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OT 630 Exegesis of Isaiah

Mark J. Boda

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NT(IBS)51x and OT501 and OT520  
- or -  
Hebrew Exam and NT(IBS)51x and OT520  

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SPO:  

Meetings:  
During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.  

Maximum Registration: 21  
Catalog Description: This course explores selected exegetical issues in the book of Isaiah and provides students with opportunities to apply original language tools to the book's strategic passages. Particular attention is given to the literary and theological context created by the book of Isaiah as a whole and how this affects the interpretation of specific passages in the book. (May be taken by students in M.A. programs not requiring Hebrew, by special arrangement with the professor.)  

Objectives:  

OT630X1 Exegesis of Isaiah  
Spring 2008-3 hours  
February 9-May 22, 2009  

Instructor  
Rev. Mark J. Boda, Ph.D.  
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Welcome!  

I'm Mark Boda, your professor and facilitator for the semester. You have arrived at the syllabus page for our class this semester in Exegesis of Isaiah. This will be our guide throughout the semester so it is very important that we all begin by reading the notes provided below. From here you will be guided through the various learning modules, virtual lectures, and discussion rooms which will facilitate our learning this semester. If you have
questions or concerns, just click on the To Professor link and I will get back to you a.s.a.p. I've provided a bit of my "official" life story below. I spent my early life in the Academy setting, growing up in the home of a seminary professor and president in Western Canada. I ministered in pastorates in both Toronto and Philadelphia and served in campus ministry in North Etobicoke before joining the faculty of Canadian Bible College and Theological Seminary in Regina, Saskatchewan where I served from 1994 until 2003. Presently I hold the post of Professor in the Faculty of Theology at McMaster University and the Chair in Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. My undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Theology which I received in 1984. After my first pastorate I studied for the Master of Divinity at Westminster Theological Seminary (1991) before reading for the Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge (1996). I see my ministry in the academy as multi-faceted, dominated by teaching and mentoring students, but also publishing and communicating to a variety of audiences including research scholars, church leaders and lay people. To that end I am consistently involved in the academic guilds publishing scholarly articles and books through which I receive feedback on my foundational research and also hopefully make a difference for the kingdom in these contexts. I also devote some of my energy to writing commentaries and theological books for and presenting lectures to church leaders. Finally, I do take opportunities to write books for lay people and preach in local churches. I am ordained in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. My wife Beth and I have the joyous privilege of raising and mentoring our three boys in the life of the Spirit (David 20, Stephen 18, and Matthew 13). For fuller information on my past work see my faculty web page at http://divinity2.mcmaster.ca:8111/faculty/faculty.aspx?facid=5

**Description**

This course explores selected exegetical issues in the Book of Isaiah and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to the book's strategic passages. The focus will be on developing appropriate interpretive skills for the pastoral ministry.

**Course objectives (Shared by OT department)**

Upon successful completion of this course, each participant will be able to:

1. Confirm and refine by recourse to the Hebrew text of Isaiah literary analysis of longer units previously studied in translation,
2. Analyze the significance of the grammar and sentence structure of brief pericopes using primarily the Hebrew text,
3. Present the significance of key terms in a given passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,
4. Identify the function of a given, brief passage of Isaiah in the framework of its immediate context, its function in the literary flow of the book and in the section of the canon within which it appears,
5. Situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Isaiah in the context of the Old Testament’s unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,
6. Demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Isaiah, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one’s own interpretation in the on going discussion of biblical interpretation,
7. Illustrate the contribution of exegetical study of the Hebrew text to biblical exposition, instruction, theological reflection, and spiritual formation in order to construct an appropriation of the passage that is integrative and coherent.

**Resources**

**Required Books**


**Library Resources**

The required books will not be enough to carry you through this semester. You will need to become acquainted with your local theological and public libraries. At some point in the semester you will need to
use a theological library's facilities for your research paper. Asbury can provide some help for your study. You can access some of their resources via the Resource links in Moodle and you can order articles and books from the librarians at the seminary.

**Accessing Information Commons Materials:**

1. **General Questions:**
   The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml).

2. **Materials Requests:**
   - ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary’s Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.
   - ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. **Research Questions:**
   - ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. **Online Databases:**
   - To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml) and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id). Especially helpful for your work will be the ATLA Religion database (for journal articles) and the IPreach resource database (for commentaries, Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, reference material).

**Copyright Information**

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

**ExL Media Copyright Information**

No further reproduction and distribution of [media for this course] is permitted by transmission or any other means.

**Program of Study**

This is an internet course and requires both independent work and group discussion. The resource base will include a series of lectures which I will provide (virtual lectures), a series of books we will all read together, and our interpretive and collaborative enterprises during the course of the semester. The learning experience is structured in 10 learning modules. By logging into [http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu](http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

- The **Course Information Center**, in the center of your screen, contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
  
  a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;  
c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;  
d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;  
e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;  
f) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

- **Learning Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. This course is structured into 10 learning modules each corresponding to a one week period during the semester.
- **Resources**, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you may want to use often in the semester.
- **Virtual lectures**: these lectures seek to orient us as a class to the issue under discussion in the particular learning module. They will be supplemented by reading in the textbooks and will be followed by questions which will prompt our discussion.
- **Groups**: You have been arbitrarily put into groups for the semester. These groups will foster dialogue over specific texts under discussion as well as the final theme papers.
- **Independent Work**: Throughout the semester you will be translating a passage each week, reading in textbooks and writing one paper on your own: a research paper on a short pericope in Isaiah.

**Hot Tip**: As the Catalog of the Seminary makes clear, students should expect to spend 2.5-3.0 hours outside of class for every hour in class. That means ExL students should expect to invest 10-12 hours maximum per week for this course. It is best to set particular times during the week to work on the course.

**Communication**

**Professor**  
I have provided my phone numbers and you can contact me via the To Professor link. I have provided my home phone number because I am making myself available to you even outside my daily work hours. You will notice that my area code is not the same as that of Asbury Seminary. I will be guiding this class from my home in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and the beauty of this new medium of education is that I am as close to you as the professors in Wilmore.

**ExL Team**  
However, there are some other people whose work is often behind the scenes but they are essential to the success of this learning experience.

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and Virtual media** contact Information Commons: [Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program**, contact Dale Hale: [ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2393

**Accessing Information Commons Materials**

1. General Questions:  
   a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm)

2. Materials Requests:  
   a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm)

   b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of
reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:
   a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.
4. Online Databases:
   a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to [http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm](http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm) and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (200000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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Virtual Media Copyright Information
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High Tech/High Touch
Throughout the semester as you have things to share, prayer requests, crises and stories of God's blessing, please post them into the [Prayer Forum](#) provided. I will keep you updated on my life. At times I will ask someone to pray for us all in the Prayer Forum as we begin the week. To get to know your classmates, just check out their resumes by double clicking on their name on FirstClass.

Learning Modules

**Introduction Modules:** During the initial two modules you will be introduced to the book of Isaiah and begin to work on your exegesis papers for presentation during the Exegesis Modules (translation should be done on the passages in brackets after each Learning Module and posted to the appropriate links).
- February 9-15: Learning Module #1: Introduction to course (Isaiah 6)
- February 16-22: Learning Module #2: Orientation to Isaiah (Isaiah 40:1-11)

**February 23-March 8: Study Hall: Some Space to Work on Exegesis Papers**

**Exegesis Modules:** During these modules each week I will present a literary overview of a particular section of the book of Isaiah and then either one or two students will present an initial focused study on a passage within the corpus under review (see bracketed passages below). Since everyone will be translating the passages which the students will be presenting, everyone will be able to interact with the presentation (translation by students other than those presenting the paper that week should be done on the passages in brackets after each Learning Module and posted to the appropriate forum). These initial focused studies will be the foundation for a longer paper which is due at the end of the semester after the initial studies are discussed.
- March 16-22: Learning Module #4: Isaiah 7-12 (11:1-9)
- April 6-12: Learning Module #7: Isaiah 40-48 (48:1-11)
April 27-May 3: Study Hall: Some Space to Complete Thematic Papers

Theme Module: During this final module each group will present a theme paper they have written as a group. The project should be 3-4000 words and offer perspectives on this theme from the various sections of the book of Isaiah (Is 1-39, 40-55, 56-66). Members from the other groups will interact with your theme paper during this week.

May 4-10: Learning Module #10: Themes

May 11-22: Study Hall: Some Space to Complete Exegesis Papers

Weekly Rhythms

Overview: During each week during the Exegesis Modules (we'll begin to test it out in the first two weeks) I will provide an overview of the literary flow and theme of each major section of the book of Isaiah and then one person from the class will provide an exegesis of a key passage within that section of Isaiah. These exegesis papers should follow the exegesis guide which I have posted to provide us all with a close encounter with a passage each week.

Each week I will provide an overview of the section of Isaiah on Monday to orient us all to the section under discussion. Everyone must read this overview, as well as any supplementary reading during the week – the sooner the better. By Tuesday evening, each person in the class is required to provide a translation of the particular passage under discussion. On Wednesday the designated person will provide their first draft of their exegesis paper for the class and by Thursday evening each person in the course should respond to that paper with responses both for affirmation as well as for growth. The person who submitted the paper should respond to each of these at least once. Others are free to jump in and respond or comment on any conversation. By Saturday midnight each person in the class should post a note to their respective group, recording that they have read the entire section in the book of Isaiah as well as their required section in one of the class textbook commentaries (Oswalt or Childs, each group should divvy this reading up) identifying any special insights on this section from Oswalt/Childs as well as providing a list of potential insights for the group theme paper for the end of the semester.

Weekly Deadlines

- **Monday**: Mark Boda posts an overview of the section of Isaiah
- **Tuesday**: Each class member posts a translation to their group (by midnight).
- **Wednesday**: The class member doing the exegesis paper for this section of Isaiah must post the paper to the appropriate forum (by noon)
- **Thursday**: Each class member should read and respond to the exegesis paper in the forum (by midnight).
- **Saturday**: Each class member should post a note to their group noting that they have read the section of Isaiah in English translation and in their textbook commentary, highlighting any special insights as well as potential insights for the group theme paper (by midnight).

Weekly Work Schedule (you can do things earlier in the week if you wish, but here is a guide):

- **Monday-Tuesday**: reading Mark Boda’s overview and section of Isaiah, translating the specific passage
- **Wednesday-Thursday**: reading the exegesis paper and responding to it
- **Friday-Saturday**: reading any remaining commentary sections and identifying potential insights for the group thematic paper

Learning Opportunities

Reading

Textbook reading for this course must be completed by the end of the semester. **By the last day of the semester you must send me a note declaring what percentage of each of the class textbooks you have read during this semester (this should be the percentage of what you were responsible for in your group). This is your responsibility to hand in. If it is not sent to me I will assume no reading was done.** Since this is a presupposition of this course a positive mark is not assigned to the reading. However, failure to complete the reading will result in a loss of up to 10% of the course final grade.

Discussions

Our various resources provide orientation and content during our various modules. They are designed to prompt us to discuss and clarify the issues raised. Your participation in this discussion is essential both as
an initial contributor as well as a responder to other's contributions. Our discussions will not only take place with the entire class, but also within smaller groups. I will provide evaluation of your contributions at mid-semester and end of semester.

Each student in the class will be regularly translating (see Guide below) all the passages that will be presented in the class beginning in Learning Module #1. These passages are all noted in the guide for each learning module and are found in brackets in the list of Learning Modules in the schedule above. These translations must be posted to the appropriate forum by Tuesday midnight each week. Each week during Learning Modules #3-#9, 1 (and in some cases possibly 2) students from the class will be presenting a more detailed exegesis paper on the passage that will have been translated, and this will be an opportunity to interact with one another and allow iron to sharpen iron here in the course. Since everyone will be translating the passages each week, everyone will be able to interact with the papers that are presented.

**Guide for Translation each week:** You should (1) translate in "wooden" ways (and if necessary provide a more colloquial/smooth English sense in brackets), (2) parse and analyze all the key words (providing their lexical form, that is, the form they would be listed as in the dictionary) (3) based on Arnold-Choi identify key grammatical/syntactical function of at least one word in each verse (in your paper you will eventually look at all words): especially, construct-absolute relationships, prepositions, particles, etc. (cite section in Arnold-Choi).

**Format for Discussions:** The level of English typically decreases drastically on the Internet and you will have to remind yourself you are in a class environment. Submissions in this class should be written in acceptable English prose style with proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It is expected that you will use appropriate written communication format with introduction, conclusion and a clear and concise flow of argument. For most of the course you will be submitting your material in forums.

**Hot Tip:** The key to a good mark on discussions is---
- **Consistency** (regular interactions rather than all at the last moment)
- **Relevancy** (speak to your classmates' contributions and move the discussion along)
- **Punctuality** (on time according to the schedule)

**Key Dates:** According to the schedule above

Value: 30%

**Exegetical Study**

In the first week of the semester you will be given a passage in Isaiah on which to do some more concentrated exegesis and interpretation. A Guide for Exegesis (online resource) is provided for you to follow. This guide will provide the basic structure you must use for presenting your research in the paper. In the first two learning modules I will provide two examples using this exegesis model (these examples are in the form I call below "formative" and are not examples of the final form of a research paper which is required for what I call below "summative"). In this paper you will provide an interpretation of your passage based on the content and methodology provided in this course.

There are **two phases** to your work on this paper.

**Phase one is formative**, that is, it is concerned with producing a draft form of the paper for presentation in class with the assumption that it will not be marked nor be in final form (this does not mean you hand in sloppy material, but it is not expected to be a full research paper at this point). In the week your paper is to be discussed in class you will post this draft form of your exegesis paper by Wednesday noon for the rest of the class to read, learn from, and also provide you with some formative response (strengths of and new insights from your paper and ways you can improve it). The idea here is to grow in our exegesis and improve our work in the text in a safe environment. This draft exegesis paper should follow the Guide provided by me for exegesis and the examples that I will give in the first two weeks of the course. You can draw on secondary literature, but the focus in Phase one can be on your own translation and exegetical work in the text.

**Phase two is summative**, that is, now it will be submitted to the professor and marked. In the weeks after you present your paper in class you will work this draft exegesis paper into a full research paper to be evaluated by the professor. It is due on the last day of the semester. At this point you must bring other secondary literature into the text and footnotes. Your research on this passage should draw on a minimum of 8 books/articles beyond the textbooks for the class. These books/articles must reflect recent **published**
research (after 1980). This requirement does not include ancient sources used (Josephus, Qumran) or Bibles, Versions, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries (or other reference works), but rather elongated treatments of your biblical text or book. You are not allowed to use internet resources (besides ATLA or iPreach) as the basis for your research paper unless you have had the resources approved by the professor. For the format of this paper see the Format section below.

**Format for Exegesis Papers:** Papers should follow a standard format such as [http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml](http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml) While documentation formats for materials appearing on the Internet are not yet fully standardized, there are some attempts at this. Please follow the guidelines put together by Andrew Harnack and Gene Kleppinger. Papers in this course will be submitted as an attached file. The preferred file format is Microsoft Word. All material which is submitted should be double spaced with 1" margins utilizing a readable font (10-12 pts). It must have a title page and bibliography which is not included in the length required. It should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps, an outline may accompany the paper, but this is not included in the length of the paper. Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.

After all your good research on your passage, you will need to present it in a way that is user friendly and gets to the heart of the passage. Use this guide below which matches the outline in the "Guide for Exegesis" online resource (the percentages are the amount of your paper which should be devoted to each point):

**Format for Exegesis Papers:**

- **Introduction (2.5%)**
  - I. Translation (15%)
  - II. Referential Historical Context (10%)
  - III. Describe the overall theme and flow of the passage (10%)
    - A. Form
    - B. Overall Rhetorical Flow
  - IV. Verse by verse analysis (40%)
  - V. Link the text to the book of Isaiah, the rest of the canon and our lives today
    - A. Book (10%)
    - B. Canon (5%)
    - C. Culture (5%)
  - VI. Conclusion (2.5%)

**Hot Tip:** I evaluate based on three factors--

- **Presentation** (is it laid out properly? does it use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation? etc.)
- **Argumentation** (does it have an introduction, conclusion, flow of thought? etc.)
- **Content** (does it cover the material required? is it the appropriate length? etc.)

**Key Dates:**

- Draft Presentation: according to the schedule for semester
- Final Paper: last day of semester

**Value:** 40% (Paper)

**Thematic Study**

By the end of the first study hall (just before Learning Module 3) your group must agree on a key theme to trace throughout the book of Isaiah during this semester. By this date you will have read the thematic overviews in the introductions to the course commentaries. As part of the exegetical study above, each week as you read my overview, the text of Isaiah, commentaries and the exegetical papers, you should be on the lookout for material that will form the base of your group paper.

By the end of the second study hall (just before Learning Module 10) each group will post a 3-4000 word review of a major theme in the book of the Isaiah. This theme must be traced throughout the various major sections of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 1-39, 40-55, 56-66) and will be produced over the semester as we work through the various sections of the book each week. You will post this to the appropriate forum and members of other groups will interact with your work.

**Key Dates:**

- End of first study hall (Group Theme identification)
- End of second study hall (Paper completed)

**Value:** 30% (Paper)
Hot Tip: I evaluate based on three factors--

Presentation (is it laid out properly? does it use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation? etc.)

Argumentation (does it have an introduction, conclusion, flow of thought? etc.)

Content (does it cover the material required? is it the appropriate length? etc.)

Windows of Feedback

My commitment to you is to provide feedback at key junctures in the semester. After Learning Module 5 I will provide feedback to you on your progress in the discussions in the first half of the semester. Also, after you have presented your initial draft translation and exegesis of your passage, I will offer you some initial areas to improve your work as you transform that draft work into a formal paper. At this point there will be no grade, but rather general comments on how you are doing and how you can improve. Then at the end of the semester I will provide an evaluation of your discussion contributions for the second half of the semester and the final grades for your papers. My hope is that this kind of evaluation will help you grow and show you the kind of values necessary for success in the course.

Time Away

Let me explain something that is often an issue in classes of this kind. One summer as I taught an Asbury internet course, I was away for 5 weeks in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, England, Italy and points in between. Even so, I was never out of contact with my class – that is the wonder of the Internet. As I was responsible to be in regular contact with my internet class during that summer, so I want to be upfront with you all and tell you that I do hold students responsible for each week during the semester. In the past most students who have had to be away at certain points have worked ahead so that their material is on time and then have kept in touch through internet cafes while on the road so that their response material is not late. This is key for discussions which need to come in at the time we are dealing with the issues.

Privacy

The code for this class and the forums and syllabus are for the private use of the students in this class. You should not give out the code or address to any other person. This ensures your privacy and mine.

Select Bibliography

For further resources, see especially:


