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PROPHECY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL HB611
Spring 2019

PURPOSE: This course will be a survey of the Hebrew Bible prophets, from early Israel to early Judaism. The course has these primary objectives:

- **Development of Biblical and Theological Understanding** The theology of prophetic preaching will be the focus for study. Built on a chronological outline which places the prophets into their historical settings, the course will emphasize the interplay between the prophets' contexts and their message and theology. As a background to this theological focus, the insights of critical scholarship will be assumed. This means each prophetic book will be viewed as a living tradition that preserves both the message and memory of an individual prophet and the faithful, theological re-interpretation of that message by later Israel. How Biblical texts can be appropriately related to contemporary contexts and issues will also be discussed.
- **Development of Practical and Pastoral Skills** A variety of pedagogical methods will be used in class to provide students an opportunity to experience, reflect on and use models for the interpretation and teaching of the Bible in contemporary contexts.

Prerequisites: HB500 and HB600

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

- **Development of Interpretation and Exegesis using Hebrew Language Tools** Focussing on prophetic texts, the course will give students a greater facility in interpreting Hebrew texts. Especially emphasized will be the transition from translation to exegetical and theological insights. The Major Exegesis paper required for various Basic Degree programs will be written as the final paper for this course.

Prerequisite: BIBL500 or equivalent.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

In successfully completing this course, a student will be able to:

- **Demonstrate an intermediate level knowledge of prophecy and individual prophets in Ancient Israel**
 - A. Describe the historical and social context of the prophets and discuss how that interacted with their message and theology
 - B. Identify and discuss the narrative/poetic artistry, content, and theological issues of Hebrew Bible prophetic texts
 - C. Apply a range of critical methods to the interpretation of prophetic texts
 - D. Create a critical interpretation of an assigned passage following Critical Interpretation Paper Guidelines (option 1 for cumulative assignment)
- **Demonstrate a willingness and ability to relate prophetic texts to contemporary life and issues in church and public contexts**

- A. Describe the interpretive principles upon which biblical texts can be used and applied in contemporary situations
- B. Evaluate and describe the application of prophetic texts to contemporary issues, including a discussion of interpretive insights from Third World, feminist, Indigenous and other hermeneutical approaches and compare these to one's own interpretation
- **Demonstrate a willingness to participate in and learn about appropriate pedagogical methods for teaching Biblical literacy in contemporary contexts**
 - A. Plan and lead a class session on a topic relevant to the course with a group of peers from the class, articulating the pedagogical method and class outline of the group presentation
 - B. Create an educational curriculum related to the topics of the course (option 2 for cumulative assignment)

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

- **Demonstrate an ability to use Hebrew in translation and exegesis of prophetic texts**
 - A. Apply Hebrew language tools to explicate and analyze a text
 - B. Apply research and critical methods and appropriate hermeneutical methods to interpret a prophetic text both in its ancient context and in contemporary contexts
 - C. Create a critical interpretation of an assigned passage using Hebrew translation and interpretive skills following guidelines in Major Exegesis Paper Guidelines

FORMAT AND CONTENT

For all students work in the course consists of weekly classes including lectures, discussions, small group exercises, assigned readings and class exercises; and two choices for a cumulative written assignment: a Critical Interpretation paper or an Adult Education curriculum. Distance students will participate in all classes and assignments via synchronous participation.

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency an additional tutorial will provide weekly experience in using Hebrew. The final paper will be the Major Exegesis paper using Hebrew translation and interpretive skills following guidelines in Major Exegesis Paper Guidelines.

Texts—available at UBC Bookstore

Bible (modern critical translation required; Oxford Annotated or HarperCollins New Revised Standard Version suggested)

David L. Petersen. *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. [=TEXT]

Walter Brueggemann. *The practice of prophetic imagination : preaching an emancipating word* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

A copy of or access to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by William Holladay.

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

1. **80% attendance** as specified by VST requirements for semester courses;
2. **Participation in class** discussions and preparation of in-class discussion exercises.
Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.
3. **Four out of five short in-class exercises** on theological themes in the prophets; as described in syllabus; due as assigned in calendar; evaluative criteria: papers show a close reading of the biblical text and demonstrate ability to extract and describe the most important theological themes in prophetic material.
4. **Group Presentation** Working in a small group, you will prepare a passage from one of the HB prophetic books for the whole class, to help the class explore possible interpretations of the passage and will demonstrate thoughtful pedagogical methods.
5. **A final exegesis paper** following guidelines in Critical Interpretation Paper Guidelines, which will be handed out in class; OR
6. **A final pedagogical project** in which the student creates an adult education curriculum on some aspect of prophecy.

Selected Bibliography for the Study of the Prophets

Commentary Series [# of volumes vary; some are older; not every series complete for HB/OT]

Anchor Bible Commentary. Doubleday Press.

Feminist Companion Series. Sheffield Academic Press.

Forms of Old Testament Literature. Eerdmans.

Hermeneia Commentary. Fortress Press.

Interpretation Commentary. Westminster/John Knox.

Interpreter's Bible Commentary. Abingdon.

New Century Bible Commentary. Eerdmans.

Old Testament Library Commentary. Westminster/John Knox

The Women's Bible Commentary. Westminster/John Knox Press.

Word Biblical Commentary. Word Books.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *A History of Prophecy in Israel.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipatory*

Word. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

Carter, Charles E. and Meyers, Carol L. (eds.) *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996.

Clements, Ronald E. *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

Coggins, Richard, Anthony Phillips and Michael Knibb, eds. *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honor of Peter R. Ackroyd.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Gitay, Yehoshua. *Prophecy and Prophets.* Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997.

Gordon, P.R., ed. *The Place is Too Small For Us: Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship.* Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 5. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

Gottwald, Norman and Richard A. Horsley, eds. *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics.* Revised edition. Maryknoll, NY: 1993.

- Heschel, Abraham J. *Prophets*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Matthews, Victor H. *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001.
- Mays, James L./Paul Achtemeier, eds. *Interpreting the Prophets*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- Petersen, David L.. *The Prophetic Literature*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Premnath, D.N. *Eighth century prophets : a social analysis*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003.
- Wilson, Robert R. *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

Suggested Readings for Socio-Political Interpretive Perspectives

- Bailey, Randall C. et al, eds. *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Newsom, Carol A. and Ringe, Sharon H., eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- Patte, Daniel, ed. *Global Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Segovia, Fernando and Mary Ann Tolbert. *Reading From this Place*. Vol.1: *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*. Vol.2: *Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Amos or Micah

- Marvin L. Chaney, "Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Economy Critiqued by the Eighth-Century Prophets," *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 250-263.
- Itumeleng J. Mosala, "A Materialist Reading of Micah," *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 264-295.

Hosea

- Phyllis A. Bird, "To Play the Harlot: An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor," *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 296-312.
- Renita J. Weems, "Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?" *Semeia* 47, pp. 87-104.

Jeremiah

- Henri Mottu, "Jeremiah vs. Hananiah: Ideology and Truth in Old Testament Prophecy," *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 313-328.
- Burke O.Long, "The Social Dimensions of Prophetic Conflict," *The Place is Too Small for Us*. pp. 308-331.

II Isaiah

- Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Eagletonian Reading," *The Bible and Liberation*, pp. 329-342.
- J. Severino Croatto, "Exegesis of Second Isaiah from the Perspective of the Oppressed: Paths for Reflection," *Reading From This Place* (Vol. 2), pp.219-236.

Daniel

- John J. Collins, "Daniel and His Social World," *Interpreting the Prophets*, pp. 249-260.
- Nestor Miguez, "Apocalyptic and the Economy: A Reading of Revelation 18 from the Experience of Economic Exclusion," *Reading from This Place*, pp. 250-262.