

Old Testament Prophets

Horizon College and Seminary, Winter 2010

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Course Description

An introduction to the method and message of the Old Testament prophets in light of the scholarly understanding of the social, religious, and political dynamics of Israel and Judah during the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian periods. Consideration will also be given to the relevance and implications of the Old Testament prophetic books for religious life and faith in the contemporary period.

Course Textbooks

Matthews, Victor H. *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001.

Holy Bible (RSV and NRSV are good translations).

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will

- Have a thorough understanding of the important scholarly discussions surrounding the individual prophetic books.
- Have a comprehensive understanding of the content of these books in light of their place in the Ancient Near East.
- Be able to identify the foundational theological themes of the prophetic writers.
- Be able to identify and discuss the novel aspects of ancient Israelite religion as found in the Prophets.
- Have a basic knowledge of the important critical resources available for the study of the Hebrew Bible Prophets.
- Be able to articulate some important implications of these texts for the contemporary period and their own personal lives.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introductory Matters: The Rise of the Prophet; Prophets and the Prophetic Message; Prophets in their Religious, Social, Political, and Historical Contexts; Prophets in the OT Narrative

Week 2: Prophets of the Assyrian Period: Introduction

Week 3: Prophets of the Assyrian Period: Amos; Hosea

Week 4: Prophets of the Assyrian Period: Isaiah 1-39; Micah

Week 5: Prophets of the Babylonian Period: Introduction; Zephaniah

Week 6: Prophets of the Babylonian Period: Jeremiah; Nahum

Week 7: Prophets of the Babylonian Period: Habakkuk; Ezekiel

Week 8: Prophets of the Babylonian Period: Obadiah; Isaiah 40-55

Week 9: Prophets of the Persian Period: Introduction; Isaiah 56-66

Week 10: Prophets of the Persian Period: Haggai; Zechariah

Week 11: Prophets of the Persian Period: Malachi; Jonah; Joel

Week 12: From Prophecy to Apocalypse; Interpretation of the Prophets in the NT; The Voice of the Prophets in the Contemporary Age

Course Requirements

Required readings:

Students are required to read all portions of the course textbook as assigned by the instructor. Although no formal grades will be given for the completion of these readings, the course text forms a valuable supplement to the class lectures. As such, it is expected that the student will interact with the text and prepare him/herself for any related questions that might appear on class quizzes or the final exam.

Quizzes (3x10%):

In place of a midterm exam, students will be required to write three quizzes on dates assigned by the instructor. These quizzes are cumulative in nature and will reflect material from the class lectures and assigned readings up to, but not including, the day of the quiz.

Research Essay (30%):

Students will be required to submit one research essay of no less than 8 pages in length (MLA format). In consultation with the instructor, students will choose a topic from one of the following four general categories:

- An exegesis of a selected passage from the Prophets

- A history of interpretation of an important passage from the Prophets
- An exploration of a major theological theme from the Prophets
- The interpretation of the Prophets during the Second Temple period

Final Exam (40%):

Based on class lectures and assigned textbook readings.