Course Description:

0OT5001 Judges - Esther, 2 hours
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:
Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

An analysis of each book in this section of the canon from a literary, historical, and theological perspective. Each book is placed in the context of redemptive history to show its relationship to what has gone before and how it furthers the progress of redemption, which ultimately leads to Christ. There is an emphasis on how to interpret narrative and characters in a story.

Course Objectives:

- To understand the structure and message of each book covered in this course
- To understand how each book fits into the progress of the unfolding history of God’s people
- To understand how these books lay a foundation for the coming of Christ
- To become comfortable teaching and preaching from narrative, with special attention given to how to deal with characters in a story

Required Textbooks:


(This chart can be found at the BMH website (www.bmhbooks.com).

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

**Online Student Handbook:**  
The Online Student Handbook (can be downloaded here) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

**Summary of Requirements:**  
1. Listen to all recorded Lectures  
2. Complete all Readings  
3. Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and the professor)  
4. Take the Final Exam  
5. Submit Research Paper  
6. Submit Biblical Books Reading Requirement  
7. Submit Mentor Report/Course Application Paper
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:

Dr. Richard P. Belcher is the Professor of Old Testament and Academic Dean of RTS Charlotte. He is an ordained minister in the PCA and pastored an urban nondenominational church in Rochester, NY for ten years before pursuing the Ph. D. This pastoral experience in an unusual and challenging setting gives him great insight into the practical, modern issues that will be faced by future pastors studying with him at RTS. He graduated from Covenant College and received his M. Div from Covenant Seminary. He also received an S.T.M. from Concordia Theological Seminary, and his Ph. D. is from Westminster Theological Seminary. He has served as stated supply for numerous churches in the area since coming to RTS Charlotte in 1995.

Publications by Dr. Belcher:


Forum Discussions (15%):
The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
   A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
   B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student’s answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts =10 total posts).
   C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.

2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
   • A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examination (Final 35%):
There will be one exam with three parts. Part 1 includes outlines of the Biblical books included in the document titled “Outline of the Historical Books”. Part 2 will be the identification of key historical terms from the readings and the lectures. Students will be given the key terms ahead of time in the Course Glossary. Part 3 will be a series of essays (3) based on the lectures.

The exam for this course will be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (40%):
The research paper is required that will focus on a character of a narrative. See section titled “Research Paper Instructions” in this syllabus for more instructions.

Reading Report (5%):
The student must complete all of the required reading and submit a reading report acknowledging how much of the required reading they have completed. This report will be submitted in the Canvas classroom.
Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an RTS Global degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another RTS campus (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:
Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education
2101 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 900-1257
1-855-854-6920
FAX: (704) 366-9295
E-mail: dess@rts.edu
Web site: www.rts.edu/distance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson One</th>
<th>Lesson Two</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreting Narrative: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives</td>
<td>Kingship: the Restoration of Human Dominion</td>
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<td>Lesson Three</td>
<td>Lesson Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Judges: Israel’s Failed Mission</td>
<td>The Downward Spiral of the Canonization of Israel</td>
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<td>Lesson Five</td>
<td>Lesson Six</td>
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<td>Ruth: Covenant Loyalty Brings Covenant Blessings</td>
<td>Samuel and the Crisis of Leadership</td>
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<td>Lesson Seven</td>
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<td>Saul: a King Like the Other Nations</td>
<td>David: God’s Choice for a King</td>
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<td>Lesson Nine</td>
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<td>David: the King After God’s Own Heart</td>
<td>Solomon: the Worldwide Glory of God’s Kingdom</td>
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<td>Lesson Eleven</td>
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<td>Elijah: the Prophetic Fight Against Idolatry</td>
<td>Elisha: Yahweh’s Power to Deliver</td>
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<td>Covenant Curse: the Exile of the Kingdoms</td>
<td>Ezra: Laying the Foundation for Restoration</td>
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<td>Lesson Fifteen</td>
<td>Lesson Sixteen</td>
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<td>Nehemiah: the Need for Continuing Reform</td>
<td>Esther: the Hidden Providence of God</td>
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<td>Lesson Seventeen</td>
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<td>Chronicles: Looking to the Past in Hope for the Future</td>
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The paper must deal with a character in one of the narratives in Judges to Esther, whether a judge, king, prophet, leader, or some other fairly major character. The paper should cover how the author portrays the character (characterization) and what the author is trying to convey through this particular character in the narrative. It would be helpful to present a misuse of the character or another view of the character as a contrast to your development of the character.

The following questions may need to be addressed in the paper:

a. What function does the narrative serve in the context of the book?

b. What major idea is the author of the narrative trying to establish?

c. What is the meaning of the narrative to the original reading audience?

d. What major OT concepts, institutions, or ideas does the character relate to or develop?

e. Is there any legitimate connections to Christ in your character or narrative?

f. What is the meaning of the character for God’s people today?

The following are criteria that will be used to evaluate the paper:

a. Cogency of argument - is there a thesis statement, how well does the argument hang together, and how well are pertinent and fundamental points brought out?

b. Discussions of historical context, genre, and redemptive history (where these are appropriate, but do not go overboard); just give the reader enough information to understand your paper. Some issues, like authorship, can be omitted or issues and bibliography related to authorship can be given in footnotes.

c. The use of sources: this is a research paper so avoid study Bibles as a source; read as many commentaries as you can, including conservative commentaries, those from a critical perspective, and at least one older commentary, such as Calvin, Geneva series, etc. At least one journal article must be cited. Research is important and can be included in footnotes. Think of at least 8 sources.

d. Do not make a Scripture reference as a footnote, but put it in parenthesis in the paper.

e. The paper should be 10-15 pages, double-spaced, pages numbered, and with one inch margins on all sides, except the left margin should have a 1 1/4 inch margin.

f. You are expected to use as much Hebrew as you are able.

g. Use the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.

h. Don’t leave blank space between paragraphs
Here are sample footnote references that you need to follow or you could lose points on your paper. These footnotes follow the SBL Student Handbook. The following examples give sample first references for books, journal articles, and an article in a book, followed by second references to a work, which are shortened:


Second footnote references shortened:

5Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 122.

6Howard, “The Case for Kingship,” 34.


# Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** Judges Through Esther  
**Professor:** Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Student Learning Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mini-Justification</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Teach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>MAR Specific SLO</strong></td>
<td>An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society</td>
<td>None</td>
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