Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Jacksonville  
OT 637: Exegesis in Conquest Narratives Syllabus  
Summer 2015

Course Instructor:  Dr. Sarah Lebhar Hall  
sglhall@hotmail.com

Class Meeting Times:  
Fridays: 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.  
Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Weekend 1: June 19-20  
Weekend 2: July 17-18  
Weekend 3: Aug 14-15

Course Objectives:  
1. To equip students to observe and interpret Hebrew narrative in order that they might effectively teach and preach it. This class will devote a good deal of attention to teaching and practicing exegetical method.  
2. To increase students’ proficiency in Hebrew language, through reading and translation.  
3. To explore the narrative features and theological significance of the conquest narratives in Joshua 1-11.

Required Texts:  
- *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Robert Alter  
- *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Hebrew Bible)  
- A Lexicon (either Brown, Driver, Briggs or Holladay)  
(The Hebrew Bible and lexicons are available electronically in Bibleworks, Logos, etc.)

Selected Articles/Chapters: (Scanned copies of these articles will be made available online.)  
- “Joshua,” from *Introduction to the Old Testament* by T. Longmann and R. Dillard  
- Selected chapters from Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?*  
- Excerpt from Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace.*  
- “Classification of the Major Figures,” by Allen P. Ross.

Please Note:  
There will be some class assignments that require use of reference works available in the library.  
If you are not resident in Jacksonville, please plan to (a) spend some study time in Jacksonville after or between sessions, (b) locate a theological library closer to home, or (c) make use of the excellent inter-library loan system of the public library.
Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Graded exercises


- **Required Reading** (10%): At the end of the semester, students will sign and submit a statement indicating what percentage of the required course reading they have completed.

- **Video Lectures** (10%): At the end of the semester, students will submit a written statement indicating what percentage of assigned online lectures they have viewed.

- **Hebrew Translation** (20%): Students will submit their own translations of selected passages, along with parsing information for each verb. The translation of passages is to be completed according to the class schedule below. Please bring two copies of each translation to class: one to be submitted at the beginning of class, and one to be used for class discussion.

- **Exegetical Exercises** (30% of grade). Please bring two copies of each exercise to class: one to be submitted at the beginning of class, and one to be used for class discussion.

- **Exegesis Project** (20% of grade). Details of this project will be discussed at the first class session. **Due Sept. 14.** Note: *All students must provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope at the last class meeting in order to have their graded coursework and project returned* (unless it is submitted electronically).

- **NB:** **Class participation** may affect the student’s final grade. This includes completing assignments *prior to* each session, and being prepared to contribute accordingly to class discussions.

Attendance

Attendance at all class sessions is required. According to seminary policy, any absence of more than three hours will result in a letter grade penalty for the course.

Grades

Letter grades for all work will be assigned according to the following guidelines:

- A+ = 98-100
- A = 94-97
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 84-86
- B- = 81-83
- C+ = 79-80
- C = 76-78
- C- = 72-75
- D+ = 69-71
- D = 66-68
- D- = 62-65
- F = 0-61

All incompletes (I) and withdrawals (W) must meet the deadlines of the Registrar’s office, and follow the guidelines of the catalogue.
Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #1 (To be completed before June 19)

• **Read Joshua chapters 1-11 in English, three times.**
  o The first time through, read it all in one sitting.
  o The second time through, read it out loud (or, listen to it, perhaps using the audio feature at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))
  o The third time through, make note of your observations. Write down (or type up) *anything* that catches your attention, raises a question, strikes you as important, or seems to be a repeated theme. If you like, make a list of the characters in the narrative. Bring these observation notes to class; you won’t need to turn them in, but I will check to see you’ve done this, and it will aid your class participation.

• **Read chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 of *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Write an informal 1-2 page reflection paper, explaining which concepts you found most helpful or interesting. If you like, note whether you found any of his specific interpretations particularly convincing or unconvincing. Alter is a Jewish literary scholar who does not have a high view of the inspiration of Scripture, so you will probably not agree with his perspective entirely. Focus your attention on his astute observations about the way that Hebrew narrative operates.

• **Read Longmann and Dillard’s introductory chapter** on Joshua (posted on the class website).

• **Translate Joshua chapter 1 in Hebrew.** Have your dictionary on hand, but do as much as possible without the help of electronic resources or other exegetical aids; on the parsing guide, note which verbs you needed help to identify, parse, and translate. The chapter is short, so if you translate three verses a day, you’ll have it done in a week.

• **Watch the assigned short audio/video lectures** posted on the class webpage. There are lecture outlines posted to accompany the videos. They cover the following topics: Old Testament ‘timeline’; Intro to the prophets (*Nevi’im*); Textual Criticism.

Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #2 (Due July 17)

• **Translate Jonah 1 (including parsing all verbs) and analyze its literary features** (detailed assignment instructions will be distributed in class).

• **Translate Joshua 7 (parse all verbs) and analyze its literary features.**

• **Text Criticism exercise** (details given in class).

• **Watch the assigned video lectures:** Historical/Cultural Background, Word Studies, Figures of Speech.

• **Read “Classification of the Major Figures”** by Allen Ross.
Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #3 (Due August 14)

- Translate Joshua 5-6:5 from Hebrew into English (parse all verbs).
- Complete a word study on the word “reproach” in Joshua 5: 9.
- List and analyze all the figures of speech in Joshua 5:1-6:5.
- Historical background assignment on Joshua 5:1-6:5.
- Complete the assigned reading on the theology of conquest/judgment (Wright, Copan, Volf).
- Watched the assigned audio/video lectures: “The perspective of a terror victim”; The problem of Judgment; Exegetical outlines: Biblical Theology; Expositional outlines; Applications. NB: The audio lecture by Kay Wilson includes some strong language; you will not want to listen to this with young children around.

Post-Class Assignments: (Due September 14)

- Submit the following statements (posted online)
  - Percentage of online lectures watched
  - Percentage of required readings completed
- Submit final exegesis project on Joshua 9 (details will be given in class).

Course Structure (for class time together)

**Weekend 1:**
Introduction to Joshua
Joshua 1 & 2
Grammar and Syntax
Literary Features
Textual Criticism

**Weekend 2:**
Joshua 3-6, 8, 10
Historical/Cultural Background
Word Studies
Figures of Speech

**Weekend 3:**
Theology of the Conquest
Exegetical Outlines
Biblical Theology
Expositional Outlines
Application