

SYLLABUS: PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Hebrew Studies 332/Jewish Studies 332/Religious Studies 332/Lit Trans 332

Spring, 2011

Class email list: hebrst332-1-s11@lists.wisc.edu

Steve M. Modugno – email: modugno@wisc.edu

Texts

Redditt, Paul L. *Introduction to the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eedrmans, 2008.

The New Revised Standard Bible. You can access the NRSV online via links embedded in the schedule on Learn@UW. The New Revised Standard Version taps the best scholarship regarding both what the "original" Hebrew text was and how that text can best be translated into English.

Goals

1. To become acquainted with the prophets of the Bible by reading selected passages from each.
2. To develop skills for reading the prophetic books. Your own reflections on the passages you study, informed by what you learn through reading and in class, will be the most important resource you will develop.
3. To understand how biblical scholarship has studied the prophets and to learn what it has uncovered about how the prophetic books were composed and how the prophets and their words are portrayed.
4. To understand what a prophet was in ancient Israel, how prophetism arose, how prophets were perceived by their contemporaries and what roles they played in their society.
5. To write well about a passage you have studied.

Means to accomplish goals

1. Read the assigned materials *prior* to class. Doing so will prepare you for the issues to be discussed.
2. Faithfully read the assigned passages for general reading from the prophets (marked PT). Read especially carefully the texts marked FT (Focus Text) which will receive special consideration in class. Questions to ponder about some FT passages will be posted via embedded links alongside the FT passage reference.
3. Attend class, ask questions and take good notes. The assigned readings offer important introductions and discussions, but they are simply a starting point. The class sessions will supplement, clarify, and modify those readings, especially as we examine specific, representative passages.
4. Write three examinations: February 24; March 31; May 8. These exams will test your knowledge of the readings, the lectures, and your grasp of the texts discussed in class. N.B. *EACH EXAM TESTS ONLY MATERIAL COVERED SINCE THE PREVIOUS EXAM.* You may use the class email list to set up study groups but NOT to exchange answers to the study questions. Barring extraordinary circumstances, you are expected to take each exam at the time it is scheduled.
5. Write a brief paper (5 pages maximum) on a passage from one of the prophets, using a method of close reading you will learn during the semester. For particulars of the paper and

- a list of recommended passages, consult the instructions for the paper. Your TA will have additional information and will specify when the final product is due. A half grade reduction will be assessed for each day a paper is late.
6. There will be at least two extra credit opportunities for you. You may attend one of the following lectures and write a one-page (double-spaced) reaction to the lecture. Submit it to Steve Modugno **no later than one week after the lecture** to receive extra credit. The first lecture will be given on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Pyle Center Auditorium (702 Langdon St.). It is titled "Holy Tongues, Holy Lands: Contesting the Sacred in the Making of a Hebrew National Culture" and will be presented by Professor Arieh Saposnik. The second lecture will be given on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. in the AT&T Lounge in the Pyle Center (702 Langdon St.). It is titled "Shifting Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls" and will be presented by Professor John J. Collins.
 6. A class email list is available (hebrst332-1-s11@lists.wisc.edu). All posts to the list are expected to be germane to the course and show proper respect for other class members.
 7. If you are registered for honors credit, please contact me early in the term.

Course Grades

Course grades will be computed using the following values: a) exams: first exam, 20%, second exam, 25%, third exam, 25%; b) discussion section, 30% (includes the paper).

Office Hours

I will be available in my office (1352 Van Hise) from 9-10AM on Tuesdays and from 1:00-2:00PM on Thursdays. If neither of these times is compatible with your schedule, please contact me (modugno@wisc.edu) to arrange an appointment.

Class Assignments

Key to abbreviations:

PR = Paul L. Redditt, *Introduction to the Prophets*

L = readings available through the course schedule on Learn@UW

PT = required reading in Prophetic Texts associated with the day's topic (*You can access the NRSV via the schedule on Learn@UW.*)

FT = Focus Texts will receive special scrutiny in class

Those unfamiliar with the "story line" of the Bible might benefit from two web-based presentations that can be accessed via links at this point in the online schedule. The first is a PowerPoint presentation on the "Narrative Thread of the Pentateuch," which provides an overview of the history of Israel as reported in Joshua through 2 Kings.

Schedule

Week One

January 18: Introduction

January 20: Prophecy and the Bible

PR 21-51

L An overview of the material on textual criticism presented in class is available through the online schedule.

PT 1 Samuel 3; 9:1-10:16 (i.e., chapter 3; chapter 9, verse 1, through chapter 10, verse 16)

Week Two

January 25: Prophecy in Israel and its environs

PR 1-14 (down to "Prophecy as Literature")

L Robert R. Wilson, "Early Israelite Prophecy."

January 27: Prophetic records in Israel

PR 14-17

L Examine Amos 3:3-8, using the questions at the bottom of the page, and bring to class with it the document, "My/His Servants the Prophets"

L Hans Walter Wolf, "Prophecy from the Eighth through the Fifth Century."

Week Three

February 1: Redaction, Canonicity and the Book of the Twelve

PR 197-208

L Brevard Childs, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature."

February 3: Hosea, Son of Beeri, Hebrew poetry

PR 209-226 (down to "Joel")

L Adele Berlin, "Reading Biblical Poetry."

FT Hosea 1:1-9 (i.e., chapter 1, verses 1-9)

Week Four

February 8: Hosea, Son of Beeri

L Philip J. King, "The Great 8th Century."

FT Hosea 1-3

PT Hosea 11

February 10: Joel

PR 226-237

L Harold Brodsky, "An Enormous Horde Arrayed for Battle: Locusts in the book of Joel."

PT Joel 1-3

Week Five

February 15: Amos of Tekoa

PR 237-248

PT Amos 1-5

February 17: Amos of Tekoa

FT Amos 1:3-2:16

Week Six

February 22: Amos of Tekoa

FT & L Study Amos 7:10-17 in light of the questions printed below the text.

February 24: **EXAM 1**

Week Seven

March 1: Obadiah & Jonah
PR 249-255, 256-266
PT Obadiah (all 21 verses!); Jonah 1-4
March 3: Micah of Moresheth
PR 266-283
PT Micah 1-4; 7

Week Eight

March 8: Micah of Moresheth
FT Micah 4:1-8; 6:1-8
March 10: Nahum & Habakkuk
PR 284-292, 292-303
PT Nahum 1, Habakkuk 1

***** SPRING BREAK *****

Week Nine

March 22: Zephaniah
PR 303-314
PT Zephaniah 1-3
March 24: Haggai & Zechariah 1-8
PR 315-321, 321-331
PT Haggai 1-2

Week Ten

March 29: Zechariah 9-14 & Malachi
PR 332-344, 344-355
L Richard S. Hanson, "The Collection of Prophetic Books ends with Three Massas: But What's a Massa?"
PT Malachi 1-4
March 31: **EXAM 2**

Week Eleven

April 5: Isaiah, Son of Amoz
PR 53-80
L Print and bring to class the pdf copy of Isaiah 6
PT Isaiah 6-8
April 7: Isaiah, Son of Amoz
PT Isaiah 23-27
FT Isaiah 5:1-7 and Isaiah 8:16-20 (consider the questions posted via the link on the schedule)

Week Twelve

April 12: Isaiah 40-55

PR 81-101 (down to "Introduction to the Prophet(s) Behind Isaiah 56-66")

L Frank M. Cross, "The Council of <Adonai> in Second Isaiah."

FT Isaiah 40:1-11

April 14: Isaiah 40-55

PT Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9

FT Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Week Thirteen

April 19: No class in observance of Pesach (Passover)

April 21: Isaiah 56-66

PR 101-108

PT Isaiah 56-59

FT Isaiah 56:1-8

Week Fourteen

April 26: Jeremiah, Son of Hilkiyah

PR 109-131

L Bring to class the comparison of 25:1-13 in the Septuagint and the Masoretic text *and* examine the comparison of 2 Kings 22-23 and 2 Chronicles 34-35: what differences are there between Kings and Chronicles in their reports of Josiah's rule? Bring to class the following documents: Jeremiah Scrolls, Jeremiah Composition.

PT Jeremiah 1-3; 7; 13; 15:15-21; 20:7-12; 32; 36

April 28: Jeremiah, Son of Hilkiyah

FT Jeremiah 1:4-19

Week Fifteen

May 3: Ezekiel, Son of Buzi

PR 148-167

PT Ezekiel 1-3; 8-11

FT Ezekiel 1:1-28

May 5: Ezekiel, Son of Buzi

L Ronald Troxel, "Ezekiel 37:1-14 – A Close Reading."

FT Ezekiel 37:1-14; Ezekiel 18

EXAM 3: May 8, 7:45-9:45 AM (location TBA)