



# JOSHUA

Syllabus  
McMaster Divinity College  
Winter 2023

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## Course Designation

OT 5XJ5 Joshua

## Class Schedule

First day of class is Monday January 9<sup>th</sup>.

No class on family day Monday February 20<sup>th</sup>.

No class during intensive hybrid week on Monday February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Last day of class is Monday April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Class meets every Monday from 4:00 p.m. – 5:50 p.m.

This course is in person and live streamed, so is available in any location.

## Course Description

The book of Joshua is challenging in various ways. It is difficult to bring coherence to apparently contradictory assertions: all the land was conquered yet much land remains to be taken; all the Canaanites are to be destroyed yet Israel lives amongst the Canaanites. Joshua is a challenging book ethically, as the promise of redemption comes about through war and conflict. The goal of this course is to provide a guide in understanding the book of Joshua in its literary form and its theological message in dealing with the concepts of judgment and redemption.

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The course is to provide guidance to the Christian living in a world that is continually afflicted with mortal conflict. When Jesus spoke of wars and rumors of wars, he expressly declared that this was a sign the end is not yet. War is part of our present age and always involves the participation of those serving the kingdom of God.

### **Course Objectives**

#### *Knowing*

- Textual versions of Joshua (Joshua is preserved in two different editions)
- Relationship of Joshua to the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History
- Theological concepts of sovereignty, mercy, and judgment

#### *Being*

- Living with courage and conviction in a societies of conflict
- Learning submission and faithfulness to God in times of conflict
- Understanding the hope of divine promise in formidable circumstances

#### *Doing*

- Engage in confronting violence with a theology of redemption
- Address strife with an understanding of the human condition that perpetuates violence
- Actively participate in church congregations by teaching and living a theologically sound anthropology

### **Course Texts**

James Gordon McConville, *Joshua: An Introduction and Study Guide: Crossing Divides*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

Hartman N. Rosel, *Joshua*, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament, Leuven, Peeters, 2011.

K. Lawson Younger, Jr. *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing*, JSOTSup 98, Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1990.

### **Textbook Purchase**

Read On Bookstore  
5 International Blvd  
Etobicoke, Ontario. M9A 3C3

Bookstore Phone: 416 620 2934  
**Cell to text orders:** 416 668 3434  
**Email for orders** [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca)

The new Hurlburt Family Bookstore is located beside the Chapel entrance, opposite Cullen Hall.

## Course Topics

Text and history of composition  
Historical and archaeological interpretations of Joshua  
Joshua within the Deuteronomistic History  
Spying out the land  
Shittim to Gilgal  
Covenant renewal  
Jericho and the *kherem* (review of Moabite stele)  
Divine warfare  
Canaanite agreements  
Hazor  
Tribal territories  
Keeping the peace  
Theology of Joshua in contemporary context

## Course Requirements

The book of Joshua is one phase in the story of divine redemption, not just of Israel but the restoration of creation. To most people Joshua reads like an aggressive military campaign in nationalistic interests. This is to reduce the book to misconceptions; redemption in Scripture is never limited to Israel nor is the creation of Israel for nationalistic ends. Joshua must be read as part of God's divine work in bringing an end to sin and violence and establishing a transforming covenant.

Contemporary society is engulfed with violence at all levels, often of a random and senseless variety. Joshua brings an important theology to understanding humanity, society, judgment, and redemption. There are many ways to employ this theology. The task of the assignments in this course is to engage the theology of Joshua in addressing a contemporary situation.

### I. Literature Review: *Develop a suitable title for the assignment*

- a. The student will develop an annotated bibliography of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to *the topic of the course* and write a 100-150 word annotation for each one. The required texts for the course can be included as part of the book list. **The literature review will be approximately 2,000 words. This assignment is due Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> and will constitute 25% of the course grade.**
- b. A paper will also be prepared that summarizes the key learnings from the annotated bibliography and provides a cogent foundation for a theology and practice of *the topic of the course*. **The paper will be approximately 3,000 words. It is due Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> and will constitute 25% of the course grade.**

### II. Major Paper: *Develop a suitable title for the paper according to the topic of the course*

The paper should include four key sections. First a brief, but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach; second an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the problems that you want to identify?); third, a consideration of a foundational

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theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area; fourth, some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and also their ministry beyond the local church).

The paper should be approximately 8,000 words. It is due Mar. 27<sup>th</sup> and will constitute 40% of the course grade.

### III. Class Presentation

The student will offer a class presentation of their paper and its findings to the class. The presentation is due at a time agreed upon by the instructor and the student; it will constitute 10% of the course grade.

## Course Policies

### *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).

### *Style*

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: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

## Bibliographic Resources

### Text of Joshua

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De Troyer, K. "Reconstructing the OG of Joshua." In *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, edited by W. Kraus and R.G. Wooden, 105–18. SBLSCS 53. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Feldman, Ariel. *The Rewritten Joshua Scrolls from Qumran: Texts, Translations and Commentary*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.

Greenspoon, Leonard. "The Book of Joshua—Part 1: Texts and Versions." *Currents in Biblical Research* 3 (2005) 229–61.

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Mäkipelto, Ville. "The Four Deaths of Joshua: Why the Septuagint is Pivotal for the Study of Joshua 24." *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 6 (2017) 217–42.

Tov, Emmanuel. "The Literary Development of the Book of Joshua as Reflected in the Masoretic Text, the LXX, and 4QJoshua." In *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint*, 132–153. VTSup 167. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Two Literary Strata of Joshua: G and M." In *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, third edition, revised and expanded, 294–299; idem, "Different Literary Editions of Joshua: 4QJosh<sup>a</sup> and M, G," 314–316. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

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Ulrich, E. and F. M. Cross, eds. *Qumran Cave 4.IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings*. Discoveries in the Judean Desert XIV. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

### **Recent Commentaries (Post 2000)**

Alter, Robert. *Ancient Israel: The Former Prophets; Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; A Translation with Commentary*. New York: Norton, 2013.

Auld, A. Graeme. *Joshua: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. International Critical Commentary. T & T Clark, 2011.

Beal, Lissa M. Wray. *Joshua*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019.

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———. *Joshua 13–24*. Word Biblical Commentary 7B. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Creach, Jerome F. D. *Joshua: A Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 2003.

Currid, John D. *Strong and Courageous: Joshua*. Grand Rapids, MI: Evangelical, 2010.

Dallaire, H el ene. *Joshua: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Dozeman, Thomas B. *Joshua 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Yale Bible 6B. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Firth, David G. *The Message of Joshua*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.

Franke, John R., ed. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 4. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005.

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Laughlin, John C. H. *Reading Joshua: A Historical-Critical/Archeological Commentary*. Reading the Old Testament. Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2015.

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Pitk aken, Pikka M. A. *Joshua*. Apollos Old Testament. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

Pressler, Carolyn. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

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**Older Commentaries (Pre 2000)**

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Boling, Robert G. *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*. Anchor Bible 6. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982.

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Miller, J. Maxwell, and Gene M. Tucker. *The Book of Joshua*. The Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

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Rast, Walter E. *Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings*. Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

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Woudstra, Marten H. *The Book of Joshua*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981.

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### **Specialized Studies**

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Earl, Douglas S. *Reading Joshua as Christian Scripture*. Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010.

———. *The Joshua Delusion? Rethinking Genocide in the Bible*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010.

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Nelson, Richard. *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*. JSOTSup 18. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1981.

Peckham, Brian. *The Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*. Harvard Semitic Monographs 35. Atlanta: Scholars, 1985.

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### **Joshua and Literary Readings**

Beal, Lissa M. Wray. "The Past as Threat and Hope: Reading Joshua with Numbers." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 27 (2017) 461–83.

Beck, John A. "Why do Joshua's Readers Keep Crossing the River?: The Narrative-Geographical Shaping of Joshua 3–4." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005) 689–99.

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Chambers, Nathan J. "Confirming Joshua as the Interpreter of Israel's Tôrāh: The Narrative Role of Joshua." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 25 (2015) 141–53.

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### ***Joshua and Archeology***

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Finkelstein, Israel. "Shiloh Yields Some, but not All, of Its Secrets." *Biblical Archeology Review* 12 (1986) 22–41.

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Hess, Richard S. "A Typology of West-Semitic Place Name Lists with Special Reference to Joshua 13–21." *The Biblical Archeologist* 59 (1996) 160–70.

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Merrill, Eugene H. "Palestinian Archeology and the Date of the Conquest: Do Tells Tell Tales?" *Grace Theological Journal* 3 (1982) 107–21.

Miller, J. Maxwell. "Archeology and the Israelite Conquest of Canaan: Some Methodological Observations." *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 109 (1977) 87–93.

Petrovich, Douglas. "The Dating of Hazor's Destruction in Joshua 11 by Way of Biblical, Archeological, and Epigraphical Evidence." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51 (2008) 489–512.

Scheffler, Eben. "Jericho: From Archeology Challenging the Canon to Searching for the Meaning(s) of Myth(s)." *HTS Teologiese Studies* 69 (2013) 10 pages, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1918>.

Stillinger, Michele D., et al. "A Rejoinder on the Value of Archeomagnetic Dating: Integrative Methodology is the Key to Addressing Iron Age Chronology." *Near Eastern Archeology* 81 (2018) 141–44.

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### ***Joshua and Covenant***

Berner, Christoph. "The Gibeonite Deception: Reflections on the Interplay between Law and Narrative in Josh 9." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 31 (2017) 254–74.

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Gentry, Peter J. "The Relationship of Deuteronomy to the Covenant at Sinai." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 18 (2014) 35–57.

Harris, Gregory H. "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?: Toward a Biblical Understanding of Joshua 21:43–45, Part 1." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 23 (2012) 55–83.

———. "Did God Fulfill Every Good Promise?: Toward a Biblical Understanding of Joshua 21:43–45, Part 2." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 24 (2013) 69–96.

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### ***Joshua and Deuteronomistic History (DH or DtrH)***

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***Joshua and Conquest (holy war, kherem, land distribution)***

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