



OT 6XS6

Class meets Saturdays (9am–4pm): Jan 11, Feb 1, Feb 29, Mar 28

Professor: Dr. Paul S. Evans

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Course Description:

This course will provide a close reading of the biblical books of 1-2 Samuel, exploring important historical, literary and theological issues raised by the text. We will investigate what the proper role of the monarchy was in Israel's history; why Saul was rejected as king; whether Samuel was an unbiased prophet; the nature of Saul's failure as king, and what qualities of David set him apart as a king. Sustained attention will be paid to the rise of David from young shepherd boy, to Israel's hero and king, and his latter decline as sin, family crises and other tragic events threatened to depose him later in life. The key role of David in salvation history will also be explored with a biblical theological exploration of the "son of David" in messianic expectation. This course will consider the nature of the biblical narrative and its theological importance in both its ancient context and for the modern church today.



Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To have a thorough knowledge of the contents and message of the books of Samuel

- To have a thorough knowledge of modern critical scholarship on the books of Samuel
- To have a thorough knowledge of the use of ritual studies in the study of the books of Samuel

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of the books of Samuel for the Church today
- To grow closer to God through study of the the books of Samuel

Doing

- To be able to interpret Samuel in its original contexts
- To be able to apply the book of Samuel to contemporary audiences
- To be able to discuss the relation of biblical historiography to history
- To articulate the biblical theological message of the books of Samuel

Required Texts

Paul S. Evans *1–2 Samuel*. Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

Baruch Halpern. *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King*. Bible in Its World. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001.

V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History*, vol. 5 in Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

Steven L. McKenzie. *King David: A Biography*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

- 20% - Student Presentations:** Students will lead the class on two occasions for one hour, making a presentation on an assigned topic, informed by relevant secondary literature, and then leading class discussion.
- *Students must hand-in a detailed lesson plan to the professor at the beginning of class on the day of their presentation.*
- 30% - Critical Comparison of Davidic Biographies:** 20 pages. Due Feb 3, 2020. Students will critically review and compare McKenzie and Halpern's Monographs on David's life in light of Long's *Art of Biblical History* and other assigned readings. Students critique the methodological approach of each book and compare the findings of each book, identifying critical issues and problems for their historical reconstructions. This paper will also give the student's own reasoned opinion (with explicit argumentation) and detail their methodological approach to reading the story of David for historical reconstruction and argue for the best approach to the problems discerned.
- 40% - Research Paper: 20–25 pages.** Due March 23. *No extensions will be given.* Papers must be double-spaced, using 12pt Times New Roman font throughout (footnotes should be 10pt Times New Roman font). The bibliography must contain at least 20 items of varied secondary sources (commentaries, theological dictionaries, specialized books) including *at least 3* articles from peer reviewed / refereed journals. *By way of supplement* to these 20 sources, a student may use a *maximum* of 2 internet resources. Students are responsible for the quality of the sources chosen. These secondary sources do not include primary sources Each source listed must be drawn on in the paper and evidenced in the footnotes etc. *Research Topic must be approved by your professor.*
- 10% - Reflection Paper on Hermeneutical Implications. 5 pages.** Due Apr 6, 2020. For this paper students write a reflection on implications and biblical theological significance of the historical research covered in the course for a student's view of the books of Samuel as scripture.

College Style for Submission of Written Work

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers to be submitted in electronic format only (a pdf file)—no hardcopies! Email to pevans@mcmaster.ca. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., evans.researchpaper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm on which they are due. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

Policy Concerning Late Papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by the last day of class (Apr 8) in order to avoid a failing grade in the class. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Bibliography

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Evans, Paul S. "From a Head above the Rest to No Head at All: Transformations in the Life of Saul " in *Characters and Characterization in the Book of Samuel*. Edited by Keith Bodner and Benjamin J.M. Johnson. London: T&T Clark, 2019.

_____. "Let the Crime Fit the Punishment: The Chronicler's Explication of David's 'Sin' in 1 Chronicles 21," Pages 65-80 in *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*. Edited by Paul S. Evans and Tyler F. Williams. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

_____. "Living by Faith and Not by Signs: Seeking but Not Divining the Will of God." *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 12 (2010) 33-60

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