COURSE DESCRIPTION
HB5/743 — Interpreting Joshua: Canaanite Destruction and Welcoming the Stranger
Vancouver School of Theology SUMMER 2020
July 13-17, 2020: 9am – 12pm (with afternoon seminar for 3.0 degree students only)

Instructor: Dr Mark R. Glanville (Regent College)

PURPOSE:
Joshua tells the story of Israel’s annihilation of the Canaanite people groups, at the command of Yahweh, with little regret save that Israel didn’t complete the task. In recent commentary this book has understandably been charged with authorizing atrocities and of undermining a positive biblical ethic of love. So then, how are faith communities to understand this book? How may we reconcile Joshua with the prophetic voice of justice in the Hebrew Bible or with the love of Christ in the New Testament?

In this course, we will put the Canaanite destruction texts in conversation with the ethic of enfolding the stranger, to see how an ethic of inclusion is visible in Joshua and in Deuteronomy, and throughout the Old Testament. Through close reading, we will explore how themes and characters in Joshua stand in tension with the genocidal narrative that is present on the surface of the text. We will consider the moments of Canaanite inclusion, such as Rahab (Josh 2 and 6). And, we will explore the exclusion of Israelites such as Achan (Josh 7). We will consider the significance of these characters in negotiating the very idea of “Israel”: Israelites are becoming Canaanite, and Canaanite is becoming Israeli. In this way, we will seek to discern ethics and theology in the book of Joshua as a book that is concerned with Israeli identity formation.

This course will proceed via a rigorous examination of the text, with both traditional and creative teaching approaches. Learning strategies will include lecture, small group workshops, discussion, kinaesthetic approaches, and jazz piano. We will have a constant eye on the question: What is God calling his people to be and to do, in this text?

This course is taught in two parts: Joshua 1 (MDiv level, audit option) is a three-hour morning class. Joshua 2 (MDiv level, audit option) is a further three-hour afternoon class that will engage in further close exegesis of the text and seek to understand the scholarly discussion on Joshua. Both Joshua 1 and Joshua 2 must be taken for Certificate or academic credit.

FORMAT
All courses offered in VST 2020 Summer School will only be available through distance learning, using Zoom for class sessions and Canvas, VST’s online course platform, for course resources. All classes will be recorded on Zoom for password protected viewing by class participants only.

Zoom software requires minimum computer system requirements such as an internet connection – broadband wired or wireless, a camera and a microphone. For details please refer to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-Requirements-for-PC-Mac-and-Linux.
Students unfamiliar with Zoom will be provided basic support by VST. For reference see https://vst.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Zoom-Manual-for-Students.pdf. Students will also be provided with basic support for accessing Canvas.

Work in the course consists of daily 3-hour Zoom classes that may include lectures and various in-class online discussions and small group exercises that will be accomplished (partly) through Zoom. We will use a mix of screen time and off-screen time. All courses also include required readings to be completed before the course starts. As well various assignments may include papers or exercises during the week, and one or more final papers due by August 31 for Certificate and Basic Degree students. All papers will be submitted to the instructor via email or as the instructor specifies.

**EXPECTATIONS AND COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the function of the Canaanite destruction texts in Israelite identity formation.
2. Compare the Canaanite destruction texts with texts that incorporate the stranger in Deuteronomy and Joshua, explaining how these texts function in concert.
3. Identify how in the Joshua narrative, Israel is being reidentified around the law: those who keep the commands of Yahweh are the true Israel.
4. Receive inspiration and direction from Deuteronomy and Joshua for their own community and for their own creative leadership and preaching.
5. Teach and preach the content of Deuteronomy and Joshua, understood through a missional lens.
6. Teach others how ancient Israel was nourished to live as a contrastive community of justice and inclusion in the sight of the people groups surrounding them.
7. From engaging Deuteronomy and Joshua, imaginatively consider communal practices that may sustain missional communities.
8. Apply skills of exegesis to other biblical texts.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Students are required to have read both the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua before the commencement of classes.

**Joshua 1**

Two articles:


One book (two options):


Joshua 2 (afternoon seminar)


ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attendance: All students taking the course for Certificate or Degree credit must participate synchronously in all class sessions via Zoom. 100% attendance is required of Certificate and Degree students.
2. Readings: All students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings.
3. Class participation: All synchronously participating students are expected to participate in all class discussions and activities. These will be set up via the Zoom technology.
4. Certificate students: Certificate students are required to hand in 5-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered.
5. Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; M.Div): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 1500-1875 words/6-8 pages.
6. Advanced degree students (Th.M): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 3750-4250 words/15-17 pages.
Further details about assignments will be provided on the course syllabus. For students taking the additional afternoon tutorial for 3.0 CR, additional reading and writing assignments will be specified.

7. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


