

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at *The University of Western Ontario*
Fall 2014

Biblical Studies 5401A
Prophets and Deuteronomic History
Mondays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Room 102)

Instructor: Rev. Fr. Mladen Horvat, 416 – 887 – 7094, profhorvat@gmail.com
Office hours by Appointment

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines the Israelite prophetic movement from the early monarchical period to the early post-exilic period, its original message and its modern applications. Themes include the city of Jerusalem in Israelite history, the desert as a place and metaphor, the figure of the prophet, religious practices cannot be disconnected from social justice, the exile and its causes, and how the wrath of God is conquered by His mercy and faithfulness.

B. GOALS

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge:

- A deeper understanding of Biblical history, also as a theological place, from the conquest of the Promised Land until the return from the Exile;
- To realize the essential connection between the “Former and Later Prophets” with the Torah (synchronic approach);
- A deeper understanding of forming process of the prophetic literature, that includes a growth from oracles towards written passages and prophetic books (diachronic approach);
- Familiarity with the outline and book structure of individual prophetic books;
- Familiarity with the main themes in the prophets with a special awareness for social justice in connection with religious practices;

Skills:

- The ability to use important resources and tools available for the study of the Prophets, especially biblical software (BibleWorks; e-Sword...) based resources;
- To enable students to approach a prophetic text, positioning it in a certain historical context, in order to determine the meaning of the original author;
- The ability to delimit a certain prophetic passage on the basis of certain markers, and to recognize different literary types of texts: a Narrative, an Oracle, a Messenger speech, a Woe – utterance; a Trial speech; a Dispute; a Lament; different types of Hymns;

- To enable the students to integrate the results of exegetical studies with one's own spiritual life, developing in them the ability to preach on the basis of Old Testament prophetic texts;

Attitudes:

- To engender in the students a familiarity with the prophetic literature;
- To foster an appreciation for prophetic literature as the Word of God;
- to cherish the prophetic texts as sources for personal prayer, spiritual life and pastoral activity;

C. ASSESSMENT

The final mark will be determined on three bases:

1) A written summary of between three and four pages of each of the prophetic book giving in summary its plan or outline, content and most important thought: 50%. These will be due one week after the completion of the study of each book. Each summary is to include the following three elements:

- a) The structure and content of each book in summary form;
- b) Its significance, main themes and the historical context;
- c) Students are to point out the importance and meaning of one significant passage in each book.

Note: Sources must be duly acknowledged. The standard form for all written materials in the course are found in, Alexander, Patrick H. *et al. (eds.) The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, especially Chapter 7 on proper form for bibliographies.

2) Active class participation: 20% in all.

3) A final written examination of three questions out of a choice of questions, given to the students in advance. 30%

In order to ensure that the written work submitted fairly represents the work of a student, the instructor reserves the right, on an individual basis, to have the student undergo an oral exam on the written work submitted. The oral exam, if applied, will help determine the grade assigned to the written work in question.

D. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

A. Required textbooks:

- a) A contemporary English translation of the Bible, such as the New Revised Standard Version (preferred), the New Jerusalem Bible or the New American Bible.
- b) Branick, Vincent P., *Understanding the prophets and their books*, New York / Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012, 3-341.
- c) Branick, Vincent P., *Understanding the historical books of the Old Testament*, New York / Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011, pp. 3-127.
- d) Students will be expected to read the Prophets and the Deuteronomistic History. They will also be expected to study the text books carefully.

B. Recommended readings:

- a) Blenkinsopp, Joseph, *A history of prophecy in Israel*, Louisville / London, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996².
- b) Chisholm Jr., Robert B., *Handbook on the prophets*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.
- c) Sweeney, Marvin A., *The prophetic literature*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- d) Sawyer, John F. A., *Prophecy and the prophets of the Old Testament*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- e) Boadt, Lawrence, *Reading the Old Testament*, New York / Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012.
- f) Campbell, Antony F. and O'Brien, Mark A., *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic history: origins, upgrades, present text*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- g) Mendenhall, George E., *Ancient Israel's faith and history. An introduction to the Bible in Context*, Louisville / London, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

E. SCHEDULE and STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

September 08/14: Introduction:

- I. Historical and literary background of biblical prophecy
- II. Reading the prophets for their theology and message

September 15/14: The classic prophets of the eight century (I.):

- I. Historical background
- II. Amos
- III. Hosea

September 22/14: The classic prophets of the eight century (II.):

- I. Isaiah 1-39
- II. Micah

September 29/14: The prophets of the seventh century and of the period of the exile (I.):

- I. Historical background
- II. Three Pre-exilic Judean prophets:

- a. Zephaniah
- b. Nahum
- c. Habakkuk

- October 06/14: The prophets of the seventh century and of the period of the exile (II.):
I. Jeremiah
- October 20/14: The prophets of the seventh century and of the period of the exile (III.):
I. Ezekiel
II. Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40-55)
- October 27/14: The postexilic prophets (I.):
I. Historical background
II. Trito-Isaiah (Isa 56-66)
III. Two prophets of reconstruction:
a. Haggai
b. Proto-Zechariah (Zech 1-8)
- November 03/14: The postexilic prophets (II.):
I. Independent oracles:
a. Deutero-Zechariah (Zech 9-14)
b. Malachi
II. Two prophets on the occasion of disaster
a. Obadiah
b. Joel
- November 10/14: Prophetic – sounding Midrash:
I. Introduction to Midrash
II. The Book of Jonah
III. The Book of Daniel
- November 17/14: I. Conclusion:
a. The message of the Prophets
b. Reflections on the Old Testament Theology
II. Overview of the Deuteronomistic History
- November 24/14: I. The Book of Joshua
II. The Book of Judges
III. 1 Samuel
- December 01/14: I. 2 Samuel
II. 1 Kings
III. 2 Kings
- December 09/14: final written exam

F. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. These can all be found at the University's website (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>). Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

Submission of Assignments: It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Selection and Registration of Courses: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.

G. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

For an updated bibliography see: http://www.biblico.it/doc-vari/ska_bibl.html