COURSE SYLLABUS
OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS
THEO 413-01
THEO 504-01

PLACE: St. Louis University.
TIME: Fall Semester, 2006-2007. Thurs. 3:45-6:15 P.M.
PROFESSOR: Dr. Bernhard A. Asen. Humanities Building 248. Office phone: 977-2857; Email: Asen@SLU.EDU; Home phone: 862-1423.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
To survey the historical, social, and political background of the Hebrew prophets; their main themes, passages, and relevance to modern times. The course objective is to help each other toward a deeper knowledge of and greater appreciation for the Old Testament prophets and their place in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the course students will have read the Major and Minor Prophets as well as the secondary text listed below. It is hoped that students will gain a deeper appreciation of biblical prophecy in its canonical context, as well as its crucial value for contemporary issues of proclamation and social justice.

SKILL ACQUISITIONS
By the end of the course students will develop an understanding of the manner in which Ancient Near Eastern international events shaped the message and mission of the biblical prophets, as well as explore such key theological themes as covenant and law, justice and righteousness, eschatology and apocalyptic. Students will draw the ancient messages into modern context through relevant application to their own life and times and appreciate that biblical prophecy is primarily proclamation and not prediction.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The Holy Bible. Any version is acceptable, but the New Oxford Annotated bible with the Apocrypha is preferred. Be sure the bible you use contains both Testaments. Please bring your bible to every class period.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS
Heschel, Abraham J. The Prophets. Two Volumes (New York: Harper & Row,
ATTENDANCE POLICY
If you cannot be in class, please email me or call me at my home or office. More than three unexcused absences will drop your grade one level (A becomes B, etc.).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS
Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus, due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Disabilities Services. Please telephone the office at 314-977-2930, or visit Room 131 in the Academic Resources Center, 3840 Lindell Blvd. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information on examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the university.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES
1. There will be three (3) synthesis papers required of all students: September 14, 2006, October 19, 2006, and November 16, 2006. This paper is to be a one-to-two page typed or handwritten “synthesis” on the readings, lectures, and discussions. I will read them and return them with some brief comments. These papers should contain your questions, comments and struggles with what you have read and what we have discussed in class. These papers will not be graded but are a course requirement.

2. Each undergraduate student will submit two (2) critical reviews (3-5 pages) on current periodical articles dealing with some aspect of biblical prophecy. Graduate students will submit four (4) such articles and one (1) book (Consult: Elenchus, OT Abstracts, The Index of Religious Periodicals, The Catholic Periodical Index, the attached Select Bibliography, etc. for things that might interest you and/or are related to the requirement in 4 below).

3. Each undergraduate student will have a take home Mid-term exam. The exam will be distributed October 12 and should be returned October 19, 2006.

4. A research paper or project on some aspect of the biblical prophets is required of all students. For undergraduates the paper should be approximately 5-6 pages and for graduate students approximately 15-20 pages and conform to standard research and writing procedures. Due: December 7, 2006.

5. At least once during the course (more if you wish) each student will visit me in my office.

6. A final synthesis paper (3-5 pages; typed) due December 7, 2006 is required
of all students.

7. All students are **required** to complete the on-line course evaluation at the end of the semester. The time when it will be available on-line will be announced in class.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR CLASSES**

**August 31**

**September 7**
Overview of Old Testament prophecy: History and international context.

**September 14**
Begin Amos. Read: Amos; Miller, pp. 39-64.

*Synthesis Paper due.*

**September 21**
Amos (cont.).

**September 28**

**October 5**
Hosea (cont.). Micah; Read: Micah; Miller, pp. 122-135.

**October 12**
First Isaiah. Read: Isaiah 1-39; Miller, pp. 90-121.

*Mid-term take home exam distributed.*

**October 19**
Jeremiah. Read: Jeremiah; Miller, pp. 149-177.

*Synthesis Paper due. Undergraduate Mid-term exam due.*

**October 26**
Jeremiah (cont.)

**November 2**

**November 9**
Ezekiel (cont.).

**November 16**
Deutero Isaiah. Read: Isaiah 40-55; Miller, pp. 204-225.

Synthesis Paper due.

**November 23**

No Class. Thanksgiving Holiday

**November 30**


**November 30**

From Prophecy to Apocalyptic. Read: Joel, Haggai, Daniel

**December 7**

From Prophecy to Apocalyptic (cont.). Summary and conclusion. **Final papers, projects and Synthesis papers due.**

*I say “tentative” because we will stress understanding, comprehension and dialogue rather than speed. It may be necessary here and there to abbreviate certain sections and lengthen others. If at any time you have questions, comments, problems, or you just want to talk, please feel free to drop by my office.*

**About the Papers**

1. The research paper for *undergraduate* students should be approximately five (5) to six (6) pages in length, and for graduate students approximately fifteen (15) to twenty (20) pages. You may use any standard style sheet (e.g., Turabian, MLA, Chicago Manual of Style, etc.). I am willing to read outlines, rough drafts, or help with the selection of a topic. You may choose your own topic or select one from the list below. For example, you might pick a particular prophet (Amos, Micah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, et al.) or a prophetic theme (creation, exodus, kingship, social justice, etc.) and show how that theme is present in the prophets generally or in select prophetic books and figures. It will be helpful to consult the many commentaries and books on the prophets available in Pius Library, as well as the attached select bibliography.

2. The project could be any of the following:
   a) compose your own prophetic oracle or message using the forms and structure of prophetic proclamation that we will discuss in class.
   b) compile a photographic or artistic interpretation of a prophet or prophetic message, including a written explanation of the project and how it demonstrates the ideas present in the prophet or prophetic message. Creativity is encouraged.

Here is a list of possible paper topics. In most cases the topic will have to be narrowed. If you have a topic you would like to investigate that is not listed here, you may pursue it, but please discuss it with me first.

Amos’ God: national or universal?

Women in OT prophecy
Marriage imagery in Hosea
Canaanite fertility religion and Hosea
The covenant tradition in Hosea
Prophecy or prediction?
The origin and function of OT messianism
Josiah’s reform and Jeremiah
The meaning of prophetic call: then and now
Individual and corporate personality in Ezekiel
Ezekiel and the concept of resurrection
Social injustice in Amos’ oracles against the nations
Micah and the marginalized
Habakkuk and the problem of evil
Jeremiah and the psalms of lament
The meaning of the Immanuel sign in Is 7:14
The portrait of God in 2 Isaiah
The role of the Servant of Yahweh in 2 Isaiah
Sin, justice and righteousness in the prophets
False and true prophets: How do you tell the difference?
Were the prophets revolutionaries?

Grading Scale for the Undergraduate Mid-Term Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-76</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-71</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-68</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-62</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are general principles of the Department of Theological Studies concerning grading standards and criteria:

A range = Superior, exceptional, outstanding with evidence of critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that deepens their understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.

B range = Good, ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that deepens their understanding of essential
theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.

C range = Acceptable, satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.

D range = Below normal expectation. Reasoning is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.

F = Unsatisfactory. The student failed to respond to the assignment: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort, 4) plagiarism or cheating involved.

Letter Grades and GPA:  A=4.00, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3.00, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2.00, C-=1.7, D=1.00, F=0.00.

For conversion of numerical scores to Letter Grades:
A=100-96, A-=95-93, B+=92-89, B=88-85, B-=84-81, C+=83-80, C=79-76, C-=75-72, D=72-68, F=67 or lower.

The Prophets
A Select Bibliography


______. Finally Comes the Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1989).


