

**Syllabus
Winter, 2013****RS 232 / JS 205:
The Hebrew Prophets**

Instructor: Derek Suderman
Time: Tuesday, Thursday, 2:30-3:50 PM
Place: Room 1300, Conrad Grebel University College
Office: 2111, Conrad Grebel University College
Office hours: By appointment (see “Communication” below)
Email: dsuderma@uwaterloo.ca

I. Introduction**A. Course Description**

This course will introduce prophecy in Ancient Israel paying specific attention to the Ancient Near Eastern literary and historical contexts in which prophets and prophetic books emerged. The course will explore the language, concerns and contemporary relevance of the Hebrew prophets. This term we will concentrate primarily on Isaiah and Jeremiah.

No religious conviction regarding the material is assumed.

B. Course Objectives

The course will:

- introduce different terms used to designate prophets in the Old Testament/Tanakh and explore their various roles, messages, and social settings;
- investigate several recurring issues of concern in prophetic books as well as prophetic forms of speech in which these appear;
- explore issues regarding historical prophets and books attributed to them;
- consider implications for the understanding and description of ‘authorship,’ ‘intention,’ and related issues;
- describe some of the challenges (problems and opportunities) presented by this material for a 21st century reader;
- consider how this material functions differently within Jewish and Christian Scripture.

C. Communication

Announcements, updates, etc. for this course will use the LEARN on-line course environment. Make SURE to check your uwaterloo email account regularly, or have this forwarded to another account.

I am happy to meet with students outside of class to discuss assignments, address concerns, discuss questions, etc. You may drop by my office before class on Thurs. or email me to set up a time.

email - Please *make sure to include the course number (RS 232) in the subject line* for all course correspondence. I am committed to responding to email queries within 2-3 business days. If I have not responded in this amount of time, please contact me again (some email has mistakenly been sent to my “junk mail” folder in the past).

II. Course Requirements

A. Textbooks

The following reading materials are required.

1. The Old Testament/Tanakh

This is *the most important textbook in the course*. Students must each have their own copy, which they are expected to bring it to class. No one version is required — in fact, having a diversity present can enrich class discussion enormously. However, paraphrases and Bibles which use a ‘dynamic equivalence’ approach to translation will not be appropriate for this course (the Message, Good News Bible, etc.). For instance, students are welcome to choose from among:

- *Tanakh* (JPS - Jewish Publication Society)
- *New American Bible* (NAB)
- *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) or the older *American Standard Version* (ASV)
- *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) or the older *Jerusalem Bible* (JB)
- *21st Century New King James Version*, or the *New King James Version* (NKJV), or the venerable *Authorized* or *King James Version* (AV or KJV)
- *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) or the older *Revised Standard Version* (RSV)
- *Revised English Bible* (REB) or the older *New English Bible* (NEB)
- *Today’s New International Version* (TNIV) or the older *New International Version* (NIV)
- *Net Bible* (available free on-line at <http://www.bible.org>). This can be used for comparison, but students will be expected to bring Bibles to class so this will not be sufficient as the only version.

2. McLaughlin, John. *Justice in the Balance: Learning from the Prophets*. Toronto, Montreal: Novalis, 2008.

Listed in the syllabus as McLaughlin with corresponding chapter numbers (ie: McLaughlin, ch. 1-2). Available at the University bookstore.

3. RS 232: Hebrew Prophets Course Packet; on-line resources

This packet is required and may be purchased at the UW Bookstore. There will also be some readings provided on the LEARN site for the course.

B. Evaluation Overview

Papers will be due *at the beginning of class* on a specific date with a 2.5% deduction per day that it is late.

Critical Response to Readings (4-1)	15%
Attendance / participation	10%
Isaiah Word Study	
- Online Quiz (Complete by Feb. 11 at 1 PM)	10%
- Paper (DUE: Mar. 5)	25%
Exam	40%

C. Description of Assignments

The basic building blocks of this course will be the close reading of primary biblical material and secondary scholarly literature as well as consistent class attendance and participation. Class sessions will build upon both Bible and secondary readings. **NO EXTENSIONS will be given for Critical Responses.** Similarly, since the “Word Study” paper will provide the basis for class discussion, extensions will be given only under very exceptional circumstances.

1. Critical Response to Readings

Students will write several 1p. (200-250 word) responses that critically engage primary and secondary readings. *These assignments are identified on the “Class Schedule” below as [CR], and will be DUE MONDAY by 1 PM, the day before class in the on-line LEARN ‘dropbox.’ No extensions will be granted for these assignments, so make sure they are in on time.* The lowest

grade for this element will be dropped (if you miss one assignment, it will be dropped). Further details regarding the expectations and marking breakdown of this element will be forthcoming.

2. *Attendance / Participation*

Since the course will be cumulative, consistent attendance will be important. To reflect this I will track attendance, with 1 unexplained absence not deducted.

3. *Word Study*

Students will take an on-line quiz that uses Strong's concordance on-line to explore the "semantic range" of a specific Hebrew term. Students will then choose a passage where this term appears and write a brief paper (5-7 pp., 1500-2100 words) explaining this passage in light of secondary material (commentaries and Bible dictionaries).

4. *Final Exam*

This exam, scheduled during the exam period, will sum up the learning from the class. It will draw on class lectures and discussion as well as Bible and secondary reading. The structure of the exam will be provided in advance.

III. Further Instructions

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. In addition, consult <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes> for the Faculty of Arts' grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/> Page 3 of 8

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require aca-

demic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

IV. **Class Schedule**

[Brackets] indicate the secondary reading to be done for each class. “Reading Guides” posted on LEARN will indicate the Bible readings to do for each class session.

A. **Introduction to Biblical Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Books**

Jan. 8

L1- Introduction to the Course; Syllabus review

Jan. 10

L2- Prophets and Kings in Historical/Narrative Accounts: Samuel, Nathan, Elijah

[McLaughlin, ch. 1-3]

Jan. 15

L3- 10th-7th centuries in Israel and Judah: Historical and Biblical Perspectives

Jan. 17

L4- ‘How to Study a Prophetic Book’ - Amos

[McLaughlin, ch. 5-6]

Jan. 22

L5- Amos

****CR:**[Heschel;¹ McLaughlin, ch. 7-8]

Jan. 24

L6- Micah

[McLaughlin, ch. 13-14]

B. **Isaiah and Jeremiah**

Jan. 29

L7- Bird’s Eye View of Isaiah; “Song of the Vineyard” (Isaiah 1-5, 9-10)

[McLaughlin, ch. 10]

Jan. 31

L8- “Call of Isaiah;” and “Immanuel” (Is. 6-8; II Kings)

[McLaughlin, ch. 11]

Feb. 5

L9- “Messianic” material? Ingredients for a Messianic perspective... (Is. 7, 9, 11)

[McLaughlin, ch. 12]

Feb. 7

L10- Jeremiah: Anticipating Exile (Jer. 1-7)

[McLaughlin, ch. 15]

ON-Line Quiz -- Complete by Feb. 11 at 1 PM.

¹Abraham J. Heschel, “What Manner of Man is the Prophet?” in *The Prophets*, Perennial Classics (1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 3–31.

Feb. 12

L11- Prophetic Oracles
[McLaughlin, ch. 16]

Feb. 14

L12- True and False Prophecy in Jeremiah

****Feb. 18-22 - No Classes - Reading Week****

Feb. 26

L13- Exile and Hope for the Future; from a prophet to a prophetic book/scroll
****CR: [Yoder²]**

Feb. 28

L15- Isaiah and Hezekiah (Is. 36-39); Intro to "Second Isaiah"

Mar. 5

L16- "Second Isaiah" (Is. 40-55)
Isaiah Paper Due

Mar. 7

**** Guest Lecture (TBA)**

Mar. 12

L17- "Third Isaiah" (Is. 56-66)
***CR: [Sweeney;³ McLaughlin, ch. 18-19]**

Mar. 14

L18- Prophecy, Inspiration, and Authorship: Revisiting a long-standing (Christian) "Conservative/Liberal" Debate: Reading Isaiah as a Whole
[Kugel,⁴ pp. 558-68]

C. The Ongoing Function of Prophetic Books

Mar. 19

L19- 'Searching for the LORD: ' from prophets to prophetic writings
****CR: [Fishbane⁵]**

Mar. 21 -

L20- Riffing on Scripture: Isaiah in the Gospels
[Kugel, pp. 539-44]

Mar. 26

L21- Riffing on Scripture: Jeremiah in Paul

²John Howard Yoder, "'See How They Go with Their Face to the Sun,'" in *For the Nations: Essays Evangelical and Public* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 51–78

³Marvin A. Sweeney, "Isaiah and Theodicy After the Shoah," in *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible After the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 208–19.

⁴James L. Kugel, "Isaiah," in *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 538–68.

⁵Michael A. Fishbane, "From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism," in *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992). 64–79.

D. **Conclusion**

Mar. 28

L22- Contemporary Prophets?? Reconsidering Prophets and Prophetic books today

Apr. 2

L23- Prophets, prophecy, and prophetic books revisited; Exam Review