Hartford Seminary
SC-639: The World of the Prophets
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Mon-Friday, 9am-5:30pm June 11th-15th
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Course Description: In this course we will study prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. We will explore the historical and political settings of Israel’s prophets and we will consider how major events that occur in the lives and ministries of the prophets are reflected in the diverse themes and theological perspectives operative in prophetic books. We will delve into themes such as social justice, divine anger, and adultery as a metaphor for idolatry. A number of the prophets we will study include Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Huldah, Ezekiel, and Jonah.

Course Objectives: In this course students will:
1. Attain an in-depth knowledge of the content and critical questions involved in discussions of a number of biblical prophets and prophetic books.
2. Analyze how major events that occur in the lives and ministries of prophets influence prophetic output.
3. Analyze how the historical and political settings of Israel’s prophets and their tradents influence prophetic literature.
4. Distinguish themes and theological perspectives articulated by a number of prophets and operative in various prophetic books.
5. Engage in cooperative study of Scripture while exhibiting respect for how distinct faith perspectives can generate differing biblical interpretations, religious beliefs, and spiritual practices.

Learning Outcomes/Competencies: The course is designed to:
1. To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one’s own religion (MARS # 1)
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the practices of one’s own religious tradition and the capacity to appreciate the practices of other religious traditions (MARS #3)
3. To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths (DMIN # 3)

Required Reading:
2. An English translation of the Bible such as The Harper Collins Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006). Other translation options will be discussed on the first day of class.

Grading/Evaluation: Students’ final grades will be evaluated as followed:
1. 20% Attendance, Participation
2. 20% Presentation, Annotated Bibliography, Thesis Statement
3. 50% Research paper
Instructions TBA

Topics 1: Introduction to prophets and prophecy
- Sweeney, 23-44
- Robert Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, 135-252
- David Baker, Israelite Prophets and Prophecy in *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, 266-294

Topic 2: Elijah and Huldah

Topic 3: Amos and Hosea
- Sweeney, 165-180, 182-187
- Gale Yee, “She is not my Wife and I am not her Husband,” *Biblical Interpretation* 9(2001), 345-383
- Daniel Simundson, “Reading Amos: Is it an Advantage to be God’s Special People,” *Word & World*, 28 (2008), 133-149

Topic 4: Isaiah 1-39
- Sweeney, 45-53
- Donald Gowan, Theology of the Prophetic Books, 59-77

Topic 6: Jeremiah
- Sweeney, pp. 85-94

Topic 7: Ezekiel
- Sweeney, 127-135
• Jack Miles, “Israel as Foundling: Abandonment, Adoption and the Fatherhood of God,” Hebrew Studies 46 (2005), 7-24

Topic 8: Ezekiel
• Sweeney, pp. 159-162
• Steven Tuell, “Ezekiel 40-42 as Verbal Icon,” CBQ 58 (1996), 649-664
• Tova Ganzel, “The Defilement and Desecration of the Temple in Ezekiel,” Biblica 89 (2008), 369-379
• Christopher Seitz, “Ezekiel 37:1-14,” Interpretation 46 (1992), 53-56

Topic 9: Jonah
• Sweeney, pp. 188-191
• Daniel Timmer, “Jonah and Mission: Missiological Dichotomy, Biblical Theology and the Via Tertia,” WTJ 70 (2008), 159-175
• Terence Fretheim, “The Exaggerated God of Jonah,” Word & World 27 (2007), 125-134
• Serge Frolov, “Returning the Ticket: God and his Prophet in the Book of Jonah,” JSOT 86 (1999), 85-105

Topic 10: Isaiah 40-66, Haggai and Zechariah
• Sweeney, 73, 201-206
• Walter Brueggemann, “Prophetic Energizing and the Emergence of Amazement,” The Prophetic Imagination, 59-80

Topic 11: Daniel
• Mary Mills, “Household and Table: Diasporic Boundaries in Daniel and Esther,” CBQ 68 (2006), 408-420

Topic 12: The end of prophecy and new manifestation of prophetic message
• Neusner, The Way of the Torah, “Dual Torah Theory”

Instructions for Research Paper:
Assignment: In a 10 page paper, explore a theological and/or historical topic or theme that arises within the Prophetic Books.

1. Identify the relevant biblical passages, discuss ambiguities within the passage(s) and questions you would like to address. Use these questions to hone in on a broader thesis statement or question.
2. Support your thesis statement using both primary literature (e.g. the Hebrew Bible) and secondary literature.

- Systematically and critically evaluate the salient points of scholars’ positions and discuss how the scholars differ from one another. Consider which scholars you find compelling, and which are unconvincing. Explain why.
- Offer your own critical interpretation/assessment of the theological and/or historical thesis topic or theme in light of the secondary reading and referring back to the questions you posed at the beginning of your paper.

3. Offer creative, insightful, and explicit reflection on how your insights apply to ministry, praxis, and/or research concerns.