

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice.
The information below is provided as a guide for course selection
and is not binding in any form.

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

BI-6625 Studies in Old Testament Historical Books, 3 credit hours

Course Description

This course is an examination and utilization of various interpretive methods employed in the study of Old Testament historical books. Emphasis placed on the development of skills and techniques in analysis of historiography, the exposition of theological themes from Old Testament historiography, the use of ancient and modern sources in the interpretation of historiography, and the relevance of the relation between history and historiography for interpretation. Study focused on one of the Old Testament historical books.

Course Objectives

1. **Describe** and locate the basic content, key themes and the flow of the OT Historical Books within the OT canon [Performance and Action]
2. **Express** how key historical, archaeological, geographical, structural, and cultural background issues affect the historiography of the Historical books [Judgment and Design]
3. **Exegete** a passage from the OT historical books by utilizing a variety of methods (e.g., literary, canonical, discourse analysis, rhetorical, linguistic, form, historical/cultural) and by appropriately using digital resources in the process [Performance and Action]
4. **Utilize** literary approaches to the interpretation of the OT historical books [Performance and Action]
5. **Integrate** biblical knowledge of the historical books into a ministry setting [Commitment and Identity]

Course Textbook(s) and/or Supporting Information

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

NOTE: Additional content or links to Internet content may be required and will be provided in the course.

Assignments (what student does for a grade)

Guideline for the Discussion Board: Post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Friday, 11:59pm CT). Then read and respond to at least **TWO** of your classmates' initial posts by the end of the week (Monday, 11:59pm CT).

Standard for Written Papers: All papers must be in **Turabian** style. Each page should be approximately 300 words, 12-pt. Times New Roman font on double-spaced lines with 1" margins. (Therefore, a 2-page paper is approximately 600 words; a 3-page paper is approximately 900 words, etc.) Here is a guide to Turabian style: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

1-1 Applying History Reflection (Blog): In an approximately 750-word blog (1.5 pages single-spaced in a Word document), explain how this week’s readings on the CONTEXT of the historical books have challenged or expanded your understanding of how to interpret the historical books.

What was new to you and how does this connect to your past, present, or prospective ministry plans? What questions do you have? Is there anything you disagree with?

Please comment on at least one other student’s blog.

1-2 Understanding Historical Details “One-Pager”: Create a one-page handout that you could use for a Bible study or Sunday school class of young adults (21-30) that concisely: (1) surveys the kinds of contextual details that exist in historiography; and, (2) explains why each are important for interpretation. Your handout should be easily readable; include images, color, and aesthetic formatting.

2-1 How Are the Historical Books Different? (Video): In a 6-8-minute video, or a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper, explain how the historical books are different from other types of books in the OT/NT. Consider this question from a variety of angles:

- Their subject matter
- The process of interpreting them
- Theological themes
- How they are applied to the Christian life

Draw from readings AND prior learning. Your video should demonstrate organization and clarity of communication.

2-2 History: Science or Art? (Blog): In a 500-word blog, assess what Long means, when he says:

“Historiography involves a creative, though constrained, attempt to depict and interpret significant events or sequences of events from the past” (87).

To fully assess what he is saying, you will need to interact with his arguments in support of this statement. Do you agree? Why or why not?

3-1 “We Believe” Assignment: Articulate what you believe about biblical history in conversation with the alternative beliefs available today. This assignment has two parts:

Part 1: Drawing from the readings this week AND your own research, write a 100-word doctrinal statement that concisely summarizes what you believe—and do not believe—about the historicity of biblical historiography. Address some of the major objections covered in this week’s readings.

Part 2: Then, in a **2-to-3-page essay**, provide support for your claims AND explain their importance to the life of the church. Include citations from class readings and at least 2 other academic, published resources.

3-2 Answering Critical Scholarship: Do some research using ATLA or EBSCO library databases, and find a published book, monograph, or essay that takes a critical view of the historicity of the historical books. If you are having trouble finding a resource, you may use any of the articles or authors referred to (and critiqued) in your readings this week.

In a **2-to-3-page paper**, respond to this published literature by assessing its claims about the historicity of biblical historiography and presuppositions about the nature of Scripture.

4-1 Observing Detail in the Text: In a **five (5) page essay**, examine the literary elements in Ruth and, if applicable, describe how each contribute to the meaning and message of the book.

Observe and include as many of the following as you can (those marked with a * are mandatory). You must include at least one (1) of the non-required key elements.

- Setting*
- Characterization* (Ruth, Boaz, Naomi)
- Plot*
- Discourse Structure
- Dramatic Structure* (summarize)
- Paneled Sequences
- Chiasmus
- Overlapping Accounts and Flashbacks
- Quotation and Dialogue*
- Gaps and Ambiguity*
- Narrator Authority*
- Macroplot
- Intertextuality:
 - Foreshadowing
 - Parallelism & Narrative Typology
 - Allusion
 - Echoing
 - Repetition of Keywords*

4-2 Word Study: Utilizing your tools in Logos Bible Software, perform a word study on the Hebrew word גאל (g'al), or "redeemer," in Ruth. This is a key word that figures prominently throughout the book. Examine the various uses of the root in Ruth and also throughout the OT. Based on your study, write a two (2) page paper with the following outline:

- Analyze the semantic range of the term in the OT
- Examine the uses of the word in the book
- Reflect upon on the meaning of the term for Ruth as a whole.

5-1 OT Character Study: Write a **three (3) page** character study of ONE of the characters in Ruth.

Evaluate the author’s rendering of them in the text and answer the following questions:

1. How do they contribute to the overarching plot of the narrative?
2. Are they static or dynamic characters?
3. What is their interaction like with the other characters in the narrative, including God?
4. How is the author’s presentation of them supposed to impact the reader (i.e. what is the thrust of the application of this text for the OT and NT believer)?

NOTE: You will need to cite sources for this paper. Include at least two citations of reputable and recent academic resources (e.g., published book, commentary, journal article) per page. Obviously, class readings are excellent sources for this paper, but other reputable sources may be utilized as well. Please note that unpublished online resources are not considered academically credible (i.e., Wikipedia, creationmuseum.org, Constable’s Notes, etc.). Bible citations are necessary for this paper, but they do not count towards your “two citations per page” requirement.

5-2 Interpretive Method (Blog): In a **500-word blog**, defend a position on diachronic vs. synchronic methods for interpreting narrative texts. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each position from your own faith perspective. What is at stake for you? How do you respond, as a believer, to the critical challenges in certain texts? Finally, weigh and critique Chisholm’s proposed “third way” methodology.

6-1 Interpreting Themes: What place does biblical theology or themes have for the interpretation of individual passages? Should one focus on the meaning of a passage solely by itself, or is there a web of intertextual meaning beneath the surface?

For example, consider the final word in Ruth: “David.” This could be an incidental detail or it could be a hint to the overall message and purpose of the book. Is the Holy Spirit, through the biblical author, tapping into themes or theology elsewhere in the Canon?

In either a four (4) page paper or a 10-slide PowerPoint presentation, defend a position on the purpose of the word “David” at the end of Ruth.

- Use one half of your paper/presentation to support your position from Ruth and the OT. Is “David” a significant enough theme/figure in the OT to infer a certain meaning from its mention, and why (not)?
- Use the other half to explain your method—i.e., how does biblical theology and/or themes factor into biblical interpretation? Cite at least 3 sources.

If you choose to do a PowerPoint, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Produce a presentation that you could use in a ministry setting.
- Submit your presentation as a .pdf or .ppt file.
- Be concise in your slides and use the presenter's notes tool to explicate your presentation.

7-1 Mapping the Message (Worksheet): Choose a portion of the book of Ruth (or all of it) that you would like to prepare to teach.

Use the "Mapping the Message Worksheet" to complete and submit this assignment. Using Chisholm's methodology in chapter 5, in a single worksheet, so the following:

1. Identify the passage you have selected
2. Provide short answers to the four questions he suggests for finding theological principles (p 190; under heading "Finding the Principles").
3. List at least two (2) homiletical trajectories (p 196; below heading "Applying the Principles").
4. Synthesize these ideas into one single summary statement (p 197)

*Note: this process is summarized on the final page of chapter 5, p 198.

7-2 McCall Evaluation: Write a **two (2) page** paper evaluating the McCall essay from week 6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of McCall's paper? What benefits can be gained from Critical Biblical Scholarship? What drawbacks are there? Please use Turabian format.

8-1 Cole Evaluation: Write a three (3) page paper evaluating Graham A. Cole's article "The Perils of a 'Historyless' Systematic Theology." What are the perils of a historyless systematic theology? What are the strengths and weaknesses of Cole's arguments?

8-2 Reflection Paper: Much of the Bible is history; the importance of knowing how to defend, interpret, and apply biblical history cannot be understated. In a reflection paper, describe some of the key lessons you have learned in this course and integrate them with other areas of ministry and Bible study, such as theology, ethics, hermeneutics, homiletics, and spiritual growth.

Start by reading over the course objectives. What have you achieved? How does this learning compliment, or strengthen other objectives in your courses or program? Your paper should be two (2) pages. (Since this is a personal reflection, you do not have to use outside resources.)

Assessments

Assessments (# in parentheses)	% of Total
Discussions (wks. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8) = 5	18
Small Assignments (1-2, 3-2, 4-2, 7-2, 8-1) = 5	25
Large Assignments (2-1, 3-1, 4-1, 5-1, 6-1, 7-1) = 6	42
Reflective Assignments (1-1, 2-2, 5-2, 8-2) = 4	15
Total:	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Description
A	96 – 100	Exceptional work
A-	94 – 95	Excellent work
B+	92 – 93	Very good work
B	89 – 91	Good work
B-	87 – 88	Above average work
C+	83 – 86	Average work
C	79 – 82	Work needs improvement
C-	75 – 78	Minimally acceptable work
F	< 75	Unacceptable work