

Prophets of the Bible

Hebrew / Jewish / Religious Studies / Literature in Translation 332

Spring 2012 (TR 2:30 – 3:45, Ingraham 19)

Lecturer: Christopher M. Jones

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: cjones4@wisc.edu (preferred)

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Office hours: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Tuesdays

Location: Espresso Royale, 650 State Street (all meetings here unless otherwise specified)

Classlist email: hebrst332-1-s12@lists.wisc.edu

WHAT THIS COURSE IS ABOUT

1. **Prophets.** What is a prophet? What is prophecy? How did prophecy develop in ancient Israelite society and how did it change over time? What was the function and social location of the biblical prophets? What was their message?
2. **Prophetic books.** How did there come to be books attributed to prophets in the Bible? How did these books develop, and what role did scribes play in this? What relationship do prophetic books have to the historical prophets to whom they are attributed?

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments:

- Three in-class quizzes: 15% (Dates: **Feb. 7, Feb. 28, Apr. 12**)
- Midterm Exam: 25% (In class; date: **Mar. 15**)
- Final Exam: 30% (Date and time: **May 18, 5:05 – 7:05 p.m.**; location TBD)
- Discussion Section (including Close Reading Paper): 30%
 - See TA syllabus for more information

Other Requirements:

- Read the materials assigned for each lecture before date for which it is assigned (lectures will presume that you have done the reading and will build on it).
- Attend lectures, take good notes, ask questions, and participate in discussions.

Grading Scale:

A	94-100	BC	76-82
AB	88-93	C	70-75
B	82-87	D	60-69

EXAMS AND QUIZZES

- The midterm exam covers material from the first half of the course. The final is cumulative but will focus on material from the second half. Any questions on the final concerning material from the first half of the course will be taken from the midterm and the first two quizzes (with modifications).
- Exams and quizzes will be written in-class and *must be taken on the day they are scheduled*, barring extraordinary circumstances (with proper documentation upon request).
- Exams and quizzes will include identification, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and matching. Exams will also include short answer and at least one essay.

GENERAL POLICIES

- Let me know immediately if you have any need for special accommodations (due to religious observance, physical or learning disabilities, or life circumstances beyond your control, etc.). We will work together to ensure that you are able to participate to the fullest in this course.
- If you are a McBurney student, you will need to provide a copy of your visa to your TA.
- This is a large lecture course and attendance is not taken in lecture. Nevertheless, the TAs notice who regularly attends lecture, asks questions, and participates. They also notice who is routinely absent and who behaves disruptively. These come into consideration for borderline grades and can affect discussion section grades.
- This is an academic course on sacred texts. We approach the Bible differently here than we would in, for instance, a church or a synagogue. Even if your faith tradition gives you a strong background in biblical literature, it is no substitute for the lectures and readings in this class.
- *Lecture laptop policy*: non-educational computing, while not prohibited, can be distracting to others – keep it to a minimum. No videos or flash animation. Nothing offensive or inappropriate. Please use good judgment.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND MISCONDUCT

- Violations of the UW Madison academic honor code (UWS 14) will be dealt with swiftly, harshly, and thoroughly. If you have *any* questions about whether an act on your part might be construed as academic misconduct, please talk to us about it ASAP.

COURSE READINGS

1. Ronald L. Troxel, *Prophetic Literature: From Oracles to Books* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). Available at Rainbow Bookstore Coop (426 W. Gilman). **RT**
2. New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. A cheap copy (\$10) available at Rainbow Coop next to Troxel's book. **HB**
3. Course pack readings posted on Learn@UW. **CP**

SCHEDULE

Week 1

Tuesday, Jan. 24 – Course Introduction (no readings)

Thursday, Jan. 26 – No Prophets! No Bible!

RT: 1-18 (Ch. 1, “What is a Prophetic Book?”)

HB: Isaiah 1, 40

Week 2

Tuesday, Jan. 31 – The prophets in historical and geographical context

CP: Seltzer, Excerpt from *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*

CP: Matthews, Excerpt from *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*

N.B.: Read with the help of the maps posted on Learn@UW

Thursday, Feb. 2 – What is prophecy? What are prophets?

CP: Troxel, “Prophecy in Israel” (from forthcoming publication)

CP: Selections from Matthews and Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*

HB: 1 Sam 9; 1 Kings 13, 22; 2 Kings 3

Week 3

Tuesday, Feb. 7 – Hosea: Trouble in paradise

Quiz #1 at the beginning of class

RT: 19-36 (Ch. 2, “The Book of Hosea”)

HB: Hosea (Skim all; read chs. 4 and 14 carefully)

Thursday, Feb. 9 – Hosea in history / History in Hosea

CP: Barton, “History and Rhetoric in the Prophets”

HB: Hosea 1-3, 5:1-6:6, 11:1-12:14

Week 4

Tuesday, Feb. 14 – Amos: “I’m not a prophet!”

RT: 37-53 (Ch. 3, “The Book of Amos”)

CP: Richardson, “Amos’ Four Visions of Judgment and Hope”

HB: Amos (Skim all; read chs. 3, 7-9 carefully)

Thursday, Feb. 16 – Micah: Old time religion

RT: 54-71 (Ch. 4, “The Book of Micah”)

HB: Micah (Skim all; read chs. 1-2, 7 carefully)

Week Five

Tuesday, Feb. 21 – Social justice in Amos and Micah

CP: Malchow, Excerpt from *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*

HB: Amos 4-6; Micah 3, 6

Thursday, Feb. 23 – Zephaniah and the Twelve

RT: 72-90 (Ch. 5, “The Book of Zephaniah and the Twelve”)

HB: Zephaniah 1-3 (whole book)

Week Six

Tuesday, Feb. 28 – Joel and Obadiah

Quiz #2 at the beginning of class

RT: 91-107 (Ch. 6, “The Books of Joel and Obadiah”)

HB: Joel 1-3 (whole book), Obadiah (whole book – one chapter)

Thursday, Mar. 1 – Nahum and Habakkuk

RT: 108-124 (Ch. 7, “The Books of Nahum and Habakkuk”)

HB: Nahum 1-3, Habakkuk 1-3

Week Seven

Tuesday, Mar. 6 – Persian era prophecy: First Zechariah

RT: 142-154 (Ch. 9, “Zechariah 1-8”)

HB: Zechariah 1-3, 7-8

Thursday, Mar. 8 – Narrative prophetic books: Jonah and Haggai

RT: 125-141 (Ch. 8, “The Books of Jonah and Haggai”)

CP: McKenzie, “Jonah and Genre”

HB: Jonah 1-4

Week Eight

Tuesday, Mar. 13 – “Miscellaneous”: Second Zechariah and Malachi

RT: 155-171 (Ch. 10, “Zechariah 9-14, Malachi, and the Twelve”)

HB: Malachi 1-4

Thursday, Mar. 15 **MIDTERM**

Week Nine

Tuesday, Mar. 20 – Reading the prophets in the ancient world and today

CP: Blenkinsopp, Excerpt from *A History of Prophecy in Israel*

Thursday, Mar. 22 – Isaiah as a book / How Isaiah became a book

RT: 172-177 (part of Ch. 11, “The Book of Isaiah”)

CP: Childs, Excerpt from *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*

CP: Summary of Isaiah’s contents

HB: Isaiah 15-16

Week Ten

Tuesday, Mar. 27 – Isaiah son of Amoz: a memoir?

RT: 177-187 (part of Ch. 11, “The Book of Isaiah”)

HB: Isaiah 6-8, 11, 20, 36-39

Thursday, Mar. 29 – A prophet reads Scripture: Second Isaiah

RT: 190-195 (part of ch. 12, “The Book of Isaiah (Continued)”)

CP: Dick, “Worshipping Idols: What Isaiah Didn’t Know”

HB: Isaiah 40, 43-44, 51-52

Spring Break (No class Apr. 3 or Apr. 5)

Week Eleven

Tuesday, Apr. 10 – The Servant(s) of the Lord in Isaiah 40-66

RT: 195-207 (part of ch. 12, “The Book of Isaiah (Continued)”)

HB: Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12, 65-66

Thursday, Apr. 12 – Jeremiah, the weeping prophet

Quiz #3 at the beginning of class

RT: 208-213 (up to “The Composition of the Book”)

HB: Jeremiah 1, 7, 21-31

Week Twelve

Tuesday, Apr. 17 – Manufacturing the Book of Jeremiah

RT: 213-224 (remainder of Ch. 13)

HB: Jeremiah 10, 35-39, 52

Thursday, Apr. 19 – Manufacturing Jeremiah, the weeping prophet

CP: van der Toorn, Excerpt from *Scribal Culture*

HB: Jeremiah 15, 20, 49, 51

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, Apr. 24 – Ezekiel, or, Anything worth doing is worth over-doing

RT: 225-241 (Ch. 14, “The Book of Ezekiel”)

HB: Ezekiel 1-3

Thursday, Apr. 26 – God, Ezekiel, and Jerusalem part I: the Fall

HB: Ezekiel 4-5, 8-11, 14, 18, 24

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, May 1 – Prophetic pornography: Ezekiel and gender

CP: Exum, Excerpt from *Plotted, Shot, and Painted*

HB: Ezek. 16, 20, 23; review Hosea 1-3

Thursday, May 3 – God, Ezekiel, and Jerusalem part II: Everything in its right place

CP: Fox, “The Rhetoric of Ezekiel’s Vision of the Valley of the Bones”

HB: Ezekiel 33, 36-37, 40:1-44:3, 47-48

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, May 8 – The end of prophecy?

CP: Redditt, Excerpt from *Introduction to the Prophets*

HB: Daniel 1-3, 6-8

Thursday, May 10 – The message of the prophets

CP: Quotations on the prophets (PDF)

Final Exam: Friday, May 18, 5:05-7:05 p.m.