



PROVIDENCE
— EST. 1972 —
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OT5311 The Prophetic Books

Prerequisite: *None*.

3 credit hours

January Module
January 6 – 10, 2020

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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.

*Note: This course will take a thematic approach as it explores the various themes, motifs, communication styles, theology of the OT Prophets primarily through the case studies of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel*.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, the students will:

1. Understand the messages of the prophets in their original contexts of the social, political, economic, and religious life of Israel and Judah, and the Ancient Near East.
2. Understand the key theological teachings of the Old Testament Prophets.
3. Analyze the biblical text from a literary and theological perspective, while reading each book in its final form and within the broader context of the canon of Christian scripture.
4. Become familiar with some of the critical issues in interpreting the prophetic books, such as issues of dating and composition.
5. Evaluate the prophets' understanding of their prophetic task and how that ministry functioned in relationship to God's people, including the civil leadership, the religious leadership of other prophets and priests, and the general populace, and apply those insights into ministry within the contemporary church and world.
6. Appreciate how the prophets addressed their own times with respect to their communication techniques, so as to apply such in "prophetically" addressing our contemporary culture and church.
7. Apply the lessons learned from studying the content of the prophetic messages to their own personal lives and Christian journey

Required Textbooks & Readings

Contemporary translation of the Bible (in class the professor will be using the NLT translation)
Textbooks

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Handbook on the Prophets*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2002. (all pages pertaining to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) (261 pp)

Carlson, Robert A. *Preaching like the Prophets* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. 2016). (178 pp)

Articles or Book Excerpts

(These articles or excerpts will be made available to students in electronic format.)

- Various articles on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel in the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (74 pp)
- Friebel, Kelvin G. “Sign Acts” in Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012). (6 pp)
- Schultz, Richard. “Hearing the Major Prophets: ‘Your Ears Are Open, but You Hear Nothing’ (Isa. 42.20)” chapter 14 and Aubrey Spears “Preaching the Old Testament” chapter 16 in Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman, eds., *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God’s Address* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012). (49 pp)
- Redditt, Paul L. “Approach to the Major Prophets” chapter 2 in *Introduction to the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). (29 pp)
- Dempster, S. “Prophetic Books” in T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000). (8 pp)
- Fox, Michael V. “The Rhetoric of Ezekiel’s Vision of the Valley of the Bones”. *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51 (1980):1-15.

Course Assignments

1) Required Readings:

- The Readings will be reported on “Reading Report Forms” provided by the instructor.
- There is no written review or summary of the Readings. The student only needs to indicate how much of the assigned readings they did. The student should however come to each class prepared to discuss the Biblical text by bringing several questions they may have pertaining to some feature, issue, translation, etc., of the pertinent passage.

1.a. Biblical Text:

- The best way to read the biblical books is to do so in conjunction with reading the Required Textbook (Chisholm)
- Percentage of Final Grade: 10 %

► Pre-Course Bible Reading:

- Read through the entire books of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel*
- Due Date: 10 January 2020 (Friday of Module Week)

1.b. Require Readings (see the list above)

- Due Date: 31 March 2020
- Percentage of Final Grade: 10 %

2. Literary – Theological Study of a Prophetic Passage:

- Choose a particular passage from one of the Prophetic Books. Make sure the passage is a complete literary unit.
- Get approval for the passage, from the instructor, before beginning the assignment and before the end of the module week.
- The Study will consist of 5 (five) parts:

(2.a) Literary & Rhetorical Study: (~ 4 pages: 1200 words total)

- Provide a discussion of the narrow literary genre of the selected passage, discussing the narratological flow of the passage (who is speaking, to whom, how, when, and why), how it fits within the overall movement of that section and book, plus a short statement of both: (a) the rhetorical situation being addressed, and (b) the persuasive purpose the prophetic message is trying to achieve (e.g., remorse & repentance for sin; an acknowledgement of having sinned; a renewed sense of hope, etc.) For the concept of “rhetorical situation”, read Fox (1980).

(2.b) Structural Outline: (~ 2 pages; 600 words)

- Outline the passage according to its literary & content divisions.
- In addition to just an outline, briefly describe the structural flow of the passage from its beginning to its end, noting the structural links that tie the passage together.

(2.c) Exegetical Issues: (~ 4 pages: 1200 words)

- Briefly discuss, any significant exegetical issues (key words, themes, variant readings, etc.) involved in understanding or translating the text.

(2.d) Theological Main Point/s of the Passage: (~ 5 pages: 1500 words)

- Summarize the main theological point/s that the passage is making, and how it makes that point.
- Briefly state any other **key** theological concepts found within the passage.

(2.e) Bibliography of Collateral Reading:

- Read 150 pages of collateral readings *specifically* on the passage you study.
- Weigh the readings more toward scholarly commentaries / articles, but you can also include commentaries / articles designed for preaching the passage.
- Turn in a Bibliography of *what you read*. Cite the *specific* pages from each source that you read.
- Include at the bottom of the bibliography, the total number of pages that you read from the various sources (should total minimally 150 pp.)

- ▶ Percentage of Grade: 45 %
- ▶ Assignment Due Date: 24 February 2020

3. Sermon on the Prophetic Passage

- On the same Biblical Passage that you did the “Literary-Theological Study” (above), you will then develop a sermon on that passage that can be preached.

- The sermon manuscript **MUST** be written out in full sentences (**FULL MANUSCRIPT**), regardless of the type of manuscript that you would normally preach from. (This is merely for the purpose of the instructor being able to know exactly what you will say. Thus, merely a sermon outline is not sufficient, and when using illustrations, they must be written out completely).
- If preached, the sermon should be about 20-30 minutes in length (approximately 10 pages: 3000 words).
- As a sermon, it must reflect both solid exposition of the text, as well as application to the contemporary audience.

- ▶ Percentage of Grade: 35 %
- ▶ Assignment Due Date: 23 March 2020

Assignment Summary

Assignment	Pages	% of Grade	Due Date:
1a) Reading: Biblical Text ▶ Pre-Course	~ 140 pp.	10 %	10 January
1b) Reading: Textbook & Articles	612 pp.	10 %	31 March
2) Literary-Theological Study Paper (a) Paper (b) Collateral Reading	~ 16 pp. 150 pp.	45 %	24 February
3) Sermon	~ 10 pp.	35 %	23 March

General Guidelines for the Submission of Written Work

Formatting Papers

Failure to follow these guidelines warrants a grade reduction.

- Papers should be typed, double-spaced and follow the appropriate formatting guidelines (e.g. 1 inch margins).
- Follow either [Chicago Style](#) or the [Horizon Format Guide](#) consistently.
- Employ gender-inclusive language wherever possible and appropriate.
- Use a standard font (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Georgia, Tahoma, Times New Roman, Verdana).
- Use *italics* rather than underlining (including in the footnotes and bibliography).
- Use footnotes only, not endnotes.
- The length of papers should not be less than 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall below the length guidelines may not be graded and will receive a grade reduction.

Submitting Your Assignments

- Assignments can be submitted via [Populi](#).
- This [video](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi (the link to the video is also available on the info tab of the Populi course page).

Adjustment to Due Dates

- Please contact the professor well in advance if you would like to request an adjustment to any of your due dates.
- A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 days late, penalty of 20%. After six days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0.

Grading

A+	97-100%	C+	77-79%
A	93-96%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-79%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
		F	<60%

Course Outline / Class Schedule

- Since the class time is in conjunction with the undergraduate course, the professor will set up a time during the module week to meet separately with the graduate students.

Monday, 6 January	9:00-9:15	Introductions & Assignments into Study Calendar	
	9:15-12:00	Interpreting OT Prophecy	
	1:00-2:30	Contingent Nature of OT Prophecy	
	2:30-4:00	Timeline of the OT Prophets	
Tuesday, 7 January	9:00-12:00	Introduction to Isaiah and Isaiah 1-12 (hearing the OT in/with/beyond the NT)	
	1:00-4:00	Isaiah 40-55 (Servant/s of the LORD)	
Wednesday, 8 January	9:00-12:00	Isaiah 56-66 (Eschatology)	
	1:00-4:00	Introduction to Jeremiah and Jeremiah 1-5 (Calling)	
Thursday, 9 January	9:00-10:30	Jeremiah 6-52 (Pathos and the Prophetic)	
	10:30-12:15	Chapel	
	1:15-4:00	Introduction to Ezekiel and Ezekiel 1-10 (Prophetic Enactments)	
Friday, 10 January	9:00-12:00	Ezekiel 11-36 (Judgment)	
	1:00-4:00	Ezekiel 37-48 (Spirit and Life)	