York, NK: Basic Books, 2011.

Amit, Yairah. *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

Arnold, Bill T., and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2014.

Gibson, Scott M., ed. *Preaching from the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Harria, J. Gordon, Cheryl A. Brown, and Michael S. Moore. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. Understanding the Bible Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012.

Hess, Richard S. *Joshua*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2015.

- Hess, Richard S., Daniel I. Block, and Dale W. Manor. *Joshua, Judges & Ruth*. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary. Edited by John H. Walton. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.
- Hubbard Jr., Robert L. *Joshua*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Jobes, Karen H. *Esther*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Lau, Peter H. W. *The Book of Ruth*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Longman, Tremper III. *Confronting Old Testament Controversies: Pressing Questions about Evolution, Sexuality, History, and Violence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019.
- Longman, Tremper III, and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.
- Mathews, Kenneth A. *Joshua*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2023.
- Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *Ruth*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1999.
- Sloane, Andrew. *At Home in a Strange Land: Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Taylor, Marion Ann. *Ruth, Esther*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Edited by Tremper Longman III, and Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020.
- Way, Kenneth C. *Judges & Ruth*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016.
- Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Webb, William J., and Gordon K. Oest. *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?: Wrestling with Troubling War Texts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000.
- Wray Beal, Lissa M. *Joshua*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Edited by Tremper Longman III, and Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Younger Jr., K. Lawson. *Judges, Ruth*. Rev. ed. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.