

**11-626 Biblical Hermeneutics: The Book of Judges
Spring Semester 2014**

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Room 301
Wednesdays, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Course Objectives:

- introduction to biblical hermeneutics and the history of scholarly methods of biblical
- introduction to the newer trends in biblical interpretation such as ecological criticism and postmodern interpretations
- appreciation for the richness in interpretive possibilities that arise if a variety of historical and contemporary contexts are considered
- awareness of the theological and ethical implications of the book of Judges

Required Texts:

NRSV as published in the The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 4th ed. (2010) or the HarperCollins Study Bible (2006)

“Judges” in the New Interpreter’s Bible (NIB), Volume II (available online at ministrymatters.com)

Gale Yee, ed. Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007)

Athalya Brenner and Gale A. Yee, eds., *Joshua and Judges* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

Steven L. McKenzie and John Kaltner, eds., *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications* (Westminster John Knox, 2013)

Additional readings will be posted on the course Moodle site.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance and active participation 10%

Interpretation exercise

Choose a text in Judges, analyze it using specific hermeneutical and methodological understandings, relate meaning(s) to a congregational context and then consider possible sermon topics. You will make copies of your interpretation for class members and present your analysis during one of the scheduled class periods. 4-5 pages. 20%

Article analysis

Choose one of the articles on a text to be read during the course or a chapter in Brenner and Yee's book, consider its strengths/weaknesses and differences/similarities compared to conventional interpretations of the texts involved. Comparisons should be based on the Anchor Bible, The Old Testament Library or The International Bible Commentary, or another commentary approved by the professor.

Be sure to identify the type of method(s) used in the article as opposed to those used in the conventional commentaries. In addition, your analysis will be given as an oral presentation on the day that the article or chapter is discussed. 4-5 pages. 20%

Analytical paper covering specific theological, hermeneutical and/or methodological themes in the book of Judges.

10-15 pages. Due date: Wednesday, May. 19, 2014 50%

Template for the reading in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts*:

As you read the material on each method in this book, make sure you identify answers to the following questions:

- name of the scholar associated with the method
- the scholar's objective in developing the method
- the differences between this method and one other method
- the advantages of this method
- the disadvantages of this method
- any questions that surface as you consider this method

Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Our class discussions will supplement and integrate the readings rather than repeat that material. For this reason, missing a class damages the learning process. Consequently, two absences will result in the substantial lowering of your final grade. Missing more than 2 classes will mean that you are unable to pass the course. If you have to miss a class for any reason, please inform the professor in advance by telephone or email. Furthermore, to facilitate your engagement with the class, cellphones and earpieces must be turned off and put away, and your laptops should be used only for taking notes.

All course requirements must be completed to receive a final grade in the course. Furthermore, all assignments must be submitted on the date specified. Requests for extensions are strongly discouraged. Any extension granted for an assignment will result in the lowering of your grade.

Class Schedule

Feb. 5: Session 1

Introduction, NIB, 723-730

Fidele Ugira Kwasi, "Judges," in the Global Bible Commentary, ed. Daniel Patte (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 74-85.

Steven L. McKenzie, *How to Read the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46-64.

Brenner and Yee, Chapter 7

Feb. 12: Session 2

Judges 1:1-2:5

NIB, 731-749

Judges and Method, Chapter 1 (Introduction)

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 1 (Cultural-Historical Criticism)

Ellen F. Davis, "Critical Traditioning: Seeking an Inner Biblical Hermeneutic," in Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, eds., The Art of Reading Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 163-180.

Brenner and Yee, Chapter 4

Feb. 19: Session 3

Judges 2:6-3:6

NIB, 750-761

Judges and Method, Chapter 2 (Narrative Criticism)

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 2 (Disability Studies)

Stephen E. Fowl, ed., The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 26-69. [contributions by Steinmetz, Lindbeck, and Camp]

Feb. 26: Session 4

Judges 3:7-31

NIB, 762-773

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 3 (Ecological Criticism)

Judges and Method, Chapter 3 (Social Scientific Methods)

Randall Bailey, "Judges," *The Africana Bible*, ed. Hugh R. Page, Jr., and others (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 120-122.

March 12: Session 5

Judges 4:1-5:31

NIB, 774-790

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 4 (New Historicism)

Judges and Method, Chapter 9 (Gender Criticism)

Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, "Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4 and 5," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58 (Fall 1990): 389-411.

Brenner and Yee, Chapters 8, 9, and 10

March 19: Session 6

Judges 6:1-8:35

NIB, 791-811

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 5 (Bible and Popular Culture)

Daniel Patte, Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1-36.

Judges and Method, Chapter 5 (Structuralist Criticism)

Brenner and Yee, Chapter 11

March 26: Session 7

Judges 9:1-10:5

NIB, 811-821

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 6 (Postcolonial Biblical Criticism)

Danna Fewell, "Imagination, Method, and Murder," in Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Book, ed. Timothy K. Beal and David Gunn (London: Routledge, 1997), 132-152.

Judges and Method, Chapter 6 (Deconstructive Criticism)

April 2: Session 8

Judges 10:6-12:15

NIB, 821-840

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 7 (Postmodernism)

Thomas C. Romer, "Why Would The Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 77:27-38 (1998).

Alice Keefe, "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men," *Semeia* 61:79-97 (1993).

Valerie C. Cooper, "Some Place to Cry: Jephthah's Daughter and the Double Dilemma of Black Women in America," in Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible, ed. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan. *Semeia Studies* 44 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 181-192.

Judges and Method, Chapter 10 (Cultural Criticism)

Brenner and Yee, Chapter 12

April 9: Session 9

Judges 13:1-16:31

NIB, 840-862

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 8 (Psychological Biblical Criticism)

Susan Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero, Trickster, and Bandit: The Empowerment of the Weak," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52:608-624 (Oct 1990).

Brenner and Yee, Chapter 13

April 16: Session 10

Judges 17:1-18:31

NIB, 863-872

Judges and Method, Chapter 4 (Feminist Criticism)

McKenzie and Kaltner, Chapter 9 (Queer Criticism)

Randall Bailey, "He Didn't Even Tell Us the Worst of It!," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 59:15-24 (2005).

April 30: Session 11

Judges 19:1-21:25

NIB, 872-888

J. Cheryl Exum, "Raped by the Pen," in Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narratives (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 170-201.

Judges and Method, Chapter 8 (Postcolonial Criticism)

May 7: Session 12

Ken Stone, "Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject-Honor, Object-Shame?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67:87-107 (1995).

Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 35-67.

Phyllis Trible, "An Unnamed Woman: The Extravagance of Violence," in Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65-91.

May 12: Session 13

Judges and Method, Chapter 7 (Ideological Criticism)

Brenner and Yee, Chapters 14 and 15

Koala Jones Warsaw, "Toward a Womanist Hermeneutic: A Reading of Judges 19-21," in A Feminist Companion to Judges, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 172-186.

Yani Yoo, "Han-Laden Women: Korean 'Comfort Women' and the Women in Judges 19-21," *Semeia* 78:37-46 (1997).