

BRIERCREST

BLST 817 Old Testament Specialty: The Theology of 1 & 2 Kings Spring 2019

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Course Dates: June 10-14, 2019

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This study focuses on a particular emphasis of Old Testament studies.

NOTE: In this course we will study the theology of 1 & 2 Kings in a focused way, and aim to integrate our thinking within a wider biblical theology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire a broad knowledge of the content and theological contours of 1 & 2 Kings, and how recent studies can heighten our appreciation of this section of biblical literature.
2. To understand the diversity and range of literary techniques used by Hebrew writers in prose narrative, and to recognize the theological value in attending to this component of the biblical text.
3. To perform competent exegesis and interpretation of biblical texts with sufficient literary discernment and theological depth.
4. To better appreciate the relationship between scholarly study of the Scriptures and application in ministry contexts, and recognize the value of various methods of theological interpretation that can enhance our understanding of the expansiveness of biblical texts.
5. To take preliminary steps toward disseminating the results of our study to various audiences in the academic community and the church.

COURSE TEXTS

Keith Bodner, *The Theology of the Book of Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)
[paperback].

John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology, Volume 1: Israel's Gospel* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2003)
[paperback].

Any other course materials will be provided as handouts or electronically.

We should also bring a copy of the Bible – ideally two different reliable translations – for each lecture.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

1 and 2 Kings unfolds an epic narrative that concludes the long story of Israel's experience with institutional monarchy, a sequence of events that begins with the accession of Solomon and the establishment of the Jerusalem temple, moves through the partition into north and south, and leads inexorably toward the nation's destruction and the passage to exile in Babylon. In this course we will undertake a reading of the narrative attentive to its literary sophistication and theological subtleties, as the cast of characters—from the royal courts to the rural fields—are variously challenged to resist the tempting pathway of political and spiritual accommodations and instead maintain allegiance to their covenant with God. In dialogue with a range of interpreters, this course provides an exploration of some theological questions that arise from the Kings narrative, while inviting contemporary communities of faith into deeper engagement with this enduring account of divine reliability amidst human scheming and rapaciousness.

- Overview of the subject and goals of our study
- Introduction to the world of Kings and recent theological study of Hebrew narrative
- From Entry to Exile: Exploring Kings in a wider canonical context
- Dynasty and Succession: David's Death and Solomon's early reign
- Palace and Temple: Deuteronomy 17 and the limits of monarchy
- Kingdom and Division: The Schism at Shechem and the split into north and south
- Prophets and Apostasy: Elijah's Career and the House of Omri
- Upheaval and Reprieve: Assyrian Aggression and the fall of the northern Kingdom
- Invasion and Demolition: The Fall of Jerusalem and deportation of the citizenry
- The Legacy of Kings in the New Testament

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Four page single-spaced report on our course textbook (*The Theology of the Book of Kings*) due prior to the start of our course on Monday morning (**June 10th**). The report should summarize the content of the volume, and provide a summary of what the student has learned and what theological study of the Hebrew Bible entails (10%).

Mid-Course Assignments:

2. End of course reflections: on Friday (**June 14th**) there will be an opportunity to respond to six questions from our class discussions (**20%**).

Post-Course Assignments:

3. Creative Responses: *The Workshop* (**40%**). Over the course of our week together we will work through a series of interactive questions (for example: *Is there a switch in mood and genre as 1 Kings 11 begins? What is the best way to interpret the vast number of Solomon's wives and concubines? Further, discuss the "quotation" in 11:2, and outline some characteristics of the "gods" that the king is guilty of worshipping. Also consider 1 Kings 11:1-13, and the penalty imposed on Solomon: is this merely a personal matter? When the first eleven chapters of 1 Kings are considered, how surprised is the reader when confronted with Solomon's "fall"?*). The student will provide a written response of approximately 300 words to each question, and the entire workshop should be emailed to the professor as a single PDF file or Word document not later than **August 9th**.

4. Research and Reflection essay: (**30%**). This is a standard 2000 word paper, single-spaced in Chicago format to be emailed to the professor as a PDF file no later than **August 9th**. Although other ideas might be proposed, here is our working topic for this essay: "After reading John Goldingay's *Old Testament Theology*, Volume 1: *Israel's Gospel*, how do 1 & 2 Kings contribute to a larger biblical theology?"

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible, arrangements must be made with the course professor. A maximum of 1 full day of class can be foregone. Students should request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit if additional time is missed.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week

after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or illness who may need academic accommodations should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Student Success Centre in person (located in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca).

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alter, Robert. *Ancient Israel: The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2013. Brief introductions and notes on Joshua-Kings from an influential literary critic of the Hebrew Bible.

John Barton, "Historiography and Theodicy in the Old Testament." In *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, edited by Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, and W. Brian Aucker, 27-33. VTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2007. Overview of an important topic for theological reflection.

Brueggemann, Walter. *1 & 2 Kings*. Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000. Fine resource for students and scholars alike.

Brueggemann, Walter. "Old Testament Theology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, edited by John W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu, 675-97. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Accessible introduction to the task of Old Testament theology.

Cohn, Robert L. "The Literary Structure of Kings." Pp. 107-22 in *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, edited by Baruch Halpern and André Lemaire, and associate editor Matthew J. Adams. VTSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2010. Helpful survey of the architecture of the Kings narrative.

Conti, Marco, editor. *1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament 5. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008. Repository of insights from the patristic era in a user-friendly format.

Dietrich, Walter. "1 & 2 Kings." In *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, edited by John Barton and John Muddiman, 232-66. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001. Short commentary particularly strong on historical and intertextual elements.

Fretheim, Terence E. *First and Second Kings*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999. Suggestive points of application with a contemporary readership in view.

Goldingay, John. "The Theology of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, edited by Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney, 466-82. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Another stimulating overview of the theological task.

Granowski, Jan Jaynes. "Jehoiachin at the King's Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings." In *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, edited by Danna Nolan Fewell, 173-88. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1992. Addresses the crucial final verses of 2 Kings on the fate of Jehoiachin.

Hens-Piazza, Gina. *1-2 Kings*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006. Thoughtful attempt to relate the narrative to the present interpretive milieu.

Janzen, David. *The Violent Gift: Trauma's Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History's Narrative*. LHBOTS 561; London: T & T Clark, 2012. Monograph that employs recent advances in trauma theory.

Leithart, Peter. *1 & 2 Kings*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006. Strong contribution to a series dedicated to theological interpretation.

Levenson, Jon D. "The Temple and the World." *JR* 64 (1984): 275-98. Seminal article on the temple in Kings and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

Linville, James R. *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity*. JSOTSup 272; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998. Some questions raised here in this monograph that originated as an Edinburgh dissertation.

Long, Burke O. *2 Kings*. FOTL 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. Form-critical and theological insight with literary sensitivity.

Miscall, Peter D. "Elijah, Ahab, and Jehu: A Prophecy Fulfilled." *Prooftexts* 9 (1989) 73-83. Creative study in the fulfillment of the prophetic word.

Mobley, Gregory. "1 and 2 Kings," in *Theological Bible Commentary*, edited by Gail R. O'Day and David L. Petersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009). Useful contribution that is part of a work devoted to succinct theological readings.

Moberly, R. W. L. *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. Collection of essays on the venture of biblical theology.

Nelson, Richard D. *First and Second Kings*. Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987. Incisive and practical commentary with a host of New Testament interfaces.

Provan, Iain W. *1 and 2 Kings*. NIBC 7. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995. Compact and illuminating treatment of the text.

Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols. New York: Harper & Row, 1962-5. Classic of the field that has retained its currency.

Schulte, Hannelis. "The End of the Omride Dynasty: Social-Ethical Observations on the Subject of Power and Violence." Translated by Carl S. Ehrlich. *Semeia* 66 (1994) 133-148. Raises several pertinent questions for contemporary interpreters.

Seow, Choon Leong, "1 & 2 Kings," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume 3. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999. Valuable and erudite commentary that can be used profitably by homileticians.

Sweeney, Marvin A. *I & II Kings*. OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. Full-length commentary with insightful discussions of critical issues.

Walsh, Jerome T. *1 Kings*. Berit Olam; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996. Excellent literary reading that raises a host of fascinating matters.

Wray Beal, Lissa. *1 & 2 Kings*. AOTC; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014. A recent commentary of benefit to anyone in a teaching context.

Yee, Gale A. "1, 2 Kings." In *The Fortress Commentary on Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*, edited by Gale A. Yee, Matthew Coomber and Hugh Page, 401-37. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. Part of a larger work of commentary that features feminist and other approaches to the biblical text.

Zevit, Ziony. "First and Second Kings." In *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, 668-779. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Scholarly and perceptive notes from a Jewish perspective.