TYNDALE UNIVERSITY

TYNDALE SEMINARY
COURSE SYLLABUS

"The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel."

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2027
Course Title	**JOSHUA-JUDGES**
Course Code	OLDT 0612 NP / BSTH 3113 NP
Date **Time** **Delivery Format**	January 4-8, 2027 **MONDAY – FRIDAY** From 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The classes will be IN-PERSON, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.
Instructor	**GORDON OESTE**, **PhD** Email: goeste@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

Tyndale Undergraduate students may enroll in this course under the following course code:

BSTH 3113

NOTE: This course is joint-listed between Undergraduate Studies and Seminary. It is a graduate level course and operates on the Seminary schedule related to reading days, start and end of semester, exam schedule and according to the Seminary Academic Calendar.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of the structure and the historical and social context of the books of Joshua and Judges, with an emphasis on their literary structure, rhetorical function, and theological relevance both within ancient Israel and for the church today. The course will include an understanding of the workings of Hebrew narrative as a means of accessing the message of these books. ***Prerequisite: BIBL 0501; Recommended: OLDT 0511.***

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of key issues related to the interpretation of the books of Joshua and Judges.
2. Critically evaluate scholarly proposals for how to understand the ethics of war in the Bible, focusing on its expression in the books of Joshua and Judges.
3. Gain practice and skill in reading and critically evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of biblical commentaries.
4. Synthesize their own view of how to best understand biblical war passages in Joshua and Judges
5. Developing a presentation on war ethics which can be used with lay audiences.
6. Demonstrate their ability to apply scripture effectively to the life of the church.
7. Have reflected meditatively, exegetically, theologically upon the relevance of Joshua and Judges for the church in the 21st century through completion of the reflective journal.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

A modern translation of the Bible (e.g. NIV, NRSV, NLT, NASB, ESV)

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

Younger, K. Lawson, Jr. *Judges, Ruth: Revised Edition*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999.

Goldingay, John. *Joshua*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Historical Books. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023.

Lynch, Matthew J. *Flood and Fury: Old Testament Violence and the Shalom of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2023.

Trimm, Charlie. *The Destruction of the Canaanites: God, Genocide, and Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022.

Walton, John H. *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest: Covenant, Retribution, and the Fate of the Canaanites*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Webb, William J. and Gordon K. Oeste. *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?: Wrestling With Troubling War Texts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019.

Tyndale recommends **STEPBible** – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Warfare and Violence in Joshua, Judges – Research Paper (40%), Due: January 29, 2027
Successful completion of this assignment fulfills Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4

Students will write a 15-page paper (double spaced, 12-point type, 1-inch margins, using at least 12 sources). Students will summarize two or three key approaches to understanding the hermeneutical and ethical implications of warfare in the OT, focusing particularly on the books of Joshua and Judges. Students will evaluate each approach by setting out the strengths and weaknesses/shortcomings of the works they have chosen to evaluate (providing supporting examples).

After evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, students will then set out arguments in support of their own position (supplying supporting evidence and rationale for their approach.

If you have completed assignments on the topic of warfare and violence in another course, please speak with the instructor to arrange for an alternative assignment.

2. Reflective Journal (30%) – Due: January 8, 2027
Successful completion of this assignment fulfills Learning Outcomes 1, 4, 6, 7

Students will read the assigned Bible readings (see the course outline) in a modern translation (Not the KJV or a paraphrase like the Living Bible or The Message). Students will indicate the date of the completion of the readings, and the thoroughness with which the readings were completed in a reflective journal. Thus, for each reading students will indicate: 1) the percentage of assigned Bible reading completed as well as, 2) whether the text was read: i) very carefully and thoughtfully, ii) carefully, iii) focusing on the main ideas, iv) skimming the text.

As part of this journal, students will also write a 200-250-word reflective journal entry on the assigned article to be read for that class. Each class session, students will journal about the role

that the assigned reading may have on their understanding of the biblical text (questions raised, questions answered, things better understood, insights into the biblical text, a theological aspect of the text addressed in the article, or interaction with the hermeneutical stance of the reading), as well as what implication this may have for how we read/teach the biblical text in the church.

3. Commentary Reading Evaluations (10 %), Due: February 12, 2027

Students will examine portions of Wray Beal and Younger that correspond with the session's lecture focus and then submit a 1) a one sentence assessment of the percentage of reading completed, as well as 2) a 4-page evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each commentary's approach (2-pages/commentary).

Successful completion of this assignment fulfills Learning Outcomes 1, 3, 4,

4. Biblical Warfare Presentation (20%), Due: March 12, 19, 2027

Students will develop a brief (10-15 minute) presentation on the topic of understanding warfare in the Joshua designed to be used in church settings. Students will build upon the foundation of their Warfare and Violence paper, developing the things they've learned into a presentation (with visuals) that could be used in a sermon, as part of Bible Study, or in a church seminar evening.

The presentation will 1) set out the tensions in the biblical text connected to warfare and violence, 2) offer potential explanations to these tensions (highlighting a number of solutions that have been proposed by several authors), and 3) their own conclusions. The presentation should not use technical jargon, should not presume that their audience is familiar with any proposed solutions, and should exhibit exegetical humility and charity in its proposed way forward.

Students will record themselves giving their presentation, then upload a link to that presentation in order to submit this assignment by Friday, March 12, 2027.

Part B - Within one week after the presentation submission deadline, students will review 2 of their classmates' presentations and supply a peer grade (with comments of affirmation and suggestions to strengthen the presentation – max 250 words) by Friday, March 19, 2027.

Successful completion of this assignment fulfills Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. General Characteristics

In general, your work should exhibit the following characteristics:

Clarity – your work should be well organized and should make sense
Accuracy – your work should follow the instructions given and accurately represent the works consulted
Thoughtfulness – your work should reflect the mature fruit of your critical reflection upon the assigned topics/issues
Thoroughness – your work should reflect proper grammar, spelling and style
Conciseness – your work should be presented in a clear and succinct manner, following the guidelines given for the length of the assignment

2. Assignment Submissions and Late Policy

Assignments should be submitted no later than 11:59 PM on the due date. Paper should be submitted as a **docx (or doc) file** (please do not submit your assignment as a PDF file).

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on or before the corresponding due dates. An assignment will be considered late if it has not been received by the professor by 11:59 PM on the due date. Should this fail to occur, the following policy will govern the evaluation of your work:

For each day late (or part thereof), the assignment grade will be reduced by 2 %.

Extensions are not readily available. Requests must be submitted and arranged beforehand with the instructor (at least **72 hours in advance**). Please note that extensions will only be granted for situations out of the student's control, and which could not knowingly be planned for in advance. As a result, extensions will NOT be granted for things like: church ministry responsibilities, mission trips, heavy workload, computer or server problems. Extensions will only be granted for exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family death, hospitalization, etc.). Thus, it is best to have your work completed and ready to submit 24 hours before it is due.

3. Marking Standards: General Principles

Marking standards follow the stated Tyndale academic policies. Assignments which satisfactorily meet the professor's expectations will receive a B/75% (i.e. a B is a good grade – students have completed the assigned work well).

Excellence or deficiency in the following areas will increase or decrease the mark assigned:

a) Form and Presentation – thus, correct bibliographic form must be used
b) Number and quality of primary and secondary sources cited. A good general rule for a research paper is that the number of sources should at least equal the number of assigned pages for the paper (unless otherwise stated).
c) Thoroughness of historical, grammatical, syntactical, exegetical, and theological investigation. This could include, though not be limited to things like: doing your own word

studies, research into background materials, examination of archaeological data, synthesizing your own research on a theological theme, etc.

d) Logical and methodological accuracy and consistency.
e) Use of foundational tools like: ANE texts and inscriptions; Hebrew grammar and syntax; specialized studies in ANE history, archaeology, culture, and sociology; specialized scholarly articles and monographs; interaction with major commentaries.
f) Quality and Clarity of written English.
g) Ability to carefully follow the assignment instructions.

Students are strongly encouraged to:

1. Use a local theological library for the preparation of this assignment, especially the reference collection. *Any one of the suggested topics can be completed at a B+/A- level using only materials that NEVER leave the library.* Such materials include periodicals, encyclopaedias, Bible Dictionaries, and reference copies of commentaries.
2. While some students may not have immediate access to a theological library near them, there is a massive amount of material is available on-line in downloadable PDF files via the library's online resources (especially EBSCO/ATLA and JSTOR). *There is a gigantic difference in the quality of the resources available through the library's e-resources and the internet in general. Remember—only quote qualified experts in the subject you are studying*. See also the Tyndale Modular online Reading Room for Old Testament, as well as the following websites: *GoogleBooks*, *www.archive.org*.
3. Use the SBL Manual of Style for citations of footnotes and bibliographic entries. See either this short summary *(Tyndale Summary - SBL Manual of Style)* or the full citation manual (SBL Manual of Style)
4. Begin early. The student will choose *either* (a) the Research Paper, or (b) the Guided Essay.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignments	**Due Date**	**%**
Warfare and Violence in Joshua, Judges Paper	Jan 29	40 %
Reflective Journal	Jan 8	30 %
Commentary Reading Evaluations	Feb 12	10 %
Warfare and Violence Presentation	Mar 12, 19	20 %
Total Grade		**100 %**

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Content	Reading
Jan 4 Morning	Introduction to Joshua;	Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians"

	Joshua 1-2	
Jan 4 Afternoon	Joshua 3-8	Pitkänen, "Ethnicity, Assimilation and the Israelite Settlement"
Jan 5 Morning	Joshua 9-12	Hom, "A Day Like No Other: A Discussion of Joshua 10:12-14"
Jan 5 Afternoon	Joshua 13-24	Nogalski "Preaching Joshua in Canonical Contexts"
Jan 6 Morning	Introduction to Judges; Judges 1-2	Wenham, "The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges"
Jan 6 Afternoon	Judges 3-5	Wong, "Song of Deborah as Polemic"
Jan 7 Morning	Judges 6-9	Block, "Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up?"
Jan 7 Afternoon	Judges 10-12	Oeste, "Butchered Brothers and Betrayed Families"
Jan 8 Morning	Judges 13-16	Wong, "Samson as Everyman in Israel"
Jan 8 Afternoon	Judges 17-21	Trible "An Unnamed Woman"

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Wright, Christopher J. H. "What about the Canaanites?" Pages 73-108 in *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Yee, Gale, ed. *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007.

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

_____. The Rhetorical Structuring of the Joshua Conquest Narratives." Pages 3-32 in *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History*. BBRS 3. Eds. Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray Jr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008.

_____. *Judges and Ruth*. Revised ed. NIVAC. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2021.

Helpful OT Websites

Make sure to check out the resources that can be accessed through the Tyndale website, in particular through the EBSCO and J-STOR sites.

Online Periodical Database
Old Testament Reading Room

General Theological Websites

Old Testament Theology
Theology on the Web
Yale Biblical Studies Guide

Biblical Archaeology

Research at the Oriental Institute
Biblical Archaeological Society
Biblical Archaeology – Useful Links
Archaeology and the Bible
Ancient Near Eastern Resources

Mesopotamian Texts Archive

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to "Guidelines for Interactions" on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Integrity website for further details.

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tyndale Seminary's Academic Calendar provides a definition and broad descriptions of types of Academic Dishonesty using AI.

Academic dishonesty includes the submission of work for which previous credit was given, the submission of work under one's own name that is largely the result of another person's efforts, aiding another's dishonesty, cheating on exams and giving false information for the purpose of gaining admission, credits, etc. … Academic dishonesty also includes submitting academic work which has been written, rewritten, or substantially edited by an artificial intelligence program. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 173.)

AI programs are not adequate information sources for academic writing. Students should not use AI in academic writing without explicit permission from their course instructor. Given the tendency of AI programs to give inaccurate information and even falsify citations, students are cautioned against using AI prompts to begin researching or summarizing a topic. Instructors may deduct points from [or give a failing grade to] assignments for the improper use of AI sources. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 174.)

Students *may* use AI as an enhanced search engine, provided they are extremely careful about checking its sources. That means personally verifying texts and claims *every time* by clicking through to the source link or independently searching. This also means public information sources like Wikipedia are not satisfactory sources. We recommend using sites like Google Scholar or the variety of journal and research databases available with a Tyndale student ID.

Students *may* use AI to transcribe interviews, videos, or dictations of their own ideas when preparing for assignments. But they must read through the transcripts themselves and *manually* verify accuracy, make selections to quote, or edit for concision and clarity. This use of AI is reserved only for ideas that students have created themselves. Students may not submit course lectures, videos, or other course material to AI or any other software to transcribe, synthesize, annotate, or otherwise summarize course content.

Students *may not* use AI in any aspect of the planning and writing process for class assignments, including but not limited to early planning, ideas, outlining, argumentation, grammar, syntax, or phrasing. Struggling with all this is fundamental part of human learning. This struggle is precisely what develops writing ability and is essential to developing critical thinking and communication skills. If further clarification is required, students should ask their professors, not an AI assistant.

Students *may not* use Grammarly or similar AI copyediting programs, including Copilot in Microsoft Word. Tyndale students are expected to write with sophistication in English. Use of a LLM to edit/re-write/re-phrase/alter student work will be viewed as a breach of the Tyndale AI policy. Students should also be aware that many of these programs can/will change student ideas without permission or notification and should be careful to turn off any generative AI features in any software they use for course assignments.

Special Note: *Students should carefully discern and justify any use of AI tools. Convenience, efficiency, academic pressure, lack of time or even health issues are not sufficient reasons to rely on AI. If personal or external difficulties affect your work, you should first speak with your instructor before using AI assistance. Your personal formation, theological reflection, and authentic engagement with the course remain the priority in completing assignments.*

Some course professors may allow AI use for specific projects within specific limits. All Seminary syllabi (or course pages on Moodle) will contain guidelines for permitted uses of AI. When using AI for any professor-approved application in assignments, students should save all rough work and earlier versions of their assignments before editing. Students may be required to produce these versions on request. The name of the AI software used must be noted (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) including the specific version number and model of that software, and the specific text of all prompts employed to get the results must be reported in the submitted assignment.

For proper citation style, consult Citation Guides for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult Writing Services.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for polices and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- Student Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity (Guide, Video, Spectrum)

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the Extension Request Form. The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works

towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tyndale Library supports courses with e-journals, e-books, and the mail delivery of books and circulating materials. See the Library FAQ page.

G. GRADING SYSTEM & ssSCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary Grading System & Scale.