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:

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


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


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)


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)

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)


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)


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)


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)


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)


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)


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)


April 30: Session 11
Judges 19:1-21:25
NIB, 872-888


Judges and Method, Chapter 8 (Postcolonial Criticism)

May 7: Session 12


May 12: Session 13
Judges and Method, Chapter 7 (Ideological Criticism)

Brenner and Yee, Chapters 14 and 15
