

BLS 534 JUDGES & RUTH 2 Credits

Lecturer: Rev. Craig Olson

About Lecturer

Rev. Craig Olson, a staff with Campus Crusade for Christ since 1987, served in the campus ministry in his native New Zealand for 10 years as Campus Staff, Campus Director, and Administrator & Trainer for the staff training center (G.C.T.C.). He led mission trips of Kiwi students to Thailand and the USA. Since moving to Texas in 1997, he completed his Master of Theology (ThM) at Dallas Theological Seminary and served as the Asian Translation Coordinator for the Josh McDowell Ministry. In this role he has been responsible for seeing more than half a million Josh McDowell books distributed in six countries in Asia in nine different languages. Craig has been married to Brigitte for 17 years and they have two children.

Academic Year : 2009/10, 3rd Quarter (Jan 25 – Apr 30, 2010)
Day & Time : Wednesdays, 9.00 – 10.50 am
Dates : Jan 27
(dates could be Feb 3, 10, 24
subject to change) Mar 3, 10, 31
Apr 7, 14, 21
Venue : EAST ASIA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
1, Dorset Road, Singapore 219486. Tel: 6291-9744

CLASS SYLLABUS

Class Description

An exposition of the Old Testament historical books of Judges and Ruth from the English text. Attention will be given to historical, political, geographical and cultural background issues and the application of these books for Christians today. (2 hours)

How do you stand strong for Christ in a culture that is going downhill? The time of the Judges was just such a time in Israel's history when *"everyone did what was right in his own eyes"*. During this turbulent time a few people stood out and made a difference (Ruth, Deborah). Others started with promise, but finished poorly (Gideon, Samson). This class will examine the colorful cast of characters—the good, the bad, and the ugly—and seek to apply their lessons to our lives today.

Class Pre-requisites:

None

Objectives

By the end of the course the student should be able to ...

1. Understand and explain the historical and cultural background during the time of the Judges.

2. Understand and explain God's purposes for the nation Israel during this time and how they relate to His plan through history.
3. Identify and explain the key traits of characters in the books of Judges and Ruth that defined their life and their legacy.
4. Identify one personal character trait that needs growth and take steps to enhance it (if a strength) or limit it (if a weakness) in order to become a leader God can use effectively.
5. Teach or preach from the lives of the characters in Judges and Ruth with application to audiences today.

Textbook

Wood, Leon J., *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, (Wipf & Stock Publishers) 1998.

Class Schedule (January 25-April 30, 2010)

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments due	√
1	27 Jan 2010	Syllabus & Introduction		
2	3 Feb 2010	Othniel & Ehud	Wood 1-17, 33-43, 92-112 Judges 1-3	
3	10 Feb 2010	Deborah & Barak	Wood 161-179, Judges 4-5	
	17 Feb 2010	No Class	Chinese New Year Break	
4	24 Feb 2010	Gideon (& Abimelech)	Wood 182-199, Judges 6-9	
5	3 Mar 2010	Ruth	Book Chart Wood 201-250, Ruth	
6	10 Mar 2010	Jephthah	Wood 253-274, Judges 10-12	
	17 Mar 2010	No Class	Mid-term Break	
7	24 Mar 2010	No Class	Lecturer unavailable	
8	31 Mar 2010	Samson	Wood 278-299, Judges 13-16	
9	7 Apr 2010	Samuel & Wrap up	Wood 302-336, Judges 17-21	
10	14 Apr 2010	Presentations	Wood 363-404	
11	21 Apr 2010	Presentations	Book Report with Personal Growth Report	
	28 Apr 2010	No Exam	Exam week	

Course Requirements

A. Reading

1. Read through the books of **Judges** and **Ruth** as per the schedule below.
2. Read the assigned Chapters from **Wood** as per the schedule below. Place a tick mark (√) in the schedule for each reading assignment completed **before** the class when it is due.

B. Personal Growth

1. You will identify one area in your life that requires personal growth. It may be a strength that you want to enhance, or a weakness that you desire to overcome or limit its impact.

2. Read one non-fiction book of your choice in your area of personal growth and write a two-page book report. The book report will identify the issue(s) the book addresses and summarize the solutions in the book. It will conclude with a personal evaluation of the book and a personal application. The lecturer (or the chaplain) can provide suggestions for books to read.
3. You will spend time each week working on this area throughout this quarter so that this area can be used by God to minister to others. This time may be in an accountability or counseling relationship with another person, it may be in a small or large group, or it may be in personal reflection and journaling. You will need to record on your book report that you have spent time each week working on this area.

C. Assignments

1. Prepare a book chart on either Judges or Ruth. This should be on one page (though it may fold out), in colour, and display the main sections, subsections, themes, characters, dates if applicable, key verses, and applications if applicable. You should attach a cover page and a bibliography. Instructions are in the Appendix of this syllabus, and further instruction will be given in class.
2. Write a research paper of 5-7 pages in length and a 15-minute class presentation of this paper. At least three scholarly sources should be quoted. The paper should include a cover page and bibliography and be in Turabian format (See the *"Users Guide to Term Paper Writing"* for guidelines.) This can be done as a group project, and can take the form of one of the following:
 - a. A 15-minute sermon (includes a sermon outline and the written out sermon complete with illustrations, introduction and homiletical principle.)
 - b. A 15-minute devotional such as would be given on a Christian retreat or mission trip. (Includes personal illustrations and applications)
 - c. A 15-minute lesson as would be taught to an Adult Sunday School class in a church setting. (Should include a lesson outline handout, a PowerPoint presentation, and time for Q&A)

Examples of topics include:

- a. A study of one of the characters in Judges or Ruth. What decisions did they make and what impact did they have on their society? What was their legacy? What lessons can we draw from their example?
- b. A sermon from one pericope in Judges or Ruth.
- c. Why did God use the system of "judges" to lead the nation of Israel for more than 300 years? Why did God not institute a King right after the conquest? Why did God "change his mind" and institute a King after this time?
- d. How do you explain Yahweh's command, illustrated in Judges, to conquer and kill the peoples living in the land of Canaan? Does this not contradict Jesus' blessing on peacemakers (Matt 5:9), or the assertion that God is love (1 John 4:8), or God's desire to see all people saved (2 Pet 3:9)?
- e. A presentation of your personal growth area. This would include the background to the issue for yourself and other Christians, the books consulted and solutions proposed by these books, and applications for yourself and others.

- f. Choose one of the confusing passages at the end of Judges (Micah and the Danites, the Levite and his concubine, or finding wives for the Benjamites), and explain its meaning and relevance. Why is this passage included in Scripture? What is the message for Christians today?
- g. How does the story of Ruth illustrate God's loyal love and His desire to redeem all people?

D. Attendance

The class meets on Wednesday mornings from **9:00 am to 10:50 am**. Students are expected to attend all classes according to the policies in the student handbook. Coming to class *tardy* (more than 5 minutes late) twice will be considered one hour of unexcused absence. Attendance will be recorded and is part of the final grade.

E. Grading System

Reading	20%
Book Review & Personal Growth	20%
Judges or Ruth Book Chart	30%
Class Presentation	30%

F. Late Assignments/Unacceptable work/Plagiarism

Late assignments will receive grade reductions of 3% per day late, unless prior permission is received from the lecturer. For work that is unacceptable (including plagiarism), the student will be given one opportunity to re-submit the assignment, or a similar assignment, with a grade reduction.

Bibliography

- Barker, Kenneth L, and John R Kohlenberger III. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Abridged Edition: Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Craigie, Peter C. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979.
- Cundall, Arthur E, and Leon Morris. *Judges and Ruth (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.
- Davis, Ralph. *Judges: Such A Great Salvation (Focus on the Bible)*. Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2007.
- Gundry, Stanley N, C. S. Cowles, Eugene H. Merrill, Daniel L. Gard, and Tremper Longman III. *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.
- Radmacher, Earl, Ronald B. Allen & H. Wayne House (Ed.s). *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.
- Walvoord, John F, and Roy B Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2002.

Younger Jr., K Lawson. *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges, Ruth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002.

Appendix: 12 Steps to a Great Book Chart

- Read the book. Repeatedly!
- Print it out and highlight key terms and major divisions.
- Label major divisions and sub-divisions with a descriptive title or summary.
- Come up with a theme, title, and summary sentence for the book. A summary sentence has two parts: subject (what is it about?), and compliment (what does it say about the subject?)
- Ask and answer the “six faithful friends”: What? When? Where? Why? How? Who?
- Research any background considerations: Historical, geographical, political, language, and cultural issues.
- Is there a key verse? Key word? Key phrase?
- What theological truths are being taught or illustrated in this book?
- Hand-draw a rough draft of your book chart.
- Fill in the details.
- Think about how to best illustrate or capture the content you have summarized. (What colour scheme? Any clip art? Design considerations?)
- Design your book chart on the computer using Excel or a similar program.