

Syllabus  
Fall, 2024

**TS 715: Old Testament Exegesis (online)**  
**Minor Prophets / Book of the Twelve:**  
**Hosea - Malachi**

Instructor: Derek Suderman  
Office: 2126, Conrad Grebel University College  
Time, location: Tues. 7-9:00, by ZOOM  
Office hours: By appointment  
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***Territorial Acknowledgement***

*I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations in perpetuity, that includes 6 miles (ca. 10 km.) on each side of the Grand River.*

**I. Introduction**

**A. Course Description**

This course will engage in a close reading of the Minor Prophets/Book of the Twelve in light of secondary material to aid in theological interpretation. In doing so we will consider the roles of prophets in the social and historical contexts of Ancient Israel, explore the rhetorical and literary aspects of prophetic material, and see how an appreciation for Jewish hermeneutics in the Second Temple Period can inform how we see this material employed in the NT. Particular emphasis will be placed on considering different approaches to this material, and ways it challenges us and may be helpfully (and harmfully) appropriated in contemporary settings.

**B. Student Objectives**

During this course students will:

- explore the social and historical contexts, literary genres, and messages of the Minor Prophets;
- critically engage literary and historical critical approaches to the prophets to consider the value and limitations of various modes of inquiry to the Bible;
- examine the prophets' rhetoric of judgement, violence, and hope;
- reflect on the motifs and challenges of this material in its time(s), and implications for ours;
- explore how prophecy functions with respect to its "fulfillment" in the NT, especially in light of 1st century Jewish hermeneutics;
- pursue a topic of special interest for the final project; and
- reflect on and discuss some of the challenges (problems and opportunities) presented by this material for 21st century readers and reading communities.

## II. Course Requirements

### A. *Textbooks*

The following materials are required or highly recommended.

#### 1. The **Bible**

This is *the most important textbook in the course*. Students must each have their own copy, which they are expected to have on hand. 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, Today’s English Version, etc.)***. Part of the course will include New Testament readings, so people who use a Tanakh (Jewish Publication Society Bible) will need access to a New Testament as well. Though we will not be discussing the Apocrypha/Deutero-canonical material in this course, consider purchasing a Bible with this as well. “Study Bibles” of various versions are also available (TNIV, NRSV, NASB, etc), and can provide helpful additional information. 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)
- *Common English Bible* (CEB)
- *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB) or the older *Jerusalem Bible* (JB)
- *21<sup>st</sup> 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. *Textbooks and Course Reserves*

We will have one textbook for the course, **Brueggemann’s *The Prophetic Imagination***, which students will be expected to find on their own. This is a compelling “classic” that launched the writing career of a prominent and influential churchly OT scholar.<sup>1</sup> For a broader intro to prophetic material, I would recom-

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* – various editions are available. The latest ones are interesting with some additional, updated material, but for our purposes the body hasn’t really changed so if you wish to purchase an older version that’s fine.

mend Petersen's *The Prophetic Literature* as a helpful reference with an overview and introduction to different features of prophetic books as well as a book-by-book introduction.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the readings for the course will be book chapters or journal articles made available electronically through Course Reserves, accessible through the LEARN site (you will need to input your UW credentials to access these readings). Links to some related podcasts, etc. will also be provided there.

3. Academic Style Guide (recommended)

I highly recommend having a "style guide" (such as Harvey<sup>3</sup> or something similar), which you can consult regularly for matters of style, grammar, writing and formatting of academic papers.

As usual within the MTS programme, *all papers with citations will be required to use bottom-of-the-page footnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) demonstrated in the Appendix of Harvey and elsewhere.*

In **Biblical Studies certain conventions** apply when citing biblical documents:

- Unless written within the flow of the paper, abbreviations consisting of the first three letters of biblical books should be used. Thus: "At the beginning of Genesis..." within a sentence, but (Gen. 1:1-6) as a reference following a sentence.
- Chapters and verses are separated by a colon, while verses within the same chapter are listed with a hyphen when describing a section (Pro. 1:1-7) or separated by commas when speaking of specific verses (Gen. 5:14, 17). Verses from different chapters are separated by a semi-colon (Job 2:1-4; 42:1-6). As noted here, the parentheses should *precede* ending punctuation.
- Unlike other citations, **Bible citations are made in (parentheses) within the document itself**, unless they are part of an explanatory footnote. During discussions clearly marked as dealing with a specific chapter, abbreviations for verse and verses should be used (v. and vv. respectively). If you provide a list of references (for instance, several other places where the same term is found), these should be placed in a footnote.
- Reference to terms in biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) are placed in italics. So, you write peace (English) but *shalom* (Hebrew term for peace, security, well-being, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup>David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup>Michael Harvey, *The Nuts & Bolts of College Writing* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2003).

## B. *Student Evaluation*

<b>Critical Article Review, from Reader</b> (various)	
Handout + Moderating Online discussion	Milestone
Critical Article Review	10%
<b>Literary Analysis Assignment</b> (DUE: Oct. 8)	20%
<b>Historical Analysis Paper</b> (DUE: Nov. 5)	20%
<b>Curated Discussion Posts</b> (x3)	10%
<b>Final Project</b>	
<b>Proposal</b> (DUE: Nov. 19)	5%
<b>Final Project</b> (DUE: Dec. 13)	35%

### 1. *Assignments*

#### *Article Presentation and Handout*

Each student will choose one substantial article from the course reader to introduce to the class, providing a 1p. outline (one-sided) and then moderating online discussion. Given the size of this class, up to 2 students will be able to choose the same article. In this case, they will coordinate their response and discussion moderation. Students will then *each* write a brief critical response on their own, that builds on online and in-session discussion (3-5 pp., 900-1500 words).

#### *Literary Analysis Assignment*

Students will choose a short passage from the Minor Prophets (generally less than 12 vv.) to analyze from a literary perspective. Building on their own observations, students will write a short paper in consultation with secondary literature including commentaries, journal articles, etc. (5-7 pp., 1500-2100 words). More detailed instructions will be provided.

#### *Historical Analysis Paper*

Students will choose a short passage from the Minor Prophets (generally less than 12 vv.) to analyze from a historical perspective. Building on their own observations, students will write a short paper in consultation with secondary literature including commentaries, journal articles, etc. (5-7 pp., 1500-2100 words). More detailed instructions will be provided.

#### *Curated Discussion Posts*

During the term, students will participate in online discussion of articles and book chapters. At the end of the term, students will select three of their discussion posts to be submitted for evaluation.

*\*All students are expected to contribute to online discussion every other week at a minimum.*

*Final Project Proposal*

Given the breadth of possibilities, students will submit a proposal outlining the topic, method, procedure, as well as a preliminary bibliography for their final project.

*Final Project*

Students will have the opportunity to pursue a topic of interest in consultation with the instructor in a major final project. This could take various shapes: a paper (12-15 pp., 3600-4500 words); a sermon or Bible study series; poetry, songs, artwork, or drama accompanied by explanation, etc.

Limited only by your imagination, topics could include: the use of a specific passage from the Minor Prophets in the NT; Jewish hermeneutics in the 1st century; history of interpretation of a passage (exploring the medieval four senses of Scripture through a specific passage, how something was read by the Reformers, etc.); the appearance of the Minor Prophets in the Lectionary; global or other contextual interpretation of prophetic passage; detailed exegesis of a specific passage; use of prophetic material in contemporary debates over militarization; a comparison of “prophetic” and “state” theology in Apartheid South Africa; the use of prophetic material in a sermon/writing of Martin Luther King Jr.; etc.

**\*\*The Use of Generative AI is Prohibited in this course**

This course includes the independent development and practice of specific skills, such as close reading of documents, critical thinking, clear communication, and basic academic writing. Therefore, the use of Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) trained using large language models (LLM) or other methods to produce text like Chat GPT, DALL-E, or GitHub CoPilot, is not permitted in this class. **Unauthorized use in this course, such as running course materials through GenAI or using GenAI to complete a course assessment is considered a violation of [Policy 71](#) (plagiarism or unauthorized aids or assistance).** Work produced with the assistance of AI tools does not represent the author’s original work and is therefore in violation of the fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and courage ([ICAI](#), n.d.).

**You should be prepared to show your work.** To demonstrate your learning, you should keep your rough notes, including research notes, brainstorming, and drafting notes. You may be asked to submit these notes along with earlier drafts of your work, either through saved drafts or saved versions of a document. If the use of GenAI is suspected where not permitted, you may be asked to meet with your instructor or TA to provide explanations to support the submitted material as being your original work. Through this process, if you have not sufficiently supported your work, academic misconduct allegations may be brought to the Associate Dean.

In addition, you should be aware that the legal/copyright status of generative AI inputs and outputs is unclear. More information is available from the Copyright Advisory Committee: <https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-at-waterloo/teaching/generative-artificial-intelligence>

You can reach out to campus supports if you need help with coursework including:

- [Student Success Office](#) for help with skills like notetaking and time management
- [Writing and Communication Centre](#) for assignments with writing or presentations
- [AccessAbility Services](#) for documented accommodations

### III. Further Instructions

#### A. Faculty of Arts Information

**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. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

**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 offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

**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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

#### Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

## Mental Health Support On Campus

- Counselling Services: [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

## Off campus, 24/7

- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website

Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)

Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

### B. *Accommodation for Students with Disabilities*

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

## IV. Meeting Schedule

Readings below are listed **on the dates to which they correspond** and are expected to be done in preparation for class. **Bolded** names indicate articles suitable for online discussion and review. \*\*Because they are so short, 3 articles on Oct. 22 will be treated as 1 article for the purpose of the critical review.

Date and Topic	Special Topics	Required Readings	Assignments
<b>A. Intro to Prophets and Prophetic Books</b>  Week 1: Sept. 10 – Prophets & Prophecy;  the Role / Portrayal of Prophets in Narrative material	Bird's Eye View of the Book of the Twelve	Brief History of the Bible (PP)	

Week 2: Sept. 17 – Prophets in Narrative (con.) & Prophetic Books; Prophets to the North --- and South??	Amos, Hosea	<b>Heschel</b> , “What Manner of Man is the Prophet?” <sup>4</sup>  Brueggemann, “Preface” + ch. 1-2  Miller, “A Prophetic Book and How to Study It” <sup>5</sup>	
<b>B. Minor Prophets / Book of the Twelve</b>  Week 3: Sept. 24 – Hosea (con.)		<b>Mays</b> , “Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition” <sup>6</sup>  Petersen, “Introduction,” pp. 1-45” <sup>7</sup>	
Week 4: Oct. 1 - Who is Like the Lord? 8th Century Judah, and its Critics... (Micah)	Social Analysis and Critique	<b>Chaney</b> , “Political Economy of Peasant Poverty” <sup>8</sup>  Brueggemann, ch. 3-4	
Week 5: Oct. 8 – Habakkuk		<b>Stulman and Kim</b> , “Reading Prophets as Meaning Making Literature” <sup>9</sup>	<b>Literary Analysis DUE</b>

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, “What Manner of Man is the Prophet?” *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 3–26.

<sup>5</sup> John W. Miller, *Meet the Prophets: A Beginner’s Guide to the Books of the Biblical Prophets, Their Meaning Then and Now* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> James L. Mays, “Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition,” *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.*, Ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 57–71.

<sup>7</sup> David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox), 25–45.

<sup>8</sup> Marvin L. Chaney, “The Political Economy of Peasant Poverty,” *Peasants, Prophets, & Political Economy: The Hebrew Bible in Social Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017) 121–46.

<sup>9</sup> Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, “Reading the Prophets as Meaning-Making Literature for Communities Under Siege,” *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010) 9–23.



<b>**Oct 12-20 READING WEEK</b>			
<p>Week 6: Oct. 22 – Dealing with Depictions of God and Violence</p> <p>What Will/ Should God do with Nineveh? (Na- hum / Jonah)</p>	<p>God and Violence; Sexualized Vio- lence; Revenge Fantasy; Human Role</p>	<p><b>Gafney</b>, “A Womanist Reading of Nahum: Nahum’s God is Not My God”<sup>10</sup></p> <p><b>Baumann</b>, “Nahum: the Just God as Sex- ual Predator;”<sup>11</sup></p> <p><b>Sanderson</b>, “Na- hum;”<sup>12</sup></p> <p><b>Galambush</b>, “Na- hum”<sup>13</sup></p> <p><b>Wenyi</b>, “Reflections on the Way to Ap- propriation of Na- hum in the DRC”<sup>14</sup></p>	<p>** For an attempt to ad- dress this topic in relation to the historic Anabaptist tradition and a critique of contemporary descrip- tions of a ‘Christocentric’ approach, see my:</p> <p>Suderman, “Tackling Vi- olence in the Prophets as a People of Peace”<sup>15</sup></p>
<p>Week 7: Oct. 29 - Zeph- aniah; Haggai</p>	<p>Intro to Post-Exilic Reconstruction/Per- sian Period</p>	<p><b>Williams</b>, “Histori- cal Criticism and Sacred Text”<sup>16</sup></p>	

<sup>10</sup> Wilda C. M. Gafney, “A Womanist Reading of Nahum: Nahum’s God is Not My God,” in *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 61-65.

<sup>11</sup> Gerlinde Baumann, “Nahum: The Just God as Sexual Predator,” *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, Ed. Luise Schottroff Rumscheidt and Marie-Theres Wacker, trans. Martin and Lisa E. Dahill (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Judith E. Sanderson, “Nahum,” *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, Ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (London, Louisville KY: SPCK Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 217–21.

<sup>13</sup> Julie Galambush, “Nahum,” *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, Ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Lapsey (London, Louisville KY: SPCK Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012) 329–34.

<sup>14</sup> Jacob Onyumbwe Wenyi, “Reflections on the Way to Appropriation of Nahum in the DRC,” in *Piles of Slain, Heaps of Corpses: Reading Prophetic Poetry and Violence in African Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade), 167-179.

<sup>15</sup> W. Derek Suderman, “Tackling Violence in the Prophets as a People of Peace: Anabaptist Hermeneutics Then and Now,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 98 (July 2024), 245-283.

<sup>16</sup> Rowan Williams, “Historical Criticism and Sacred Text,” *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom: Scripture and Theology*, Ed. Graham and David F. Ford Stanton (London: SCM Press, 2003) 217–28.

Week 8: Nov. 5 - Post-Exilic Reconstruction/Persian Period (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)		Meyers and Meyers, "the Historical Context" <sup>17</sup>	<b>Historical Analysis DUE</b>
Week 9: Nov. 12 – From Prophets to Prophetic Books;  (Re-) Reading the "Twelve" as a Whole	Re-imagining Prophecy and the Legacy of Historical Criticism	<b>Fishbane</b> , "From Scribalism to Rabbinism" <sup>18</sup>  <b>Kugel</b> , "Twelve Minor Prophets" <sup>19</sup>	
<b>C. From the New Testament to Today...</b>  Week 10: Nov. 19 - Messianism in the "Twelve" and beyond; "The Twelve" in the New Testament + Second Temple Period	The Use of Prophetic Literature in the NT	Grossman, "The Dead Sea Scrolls" <sup>20</sup>  <i>Peshet</i> "Commentaries" <sup>21</sup>  Levenson, "Messianic Movements;" <sup>22</sup>  <b>Longenecker</b> , "Jewish Hermeneutics in the First Century" <sup>23</sup>	<b>**Final Project Proposal DUE</b>

<sup>17</sup>Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, "The Historical Context," *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987) xxix-xliv.

<sup>18</sup>Michael A. Fishbane, "From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism," *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 1992) 64–79.

<sup>19</sup>James L. Kugel, "Twelve Minor Prophets," *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007) 617–34.

<sup>20</sup>Maxine Grossman, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation*, Ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011) 569–72.

<sup>21</sup>Geza Vermes, trans., *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 2011) 470–85.

<sup>22</sup>David B. Levenson, "Messianic Movements," *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation*, Ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011) 530–35.

<sup>23</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, "Jewish Hermeneutics in the First Century," *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, Mich. Vancouver: W.B. Eerdmans Regent College Pub., 1999) 6–35.

Week 11: Nov. 26 - “The Twelve” in the NT (con.)		<b>Enns</b> , “The OT and Its Interpretation in the NT” <sup>24</sup>  Brueggemann, ch.5- 6	
Week 12: Dec. 3 - So what?!?: Lessons and Challenges from the Mi- nor Prophets		<b>Sheppard</b> , “Redis- covering the Bible as Scripture” <sup>25</sup>  Brueggemann, ch. 7 and “Postscript”  <b>Davis</b> , “Minor Prop- hets” <sup>26</sup>	

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<sup>24</sup>Peter Enns, “The Old Testament and Its Interpretation in the New Testament,” *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005) 113–65.

<sup>25</sup>Gerald T. Sheppard, *The Future of the Bible: Beyond Liberalism and Literalism* (United Church Publishing House, 1990) 21–44.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen F. Davis, “Minor Prophets,” in *Opening Israel’s Scriptures* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2019), 220-55.