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BS 630 Minor Prophets

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I. GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the Minor Prophets which builds on the methodology of the first Inductive Biblical Studies course by further use of the skills learned there and by emphasizing the study of books as wholes. Accordingly, there is special focus on the initial survey of books as wholes, the interpretation a) of parts of books in the context of the books as a whole and b) of the books themselves as wholes. In addition, increased attention is given to thinking, valuing and living biblically by placing individual passages within their larger canonical contexts and by applying Scripture to life and ministry.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Methodology. By the end of the course the student should be able evidentially and contextually to:
1. Interpret books-as-wholes and any of their parts in light of the whole;
2. Evaluate and apply passages thus interpreted;
3. Correlate by articulating the major claims of each biblical book studied as both distinct from and related to those of other biblical books.
4. Describe the essential methodological aspects of Inductive Biblical Study.

B. Content. The student shall be able to:
1. Trace the development contents of each book of the Minor Prophets studied in the course without recourse to the printed text, identifying major passages and delineating major themes;
2. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from the Minor Prophets;
3. Use a general knowledge of the historical and religious background of the Minor Prophets in the interpretation of these books.

C. Attitude. The student should desire and intend to:
1. Apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
2. Make the Minor Prophets the object of life-long study;
3. Use the Minor Prophets as a resource for preaching, teaching and living.

III. TEXT AND READINGS

A. Required Texts and Materials
1. Revised Standard Version of the Bible, or some other contemporary, standard (non-paraphrasing) version such as The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, New American Standard Bible, with minimal editorial clutter in the layout.

B. Recommended Reading
The following commentary series are enthusiastically recommended for use. While there are both superior and less stellar volumes in these series, they are on the whole very useful and should be consulted for work in this course. In alphabetical order:
Anchor Bible (Doubleday)
Interpretation (John Knox)
New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans)
C. History: Collateral Reading and Self-Exam Chart


Using the Appendix, "History of Israel," as a study guide, and studying Thompson's article in ZPED or the equivalent readings, the student shall gain sufficient mastery of the historical setting of the minor prophets to: 1) date each of the prophets by correlation with their major biblical and extra-biblical contemporaries, and 2) place them in the flow of major events of their world.

To express this competence the student shall
1) make a rough-draft, historical chart which includes these major persons and events and
2) invest a least one-half hour in explaining this chart and the history it presents to another person or conferring intentionally with another person (perhaps a colleague from this class) about the chart.

Report the person and the date and time of the above presentation, and submit with your chart and Thompson reading report no later than Friday, June 12.

Exception to III.B History Collateral and Self-exam!!
If you have already earned credit in a course in the History of Israel and the majority of the items in Appendix V are known to you:
1. Invest a minimum of 3 hours reading in a recent, significant text on the History of Israel (e.g., those by John Bright, J. M. Miller & J. H. Hayes) or a work like R. K. Harrison's Old Testament Times.
2. Report that reading September 30, instead of the history self-exam, with a one page, typed, single-spaced summary of the main items of interest to you in the reading.

D. Extra-credit Research and Bibliographic Review
Students wishing to earn extra credit should request an extra credit assignment sheet from the instructor. It outlines an approximately 15 hour investment whereby a semester grade can be raised one level (e.g., A- to A). Due by December 17, 5:00 p.m.

IV. COURSE PROCEDURES

A. Inductive Studies of the Minor Prophets.
The most important part of the course will be the student’s own, independent, direct studies of the Minor Prophets, due at class time and on the dates assigned.

A word about “independent.” It is understood that these lessons are primarily to be notes of the student’s own direct study of the Bible, with reference to secondary sources only as is appropriate—to minimally interpretive works during the course of study and to more interpretive works only after considerable interpretive study of one’s own. Then the student will be expected to give evidence of critical interaction with interpretive sources used. When secondary sources are used, clear documentation will appear. This is
sufficiently important from methodological and instructional, not to mention moral perspectives that unacknowledged appropriation of significant information and ideas from interpretive or introductory resources will be considered plagiarism. **Plagiarism** will lead to a grade of zero for the lesson involved and may constitute grounds for failure in the course.

Students from cultures where extensive, undocumented use of secondary sources is acceptable should give particular notice to this aspect of North American scholarly expectations to which you will be accountable.

Independent here excludes reference to any previous student’s work in the course and to lecture notes from any previous semester of OT(IBS)630. It is assumed that these notes and all work submitted for this course is the student’s own work, done specifically for OT(IBS)630, and not previously submitted as part of any other course’s requirements. Exceptions to these procedures, when group study is suggested, will be clearly announced.

**Group consultation.** In early stages of the course where group consultation is encouraged, students should still aim to participate in these consultations as independent contributors. Group participants will not simply reproduce and submit each other’s work as their own and will not “divide up the tasks” to make together a group project.

### B. Format & Submission of Papers.

To facilitate handling by my office and also by SPO personnel:

1. Lessons will be submitted in a **manilla envelope (Recommend 9 x 12”)**. The following information will appear in the front, upper right corner of the envelope:
   - SPO number (main info needed by SPO)
   - Student’s name (please print, large “font”)
   - Lessons contained

   *The placement and order of this information are important for SPO handling. Do not center your name and SPO down in the middle of the envelop.*

2. **Each lesson** in the envelop should also contain on the front page, upper right corner:
   - Student’s SPO and name
   - Lesson numeral and page number (IV-1, IV-2)
   - Date due/Date completed—in that order—(e.g., Sept 21 / Sept 20)

   On succeeding pages you need only put your last name and the lesson-page enumeration. Staple or paper-clip all multi-sheet work submitted. In other words, even in the envelop, do not just hand in a stack of unstapled or unclipped paper.

3. To aid the grading process, please write/print on one side only of papers.

4. Lesson packets will be submitted four times during the semester. See below for schedule and weight.

### C. Evaluation and Feedback

1. **Lessons.** All lessons are due, complete at class time as assigned, even when they are submitted later with a group of lessons. Selected lessons of those submitted will be graded and returned in timely fashion for written feedback.

2. **Classroom instruction and interaction.** Main source of feedback.

3. **Peer consultation.** Group work will be encourage on several lessons to make insights and instruction from colleagues available.

### D. Grade Components.** *(See Seminarian: The Catalog Edition for grade values.)*
1. Lessons and readings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-IV</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>September 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>V-IX</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 26</td>
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<td>X-XII</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>November 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIII - XV</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collateral Reading</td>
<td>05%</td>
<td>September 30</td>
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</tbody>
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2. Class attendance and completion of lessons. See "course requirements" below.

3. Late work. Work submitted late may be accepted for credit but will not be given a letter grade, except in cases of emergency or by special arrangement with the professor.

E. Course Requirements

1. Completion and submission of all assignments and lessons in writing as assigned. At least 70% of the assignments must be completed to earn credit in the course.

2. Punctual attendance at all classes for the entire class, including the final session, December 16. Three absences are allowed without penalty. Every hour of absence beyond that will cancel credit for one lesson, unless provisions are made for make up work. Plan now to attend the final exam session, which we will use to do important integrative work.

3. Responsible handling of difficulty with class content or requirements, of late work, of absences or other matters related to participation in the class.

V. INDUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

Suggestions:

1. Read through an entire assignment before beginning it.

2. Recall that items numbered separately are often interrelated and best considered together and done in light of each other.

Group One 15%

Lessons I - IV  Due September 28

LESSON I. SYLLABUS & FOUNDATIONS  SEPT 09

1. Read through the syllabus immediately, establishing the base of your accountability for acquaintance with its contents.

2. Read Bible Study That Works. Write a one full page, typed, single-spaced, critical interaction with the work. Discuss its strengths, weaknesses, and the main questions it raised in your mind. If you have already read this work, read a section of equivalent length from one of the entries in VI.A and write the critical interaction on that work.

LESSON II. SURVEY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES: JONAH  SEPT 14 (T)

1. Title the chapters/segments. Discern the general nature of the work also (BSTW: 32-36).

2. Locate and title the main units in the book and identify the major structural relationships operative between these and in the book as a whole (BSTW:36-43).
- Describe the specific materials involved in each structure sufficiently that your structural understanding is clear. Give references.

3. Ask a brief, coherent set of interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed and the materials involved in it (Appendix III) and record them with each major set of structural observations (BSTW:44-49).

4. On the basis of your structural observations, identify the strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole from the perspective represented by each major structural insight. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance and contribution to understanding the book as a whole. It may be helpful also to state these with each law (Appendix I#13).
5. Identify literary forms of book-level significance.
6. Observe the atmosphere of the book.
7. Note data bearing on such critical questions as author, place, date of writing, history of composition, recipients, etc. Approach these questions inductively from the book itself, not from introductory remarks in your study Bible or from other secondary sources. You will have plenty of time to consult these sources during the course of further study.
8. Note other major impressions and questions relating to the book as a whole.

LESSON III. SURVEY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES: JOEL
Apply Lesson II to this book.

LESSON IV. SURVEY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES: AMOS
Apply Lesson II to this book.

History Self-Exam and Collateral Report Due SEPT 30 (TH)

Group Two 20%
Lessons V - IX Due October 26

LESSON V. INTERPRETATION OF STRATEGIC PASSAGE: JONAH 4:2
IN ITS SEGMENT & BOOK CONTEXT

Transition from Book/Larger Context Survey
1. Review App. I:3, 16-38 to refresh your memory on tips that foster insight.
2. Bring forward the interpretive questions posed in your book survey that relate most clearly to this paragraph. If no questions from this survey seem relevant, do a thought-flow survey of the passage, raise questions, and answer them by further analysis as indicated below.

Survey Analysis
1. Select text mode
   a. Multiple English Versions/without Hebrew (for those without Hebrew training).
   b. Multiple English Versions/with Hebrew (for those with Hebrew training).
   c. Hebrew alone.
   WARNING: DO NOT COPY IN OR DOWNLOAD REAMS OF BIBLE TEXT INTO YOUR LESSON. USE THE VARIOUS TEXTS AND INCLUDE IN YOUR NOTES ONLY THOSE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE TEXTS WHICH WARRANT ATTENTION.
2. Structure. Divide the paragraph into clauses and discern the structures (Semantic, Rhetorical) which bind the clauses to each other within the paragraph, upon which you will make further observations and inferences below. A simple thought-flow analysis may be the best way to do this for a strategic passage.

Interpretive Analysis:
Your own Inductive-Independent Research (primary and minimally interpretive sources: biblical text, lexicons, concordances, ancient texts/artifacts themselves)
1. Preliminary Definition of Key Terms. Definitions from biblical language lexicons w/o inference to establish probable field of reference.
2. Context: immediate, segment & book. Analyze the passage, clause by clause, attending to such matters as those listed in App. IV. Attend not only to these clauses in this paragraph context but also to the relationships they have with the segment and book contexts. By far and away, this should be the major focus of your work.
3. Word meaning. If it seems advisable, pursue key terms beyond the preliminary definition above by your own study of their use (Save consultation with other resources such as Harris’s TWOT or Botterweck & Ringgren’s TDOT for the (see App. II and Bibliography VI.E). Draw inferences.
4. Other relevant determinants (sources of information)?
5. Summarize your findings and major, outstanding questions.

**After you have done your own, primary source research - interpretation**

Interpretive Analysis:
- **Consultative-Secondary Source Research** (commentaries, word study volumes, encyclopedias, dictionaries, journal articles, theologies, etc.)
  1. **Other interpreters.** Consult critically respected interpreters of your passage and other resources treating aspects of the passage, such as social and historical context, (Remember App I:37-41).
  2. If time allows, return to the text for more of your own analysis, informed by your learning from the secondary sources.
  3. Summarize your findings.

**Synthesis**
Outline the theology of God as presented in the book of Jonah as you understand it.

**LESSON VI. SURVEY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES: HOSEA**

Survey this book, using Lesson II as a guide.

**LESSON VII. SURVEY & INTERPRETATION. JOEL 2:12-19 OR 2:28-32.**

Review Appendix I:16-41 and Appendix IV on "Observation/Analysis."

Apply Lesson V to one of these passages.

**Synthesis**
List the theological assumptions undergirding the passage you have interpreted.

**SELECT LESSON VIII OR IX (NOT BOTH)**

**LESSON VIII. SURVEY AND INTERPRETATION. AMOS 1.2-2.16**

1. Survey this book division.
2. Analysis.
   - After Survey, adapt Lesson V to this division for analysis of some strategic passage in it or to some theme or issue to be addressed by analyzing selected material throughout the division.
   - If you do not see how to move from your division survey questions to analysis, consider these questions.
     a. What do these eight oracles have in common? How does the oracle against Israel differ from the others? What significance do you see to these observations? or
     b. Analyze and interpret Israel's sin as presented in this segment and as illumined by the sins of the nations.
   How does this segment provide theological and literary foundation for the book?

**OR**

**LESSON IX. SURVEY AND INTERPRETATION: AMOS 7.1-9.15**

1. Survey this book division.
2. Analysis.
   - After Survey, adapt Lesson V to this division for analysis of some strategic passage in it or to some theme or issue to be addressed by analyzing selected material throughout the division.
   - If you do not see how to move from your division survey to analysis, consider one set of these questions:
     a) What does each of the visions apparently mean, and what is the significance of their logical movement as a group? or
     b) What is the meaning of the Amos-Amaziah confrontation?, or
c) What do the oracles of 8.4-14 mean, and what is the significance of their placement in this division?

   Outline Amos' doctrine of God and his social ethics, as seen in this division.

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**Group Three 30%**

**Lessons X - XII**  **Due November 16**

**LESSON X.** INTERPRETATION, EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC PASSAGE: AMOS 9:7-15  
NOV 02 (T)

1. Apply Lesson V to this unit. You will need to select some two or three verses for major focus, while attending to the meaning of the whole unit. Remember Appendix I, #16-41.
2. Evaluate the major truth of 9:7-15 discovered in your work. As with your interpretive work, separate observations from your evaluative inferences (cf. App. I:3, 34-36). Use primarily the evaluative determinants of Scriptural testimony/canonical dialogue, and other evaluators.

Class discussion will focus on the meaning and canonical significance of "rebuilding David's booth."

**LESSON XI.** STUDY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES. HABAKKUK  
NOV 09 (T)

1. Study the book of Habakkuk, proceeding as far as you can in the time you have.
   • Experiment with format and mechanics to suit your own preferences.
   • Use the principles of sound Scripture study learned thus far in your work while.
   • Keep written notes of your work for submission as a lesson.
2. Prepare to enter into class discussion on the meaning of this book, its relationship to other biblical revelation, and something of its significance for the present, so far as you are able to discern at your present level of work.

**LESSON XII.** INTERPRETATION OF STRATEGIC PASSAGE:  
HABAKKUK 2:4b or 3.16-19.  
NOV 16 (T)

1. Interpret either of these passages in context. Apply Lesson V.
2. Evaluate and apply their central thrust. As with your interpretive work, separate observations from your evaluative inferences (cf. App. I:3, 34-36). Use primarily the evaluative determinants of Scriptural testimony/canonical dialogue, and other evaluators.

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**Group Four 30%**

**Lessons XIII - XV**  **Due December 16**

**LESSON XIII.** SURVEY OF BOOKS AS WHOLES: MICAH  
NOV 30 (T)

**LESSON XIV.** INTERPRETATION, EVALUATION, APPLICATION: MICAH 7:18-20  
DEC 07 (T)

1. Review Lesson V and adapt the instructions to the task of working with this paragraph interpretively. Give considerable attention to the context.
2. Select what you consider to be the most important truth discovered in your interpretation of this paragraph and evaluate it preparatory to application.
3. Apply the truth to situations to which it is now relevant, attending to both individual and corporate concerns.

**FINAL LESSON XV.** MALACHI STUDY  
DUE: DECEMBER 16 (TH) 1:00 P.M.

- NOTICE:
  EXCEPT BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT THIS LESSON WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY FROM PERSONS ATTENDING THE FINAL SESSION AND ONLY AT THE END OF THAT SESSION. The session will meet from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
1. Survey the book of Malachi (about 5 hours).
2. Interpret Malachi 3:16-18, especially alert to ways in which the book’s content and structure contribute to your understanding of these strategic verses (at least 5 hours).
3. Evaluate and apply what you judge to be a major truth of this paragraph, or at least an issue you worked on (3 hours).
4. Come to the final session prepared to discuss these matters.

This study should indicate your skills in inductive Bible study and should represent a synthesis of previous studies in the Twelve Prophets insofar as they relate to an understanding of Malachi 3:16-18.

DEC 17 (F) ALL WORK DUE
• LESSON XV DUE AT CLASS TIME THURSDAY
• ALL OTHER WORK, INCLUDING EXTRA CREDIT WORK (SEE III.C) DUE BY 5:00 PM., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17.

VI. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY
See Section I below for extended bibliographies

A. METHODOLOGY & HERMENEUTICS (Including popular presentations)

** Indicates a classic in the field of Inductive Bible Study.

**B. PROPHETIC LITERATURE**


**C. Approaches to Prophecy**


For prophetic literature in general, see Biblical Resources for Ministry (Bibliography G below)

D. INDIVIDUAL BOOKS
For individual books, see Biblical Resources for Ministry (Bibliography G below).

E. WORD STUDY RESOURCES
Concordances and Indexes
†Brown, Francis. The New Brown - Driver - Briggs - Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon. Hendriksen, 1979. [This work is keyed to Strong's concordance.]
†Kohlenberger, John R., Ill, and Edward Goodrick, eds. The NIV Exhaustive concordance. Zondervan, 1990. [Keyed to Strong's concordance.]

Wordbooks and other Resources

† Particularly helpful for students without competence in biblical languages

F. OLD TESTAMENT and BIBLICAL THEOLOGY


G. BIBLIOGRAPHIES FOR BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES