Students are expected to log in Moodle before the first day of classes. To access the online forum, go to www.seminary.edu and click on Moodle (under Current Students). All registered students will be enrolled in Moodle automatically the week before the term begins.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will acquaint students with the history, theology, and critical study of the Former Prophets of the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The focus is the proper interpretation of its message to Israel and its abiding significance for the church.

OBJECTIVES
The student should leave the course with the following abilities. He or she will be able to:

1. demonstrate a basic understanding of the history and theology of the Former Prophets of the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

2. reflect on the Old Testament as an ancient document and the implications of this observation for interpretation.

3. understand the goals and methods of ancient (Israelite) historiography.

4. discuss the literary and artistic qualities of biblical narrative.

5. summarize the issues associated with writing a modern history of Israel.

6. understand how the exile and restoration of Israel serves as background for understanding the life and work of Jesus Christ.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The Bible in a modern translation, e.g., the NRSV, ESV, or NLT.


(Abbreviated *DOTHB* in the course schedule)


Topical Readings (See below)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Masters Students**

1. **Readings:** Students are expected to prepare for each session by reading the assigned pages on time as indicated in the course schedule, including:
   
   a. the biblical texts in translation. Prior reading does not substitute.

   b. the passages from Victor Hamilton’s *Handbook on the Historical Books* and all other assigned topical readings. These amount to the core instructional material for the class.

2. **Online Discussion:** Students are required to participate regularly in the online forums.

   The online forums are not “live.” The week is divided into two parts (A and B in the course outline). The professor posts starter questions online. Each student makes posts to the discussion forums, responding to questions by interacting with the readings, classmates, and any other materials provided by the instructor. The course expectation is **at least three substantive posts per student per week**. The posts constitute 35% of the grade and are judged by quality and critical engagement with the readings. Write enough to make a contribution but do not overwhelm your classmates with paragraph after paragraph in a single post. (See below for more guidelines.)

3. **Quizzes:** Students will take weekly quizzes consisting of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. You may not use course materials. You will have a limited amount of time to take each quiz. Therefore, you must read and review the readings in advance, because you will not have sufficient time to look up answers.

4. **Papers:** Students will write three small 5-6 page research papers. Further instructions including bibliography will be distributed in class.

   a. Describe the conventions of biblical historiography and their relevance for biblical interpretation. Paper due at the end of week 4.

c. Write a character analysis of king David, describing the positive and negative aspects of the biblical portrayal. How could someone with such significant moral failures be considered a good king? Students will interact with sections of Marti J. Steussy, *David: Biblical Portraits of Power* (University of South Carolina Press, 1998). Paper due at the end of week 10.

Papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, using 12-point Times font. Students must follow the style guidelines found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed.; University of Chicago Press, 2013). Please contact me early in the course if you have questions about what is expected.

**ONLINE FORUMS**

Each week students are required to make *three substantial posts* and *three response posts*.

The **substantial posts**—amounting to somewhere between 400 and 450 words—should be directed towards the starter questions provided by the instructor. These posts should draw from the assigned readings, which are the primary material for the course. Students are expected to demonstrate engagement with the readings by citing and evaluating them. Each substantial post should include a *follow-up discussion question* for further discussion.

The **response posts** should be directed toward the follow-up discussion questions provided by your classmates. They may be brief and need not cite the readings.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

The course will follow a set schedule during the week, progressing from Session A to Session B and culminating in the quiz at the end of the week. The discussion forums will be live beginning at 10:00am on Sundays and Wednesdays until 11:59pm two days later. You must take the quiz between 10:00am Friday and 11:59pm Saturday.

Session A: Sun 10:00am – Tue 11:59pm
Session B: Wed 10:00am – Fri 11:59pm
Quiz: Fri 10:00am – Sat 11:59pm

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

35%  Class Participation (Quality of Online Posts)
35%  Three Papers
30%  Nine Quizzes

**GRADING SCALE**

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3
COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction
A. The Old Testament
   LaSor, “The Pentateuch,” 3-6 [4]
   Optional: Hill & Walton, “Historical Overview of OT Times” [21]
   = 56 pp

B. The Former Prophets
   Topical Reading: Hill & Walton, “Introduction to Historical Books,” [9]
   Knoppers, “Introduction,” 1-12, skim 13-18 [12]
   DOTHB, “Deuteronomistic History” [10]
   = 42 pp

Week 2. History and Historiography
A. Is the Bible a History Book?
   Topical Reading: Long, “Introduction” [10]
   Long, ch. 1, “History and the Genre(s) of the Bible” [31]
   = 71 pp

B. Ancient History Writing
   Topical Reading: Walton, “Understanding the Past: Historiography” [21]
   Dutcher-Walls, Reading the Historical Books, ch. 5 [30]
   = 51 pp

Week 3. Biblical Narrative
A. Poetics of Biblical Narrative
   Content Reading: Berlin, Poetics and Interpretation, 13–22, 135–41 [17]
   Dutcher-Walls, Reading the Historical Books, ch. 2 [32]
   = 49 pp

B. Historicity
   Topical Reading: Davies, “Searching for ‘Ancient Israel’” [27]
   Halpern, “Erasing History” [12]
   = 50 pp

Week 4. Joshua
A. The Conquest of the Land
   Bible Reading: Joshua 1-12
   = 55 pp
B. The Distribution of the Land
Bible Reading: Joshua 13-24
Topical Reading: Long, ch. 4, “History and Modern Scholarship” [49]
= 53 pp

Week 5. Judges
A. The Judges of Israel (Part I)
Bible Reading: Judges 1-12
= 51 pp

B. The Judges of Israel (Part II)
Bible Reading: Judges 13-21
Topical Reading: Long, ch. 5, “History and Hermeneutics” [32]
= 53 pp

Paper #1 Due

Week 6. First Samuel
A. Samuel and Saul
Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 1-15
= 42 pp

B. Saul and David
Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 16-31
Topical Reading: Long, ch. 6, “The Rise of Saul” [23]
= 59 pp

Week 7. Second Samuel
A. The Reign of David (Part I)
Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 1-12
Content Reading: Hamilton, *Handbook*, 297-336 [40]
  *DOTHB*, “Davidic Covenant” [6]
= 46 pp

B. The Reign of David (Part II)
Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 13-24
Topical Reading: *DOTHB*, “David” [8]
  *DOTHB*, “Jerusalem” [9]
= 52 pp

Paper #2 Due
Week 8. First Kings
   A. King Solomon
      Bible Reading: 1 Kings 1-11
      Content Reading: Hamilton, Handbook, 379-409 [31]
      Topical Reading: DOTHB, “Solomon” [8]
                      DOTHB, “Solomon’s Temple” [7]
      = 46 pp

   B. The History of Israel and Judah (Part I)
      Bible Reading: 1 Kings 12-22
      Content Reading: Hamilton, Handbook, 415-430 [16]
      Topical Reading: DOTHB, “Kings and Kingship” [12]
                      Cross, Canaanite Myth, 274-89 [16]
      = 44 pp

Week 9. Second Kings
   A. The History of Israel and Judah (Part II)
      Bible Reading: 2 Kings 1-17
                      DOTHB, “Writing, Writing Materials & Literacy in the ANE” [8]
      = 41 pp

   B. The Last Years of the Judah
      Bible Reading: 2 Kings 18-25
      Topical Reading: DOTHB, “Isaiah” [5]
                      DOTHB, “Josiah” [5]
                      DOTHB, “Babylonian Period” [8]
                      DOTHB, “Zion Traditions” [7]
      = 38 pp

Week 10. The Future: Reality and Prospects
   A. Restoration and Israel’s Messiah
      Topical Reading: DOTHB, “Persian Period” [8]
                      Block, “My Servant David,” [40]
      = 48 pp

   B. Preaching and Teaching
      Topical Reading: Kaminski, “Preaching from the Historical Books” [16]
                      Walton, Bible Story Handbook [14]

Paper #3 Due
Course Evaluation in Moodle Due
TOPICAL READINGS (Listed according to the Course Schedule)


PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgment or documentation. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one’s own material copied, borrowed, or purchased from some other source. This includes, but is not limited to, downloading term papers from the internet, purchasing a paper from a “term paper mill,” reproducing parts or all of an article or book section, copying another student’s paper, and so on.

- Copying verbatim or taking ideas from a source without providing documentation (i.e., footnote or quotation marks).

- Copying verbatim or taking ideas from a source and providing fraudulent or misleading documentation.

- Copying verbatim from a source without using quotation marks or a block quotation. When copied material is not properly identified with quotation marks, readers are led to believe that the
material is the writer’s own words, when in fact it is someone else’s, which is the essence of plagiarism. Providing a footnote after copied material without using quotation marks is not adequate documentation and constitutes plagiarism.

Paraphrasing material that is too close to the original, whether documented properly or not. A paraphrase is unacceptable if it merely changes a few words or transposes phrases or sentences in the original source, but retains the bulk of the text as it originally appeared.

Since plagiarism is a form of claiming for ourselves what belongs to another, it constitutes an infringement on someone else’s intellectual property and is a form of stealing. It is a very serious violation of Christian ethics and raises profound questions about fitness for Christian ministry. The seminary takes these matters extremely seriously and will take disciplinary action against those who engage in plagiarism.

It is sometimes difficult to know whether or how to acknowledge and document certain kinds of material. When in doubt, consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., 2013, especially those sections dealing with using quotations and footnotes. Students are expected to know and follow the guidelines in Turabian. Ignorance of them is no excuse.

**POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES**

**NOTE:** All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account. Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

**Diploma/Certificate Student Course Requirements**
The amount of work required of Diploma/Certificate students will be at the discretion of the professor. Students will be responsible for contacting the professor about what assignments are required.

**Class Attendance Policy**
It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. A professor may set other attendance expectations. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will be absent. Attendance expectations are higher for online and intensive courses (see syllabus for specific requirements).

**Class Tardiness Policy**
The third time a student is late to the start of class, it will be counted as a class absence. It is also expected that students will return from a break by the time specified by the professor.

**Late Work Policy**
If a student cannot complete the work for a course by the due date listed on the syllabus, they must submit a “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form to the Registrar by 4:30 of the last day of the term. The form must be signed by the instructor and Dean of Students. The professor may set stipulations and grade reductions. In the absence of a formal request form, the student will receive a grade based upon work completed by the last day of the term.

**Turabian Format**
All papers, including footnotes and bibliography, must be submitted in the correct format according to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., 2013.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

**Electronic Format**
Unless otherwise specified by the professor, all work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

**Technology Use in the Classroom**
Unless it is directly tied to note-taking or research for the class, students are expected to refrain from using cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class.

**Course Evaluation in Moodle**
Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at [http://moodle.seminary.edu](http://moodle.seminary.edu). The evaluation will be open at the end of the course. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to [moodlehelp@seminary.edu](mailto:moodlehelp@seminary.edu).