

**BSCM3313 OT INTERPRETATION: RUTH & ESTHER**  
**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary**

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus is intended to give the student a general idea of the content, format, and textbooks used for this class. The professor will submit a full syllabus at the beginning of the class which will contain a course schedule and the instructor's information.

### **Course Description**

This purpose of this course is to correctly interpret the books of Ruth and Esther. Pertinent historical information and introductory matters will be discussed. The theological implications of the texts will also be explored.

### **Student Objectives**

The student will:

1. be introduced to biblical historical narratives and literary features of biblical narrative;
2. understand the historical background in order to interpret the books of Ruth and Esther;
3. be able to interpret the entire texts of Ruth and Esther;
4. discern key themes found in the books of Ruth and Esther;
5. discover contemporary applications for the truths and theological insights found in the books of Ruth and Esther; and
6. be challenged to internalize the truths of Ruth and Esther in his/her life.

### **Course Textbooks**

The Bible. Any of the following translations are acceptable: NASB, HCSB, NIV, NLT, ESV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, or NRSV.

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman Press, 2002. [Hereafter referred to as Block]

Breneman, Mervin. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993. [Hereafter referred to as Breneman]

Howard, David M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993. [Hereafter referred to as Howard](Relevant chapters will be scanned and posted to Blackboard)

## Course Methodology

The principal means of instruction will be through the reading of the biblical books, class lecture notes, course textbooks and discussion of selected topics through the Discussion Board. Additionally, the students will evaluate the biblical texts and interpret them using valid hermeneutical principles. Reading assignments and a formal exegetical paper will provide an integral part of the learning environment for the course.

## Course Requirements

1. PARTICIPATION. Students are expected to participate in the discussions of the biblical texts. Your participation will comprise part of the course grade.
2. REQUIRED READINGS.
  - a. Read the books of Ruth and Esther each in five (5) different translations of your choice.
    - i. **See 4a before you do any additional readings.**
    - ii. The student should read the entire book through in one sitting (at least one time) in order to comprehend the thematic and literary flow of the book.
  - b. Read both commentaries, *Ruth* and *Esther* in their entirety, including the introductions.
    - i. The introduction to Ruth should be read prior to beginning Unit 2.
    - ii. The introduction to Esther should be read prior to beginning Unit 6.
    - iii. The pages in the commentaries pertaining to the biblical texts we will be discussing in class should be read prior to the date we discuss the biblical text on the Discussion Board. To receive full credit for the required reading, you must read the commentary prior to the week/unit in which we discuss that biblical text.
  - c. Read the following pages in Howard, pages 23-58, 125-139, and 315-332.
    - i. The material on "Biblical Narrative" and "Ruth" (pp. 23-58 and 125-139) should be read by the beginning of Unit 2.
    - ii. The material on "Esther" (pp. 315-332) should be read by Unit 6.
  - d. Choose an additional commentary, each, on Ruth and Esther from the attached selected bibliography.
    - i. Read the appropriate pages on the biblical texts we cover in the units in these two commentaries.
    - ii. You are not required to read the introductory material in these additional commentaries.
    - iii. If you choose a commentary not listed in the bibliography, you must have it approved by the professor or you will not receive credit for your work.
  - e. For the required readings, complete the Reading Log in this syllabus, indicating (1) your reading of the biblical texts, including which translations you read; (2) the assigned readings in the required commentaries; (3) the assigned readings in Howard; and (4) the appropriate readings from the additional commentaries.
3. RESEARCH PAPER. Complete a 12-15 page, double-spaced, footnoted research paper on the following topic: "The Use of Irony in the Book of Esther." Adherence to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Turabian is expected. The due date is listed in the Course Schedule. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!**
4. EXEGETICAL NOTEBOOK. The student will be required to complete a *typed, double-spaced* exegetical notebook containing the following:

- a. Personal Notes. Your personal observations/interpretations/questions about the text **prior to** reading any commentary or Howard's discussion of the book.
  - b. Notes from class lectures. These notes should be designed in such a way that the reader is able to discern the passage being referred to as well as the source of the material.
  - c. Detailed notes from the required commentaries. Incorporate the chapters in Howard into your Introductory sections for each biblical book. These notes should be designed in such a way that the reader is able to discern the passage being referred to as well as the source of the material. These notes are not block quotes, nor are they photocopies. You should summarize and cite the material.
  - d. Detailed notes from the additional commentaries. These notes should be designed in such a way that the reader is able to discern the passage being referred to as well as the source of the material. These notes are not block quotes, nor are they photocopies. You should summarize and cite the material.
  - e. Truths/theological insights from each chapter of the books of Ruth and Esther. These will be the discovery of each student, and some will be discussed in class.
  - f. Completed Reading Log detailing all of the readings explained above in 2e.
  - g. Each of these requirements should be clearly delineated in your notebook. The notebook must be well-organized, easy-to-read, and easy-to-use.
5. A NOTE ABOUT PLAGIARISM: All written assignments must be your own work. If you use an author's exact words, you must put his/her words in quotation marks and footnote the source. If you paraphrase, you must footnote the source. Any information that you include in your paper that you did not previously know must be footnoted because the information came from someone else. If you do not footnote someone else's information, you are plagiarizing that person's work.
- a. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and the penalties will include:
    - i. A failing grade in the course, and/or
    - ii. Possible dismissal from seminary.
6. **The notebook and Reading Log should be mailed to the address on the syllabus on the last Monday of class. LATE WORK WILL BE PENALIZED 5 POINTS/DAY!**

<b>Course Evaluation</b>	20% — Participation in Discussion Board
	10% — Reading Log
	20% — Research paper
	50% — Notebook

**Netiquette Statement on Appropriate Online Behavior**

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online on the Discussion Board. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity will be expected at all times in the online environment.



## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### General Works

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- Heaton, E. W. *The Hebrew Kingdoms*. The New Clarendon Bible, Old Testament, vol. III. Oxford: University Press, 1968.
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## The Book of Ruth

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- Hamlin, E. John. *Ruth: Surely There is a Future*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
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## The Book of Esther

- Allen, Leslie. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther: Based on the New International Version*. New International Bible Commentary, Old Testament Series, vol. 9. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
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