

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OT 750 *Old Testament Prophetical Books*
Sept 6-7; Oct 4-5; Nov 1-2
Fall 2013

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary objective of the course is to develop skills to interpret prophetical books from the perspective of the Hebrew text. In addition to building upon exegetical methodology learned at the 600-level, class times will be devoted to an examination of the prophets' main themes against their historical and biblical-theological backdrop.

- Exegetical steps. How to interpret the Hebrew text of the prophets.
- Biblical-theological context. What overarching principles govern the message/approach of the prophets and how Yahweh's character is revealed in the prophets
- Historical context. How the prophets fit within the environment of Iron II Israel and related Near Eastern polities.
- Practical context. Developing skills to preach and teach from OT Hebrew
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Additional notes:

- Course documents (handouts, Powerpoints, etc.) will be available on Cams. It is the student's responsibility to check Cams for announcements, handouts, etc.

INTERNET USAGE

Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. "Surfing the web," checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2 vols. (Eerdmans, 1986, 1998)
- A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Indiana University, 1985)
- W. A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Zondervan, 1996)

Please also consult/review these 600-level texts:

- D. K. Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 4th ed. (Westminster/John Knox, 2009).
- E. R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism* (Baker, 1994).
- R. N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 4rd ed. (Westminster/John Knox, 2009).
- G. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Zondervan, 2003)

IV. HEBREW COMPETENCY EXAM

All 700-Level students are required to take a Hebrew competency exam that includes translation and parsing. The exam is scheduled for the first day of class (Friday Sept 6)

Hebrew competency for the course:

Hebrew competency must be demonstrated both in terms of the language and exegetical methodology in order to pass the course, regardless of grades on the two tests and exegesis paper. Thus, if a student fails to demonstrate Hebrew and/or exegesis competence in any aspect of the course, he/she will not be able to receive a passing final grade.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Mid-Term and Final Tests (50%):

Part I: Translation and parsing (with exegetical comments) of a set text covered in class (no lexicon allowed).

Part II: Identification and short essay questions based on the required readings and materials covered in class.

Hebrew Exegesis Paper (30 pages; 50% of course grade): Specific guidelines will be made available in class. Students are expected to abide by the academic policies as found in the Student Handbook (re: plagiarism, late assignments, etc.). For style consult *The SBL Handbook of Style*. This is especially important for footnotes and bibliography.

Class Participation: Students need to come to class prepared to discuss (= read, parse, comment on exegetical steps) the assigned texts. Unexcused absences and absences beyond one class session of 3 hours will result in loss of class participation grade (in fairness to those who attend all the classes).

Readings:

- VanGemeren and Berlin should be read in their entirety
- Select articles on the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) (on CAMS)
- The prophets in translation (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.)
- Regarding Oswalt, the expectation is that students will critically interact (not simply read) with the assigned sections of the commentary.

Students need to submit a written report of the percentage of readings completed.

DUE DATES:

- **Exegesis paper: TBD**

VI. PREPARATION BEFORE FIRST CLASS

- Review 600-level texts *Old Testament Exegesis* (D. Stuart); *Old Testament Textual Criticism* (Brotzmann)
- Read the prophets in translation (each reading in one sitting)
Note: this reading would fulfill the course requirements of reading the prophets in translation (see above).

VII. CLASS SCHEDULE

FIRST WEEKEND

“Prophetic Playbook”

- Prophetic Books: the Big Picture
- Exegetical Method: “The Big Picture of the Book”
- Hebrew competency exam
- Oswalt vol. 1, Introduction pp. 3-76
- Isaiah 1 (cf. Oswalt)

“Exile”

- Isaiah 5:8-30 (cf. Oswalt)
- VanGemeren Part 1
- Method: “Text Criticism and Translation”
- Begin Berlin

“Nations are Accountable”

- Isaiah 13 (cf. Oswalt)
- Method: “Hebrew Syntax of Poetry”
- Begin VanGemeren Part 2

NOTE: choice of passage for the exegesis paper is due the first week after weekend #1!

SECOND WEEKEND

“Heart Problems”

- Jeremiah 17:1-14
- Method: “Lexical analysis of Poetry: the question of metaphorical language”
- Finish VanGemeren Part 2

“Promise of Zion”

- Isa 2:1-4; Isa 19:16-25 (cf. Oswalt)
- Method: “Structural analysis of Poetry”
- Begin VanGemeren Part 3

“Hope”

- Isaiah 40 (cf. Oswalt, vol. 2 Introduction and related materials)
- Method: “The prophets in OT context”
- Finish VanGemeren Part 3

Mid-Term Test: to be taken by Friday October 11 (Isaiah 1; 5:8-30; Isa 13; Jer 7:1-14 are the Hebrew texts to prepare for the exam)

THIRD WEEKEND

“Substitutionary Sacrifice”

- Isa 52:13 – 53:1-12 (cf. Oswalt)
- Petter (*TJ* 2011)
- Method: “The prophets in their cultural environment”

“Substitutionary Sacrifice” (continued)

- Isa 52:13 – 53:1-12 (cf. Oswalt)
- Method: “The prophets in NT context” [focus on Isaiah in Romans]

“Inaugurated Restoration”

- Haggai 2
- Method: “The Prophets in Theological context”

“New Zion”

- Zech 14 (**note:** the chapter is not on the final but it needs to be prepared for class)
- Method: How to interpret eschatological prophecy
- “Contextualization” and “Application”

Final Test: to be taken by Friday November 15 (Isa 2:1-4; Isa 19:16-25; Isa 40; Isa 52:13-53:12; Haggai 2 are the Hebrew texts to prepare for the exam)

EXEGESIS PAPERS DUE DATE TBD: (pdf format)

VIII. BIBLICAL HEBREW SELECT REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dictionaries/Concordances

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Hebrew Vocabulary

Landes, G. *A Student's Vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew: Listed according to Frequency and Cognate*. 2d ed. SBLRBS 41. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

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Hebrew Text

Brotzman, E.R. *Old Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

Kelley, P.H., Mynatt, D.S., Crawford, T.G. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Scott, W.R. *A Simplified Guide to BHS*. N.Richland Hills, TX: Bibal, 1987.

Tov, E. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress 2001.

Würthwein, E. *The Text of the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995.

Narrative

Alter, R. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basicbooks, 1981.

Fokkelman, J.A. *Reading Biblical Narrative. An Introductory Guide*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1999.

Gunn, D., Fewell, D. *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1993.

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Prophetic books - 17 books Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. A list of books with brief descriptions of contents. Pentateuch - 5 books. Prophetic - 17 books. Major Prophets - 5 books. Isaiah - Looks at the sin of Judah and proclaims God's judgment. B. OLD TESTAMENT (cont'd). Prophetic Books of the Old Testament. Literary Activity of Prophets. We have already seen that the earliest prophecies of certain date are of the 8th century, though there is a probability that Joel flourished in the 9th century, in the reign of Joash of Judah, and that the opening verses of Amos are cited from his book. On the other hand, the old school of prophecy, whose members from Samuel to Elisha were men of action rather than of letters, was not likely to leave behind it any written oracles.