



Class Information

Day and Time: Monday 8:00 am – 10:30 am

Room Number: E209

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Joel Reemtsma

Instructor Email: jreemtsma@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 907.690.1423

Instructor Office Hours: NA (meet by appointment)

Course Description and Prerequisites

An advanced intensive study of selected books in the English Bible.

Course offerings are scheduled each semester. (Course may be repeated for credit when the Bible book differs; Prerequisite: OTS 501 or equivalent; Prerequisite may be taken concurrently: OTS 601 or equivalent.)

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course you should be able to:

1. Identify the main features of the content, structure, design, and narrative style of Judges;
2. Identify the main exegetical challenges within Judges and offer reasonable solutions;
3. Integrate geographic and cultural insights of the ancient Levant into interpretation of Judges;
4. Articulate general narrative principles of the Old Testament and their application in Judges;
5. Demonstrate proficiency in isolating and interpreting elements of Hebrew style;
6. Explain the message and purpose of Judges as well those of its major pericopes;
7. Apply theological truth from Judges to the modern Christian life.

Required Textbooks

The Holy Bible. Use your preferred version as long as it is a translation, not a paraphrase.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013.
(ISBN: 9780825425561)

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. 2nd Ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
(ISBN: 9780465025558)

Course Requirements and Assignments

A. Reading (10%)

Students are required to read the biblical book of Judges, the Judges portion of Chisholm's commentary, and the entirety of Alter's book *The Art of Biblical Narrative* according to the reading schedule (see below). In addition, several articles and book sections will be required (to be provided by the professor). All reading will be reported via online reading quizzes in CANVAS, unless otherwise noted. No late work will be accepted in the reading category.

B. Participation (10%)

Students will be evaluated based on their contribution to class discussion throughout the semester. So, they must be prepared to think critically about the text and reading and interact with their peers. Contributions may include insights, analogies, questions, observations, and more, but they must add value to the discussion. (Graduate level students will be expected to lead the way in a mixed classroom!) Since this is a subjective grade, students are free to check in with the professor periodically as to whether their participation is satisfactory. This grade will be assessed in conjunction with the exams. Excessive absence (more than one week) may result in a lower participation grade.

C. Exegetical Assignments (20%)

Students will be required to complete five of eight exegetical assignments that will be given. They may choose to complete all eight, but only the first five submitted will be graded. These assignments will be keyed to the following pericopes: Ehud (3:12–31), Deborah and Barak (4:1–5:31), Gideon (6:1–8:32), Abimelech (8:33–10:5), Jephthah (10:6–12:15), Samson (13:1–16:31), Micah and Dan (17:1–18:31), and the Civil War (19:1–21:25). Exegetical assignments are due on the day that these narratives are discussed in class (see course schedule), to be submitted electronically via CANVAS. No late work will be accepted, except by prior approval from the professor.

D. Exams (30%)

There will be two exams: a mid-term and a final exam. They will cover both course lectures and the reading. (Note that this is how you will be held accountable for paying attention to Alter!) All potential exam questions will be distributed beforehand in a study guide provided by the professor. The dates of the exams are as follows:

Mid-Term Exam: **October 14** Final Exam: **December 9**

E. Research Paper (15%)

Students will select one of the major narratives in Judges and write an 8–10 page research paper analyzing its style and composition according to principles discussed in class. This paper will demonstrate a familiarity with techniques of Hebrew composition and the way that they serve to advance narrative themes and theological aims. The student is not expected to provide original insight, but to synthesize observations from a variety of secondary sources in order to show the complexity and unity of the message of a particular pericope. Instructions and a grading rubric will be provided.

F. Book Report (15%)

Students will be required to demonstrate the ability to read academic literature closely and analytically by composing an 8–10 page report on Robert Alter’s book, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. (Participation in professional academic debate requires the ability to fairly summarize the views of others.) The paper will summarize Alter’s argument and conclusions in chapter-by-chapter fashion, noting possible deficiencies or areas of disagreement. The student will also discuss how the book has changed his or her perception of biblical narrative, and offer textual examples that could prove useful test-subjects for his or her new interpretive abilities.

**For both the book report and the research paper, students are encouraged to submit a draft version of their paper several weeks in advance for preliminary feedback.*

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students’ ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their professors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the grade was assigned, or the "I" will become an "F."

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the professor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Resources and Support

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at deanofstudents@criswell.edu.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, go to the library website, or email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu.

Writing Center: Students are encouraged to consult with writing tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence by practicing techniques of clear and effective writing. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Writing Center located on the first floor near the Computer Lab, or they can schedule an appointment by emailing writingcenter@criswell.edu or calling 214.818.1373.

Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Topic/Event	Reading Assignments
Aug 19	Intro to the Course; Contexts of Judges	
Aug 26	Contexts II; Intro to Judges	Alter: Preface & Ch. 1; Chisholm pp. 13–105
Sept 2	Labor Day (No Class)	
Sept 9	Introduction(s) to Judges	Judg 1:1–3:6; Alter: Ch. 2; Chisholm pp. 109–166
Sept 16	Othniel and Ehud	Judg 3:7–31; Alter: Ch. 3; Chisholm pp. 167–204
Sept 23	Deborah and Barak	Judg 4:1–5:31; Alter: Ch. 4; Chisholm pp. 205–248
Sept 30	Gideon	Judg 6:1–8:32; Alter: Ch. 5; Chisholm pp. 249–299
Oct 7	Abimelech	Judg 8:33–10:5; Alter: Ch. 6; Chisholm pp. 301–328
Oct 14	Mid-Term Exam	
Oct 21	Jepthah	Judg 10:6–12:15; Alter: Chs. 7; Chisholm pp. 329–370
Oct 28	Samson I	Judg 13:1–15:20; Alter: Ch. 8; Chisholm pp. 371–436
Nov 4	Samson II (Book Report Due)	Judg 16:1–31; Alter: Ch. 9;
Nov 11	Micah and Dan	Judg 17:1–18:31; Chisholm pp. 437–465
Nov 18	Civil War	Judg 19:1–21:25; Chisholm pp. 467–513
Nov 25	Fall Break (No Class)	
Dec 2	Course Summation (Research Paper Due)	
Dec 9	Final Exam	

**Please note that this course schedule is a plan, not a prophecy. That is, it is contingent upon our progress!*

Selected Bibliography

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary. Nashville: B & H, 1999.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.

Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Translated by Timothy J. Hallet. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns: 1997.

King, Philip J. and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.

Kuruville, Abraham. *Judges: A Theological Commentary on for Preachers*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017.

Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987.