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OT 630 Exegesis of Isaiah

Sandra Richter

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OT 630 Exegesis of the Prophets

Fall 2006
Wednesday 1-3:45 pm

Instructor:
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Office Hours:
Tuesday 1-2:00 pm
Wednesday 4-5:00 pm
Thursday 1:00-2:00 pm

Course Description:
This class is designed for seminarians who have already laid a foundation in exegetical method by means of IBS, basic Hebrew grammar (OT501), and an Introduction to the history and literature of ancient Israel. Beginning with the larger historical, sociological, and canonical context of the prophet and his oracles, and proceeding to Isaiah’s particular oracles, this class will seek to guide the student through the process of exegesis in the Writing Prophets. The end goal of this class is to enable the student to develop the exegetical competence required for interpreting the biblical text, and responsibly representing that text to a contemporary audience.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:
1) Understand the role of the biblical prophet in comparison to other divine intermediaries in the world of Ancient Israel.
2) Understand the canonical role of the Writing Prophets.
3) Identify the life-setting of the divine intermediary Isaiah such that his message may be better understood by his modern audience.
3) Analyze the theological and literary structure of the Book of Isaiah and, by extension, of any of the Writing Prophets.
4) Identify and assess the theological and literary structure of an individual oracle within the Book of Isaiah and, by extension, of any biblical oracle.
5) Confirm and refine, with some recourse to the Hebrew text, the literary, syntactical, and grammatical structure of individual pericopes within these oracles.
6) Present the biblical-theological significance of key terms in a given passage by using basic Hebrew language word-study tools and techniques.
7) Distill from any given passage the message intended to its original audience, and interpret and articulate its present theological import for the Church.

Course Procedures & Requirements
Method of Instruction:
The format of the class will involve lecture and in-class exegetical analysis. Informed student discussion will play a major role in the weekly class meetings. Hence, students will be expected to come to class prepared to demonstrate and discuss the readings and exercises assigned (note the percentage of student grade based on participation).
Textbooks:

PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED

PRESENTLY REQUIRED
Everyone must have:

Choose from the following commentaries covering the entire Book of Isaiah:

RECOMMENDED

Requirements:
20% - Class participation
25% - IBS-style Book Survey of Isaiah
25% - Word Study
30% - Final Exegetical Project on Isaiah

*As this is a seminar class, presence and preparedness are expected. Two absences (or the equivalent) will be waived. Following absences will result in a failing grade.
** Written projects received after the posted hour will be penalized a third of a grade per day, weekends included!

In-class Exegesis:
Every two weeks you will be assigned a pericope for in-class exegesis. You should prepare for these assignments as follows. **Answer** the following questions: (1) What is the genre of this passage? (2) What is the literary context of this passage (IBS)? (3) What is the socio-historical context of this passage? Then **translate** the passage using Bibleworks. Identify each word as you would in OT501. Identify major points of connection between your translation and your readings. Come to class prepared to contribute to our class discussion from your private work. Our goal in these assignments is both to train you in your exegetical skills and to mimic proper sermon preparation method as appropriate to your current language skills.

Word Studies:
Making use of the standard lexicons, concordances, and theological word books, the student will analyze the **semantic** range and theological significance of the word in question for the larger text and for Isaiah. Potential words/phrases include: I need more word studies that tie into final projects
Final Projects:
The student will select a 3-5 verse pericope upon which to write a 10-12 page exegesis paper. The paper will show evidence of all of the exegetical skills learned during the course of the semester (see assignment description and samples in course center). The student may choose one of two forms of presentation in the writing of this paper: either an academic (technical) presentation or a sermon format. Both presentations will require thorough citation, although the latter will necessarily involve more material in the footnotes. Potential pericopes include: 2:1-4; 9:1-7; 11:1-9(10); 22:9-11; 45:20-25 (Philippians 2:10); 53:4-9; 53:10-12. Feel free to select another pericope, but clear it with the professor first! Please make use of the SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) for citation and form issues.

*700-level students:
In addition to the course requirements stated above, these will prepare in-class exegesis passages with full translation and meet to read with our teaching intern. In addition, each student will prepare their final project passage for reading in this context.

Will read all recommended readings.

Will fully translate and do text criticism for their final project pericope, which will incorporate 5-7 verses of the Hebrew text. The page limit for these papers is 15.

**OUTLINE OF CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1, September 6: The Task of Exegesis**

Required:
Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 16-77 (online reserves)
G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus’ and the Apostles’ Exegetical Method” *Themelios* vol. 14/3 (April 1989): 89-96 (online reserves)

Recommended:
Dever, "The Bible as History, Literature, and Theology," *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know it?*, pp. 1-21 (regular reserves behind info commons desk)
115 pages (required)
Week 2, September 13: The Prophet & his Genre (sociological context & genre)
Deuteronomy chapters 13, 18, 28-30
Theodore Mullen, "Divine Assembly" ABD 2:214-17 (cf. 1 Kgs 22:1-40; Isa 6; Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7, 8; Malachi 3:1) (online reserves and/or reference)
John Huehnergard, "On the Etymology and Meaning of Hebrew Е ● О ● ☉ ● ☇ Eretz-Israel 26: 88-93 (online reserves)
Isaiah 1, 6
“The Prophetic Lawsuit” handout (distributed in class and on icon)
“Isaiah 1 as a Prophetic Lawsuit” handout (distributed in class and on icon)
65 pages text for the day, Isaiah 1

Week 3, September 20: The Life and Times of Isaiah the Prophet (more on genre & historical context)
Brevard Childs, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature" pages 41-49 in Interpreting the Prophets (online reserves)
Isaiah 5 (and Matt 21:33-46)
The Harper Collins Concise Atlas of the Bible, pp. 72-84 (12)
Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Isaiah of Jerusalem: Themes and Preaching Possibilities," pp. 23-37 Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah (14)
64 pages, text for the day, Isaiah 5

Week 4, September 27: The Book of Isaiah IBS-book survey due
Christopher Seitz, "The One Isaiah/The Three Isaiahs," pp. 13-21 Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah
Introduction to Isaiah in your commentary of choice (either Oswalt or Blenkinsopp are preferred for this)
75 pages, text for the day, the whole book

Week 5, October 4: Ahaz & Text Criticism
Read Isaiah 7:1-12; Matt 1:18-25, 4:14; Rom 15:12
Translate Isaiah 7:10-16 with Bibleworks (this week I’ll take care of socio-historical context)
25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah
Text Criticism Exercise: The Question of the Virgin
Ernst Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament. 2nd ed., xiii-132 (not to be memorized!)
Wm. Scott, 18-24 (cf. pp. 61-87)
Read and translate the text critical notes associated with Isa 7:14 making use of Wm. Scott, pp. 61-87. Read Matt 1:18-25 (emphasis on v. 23). Come prepared to comment on where Matthew got his translation of Isaiah.

pages 164, text for the day Isaiah 7
**Week 6, October 11: Word Studies & the Oracles Against the Nations**


**Word Studies Discussion: the virgin again ...**

Read the Word Study handout and one sample word study (icon)

Word study exercise: $\infty \heartsuit \bullet \kappa \theta \rho \nu$ (in Isaiah 7:14)

Read Isaiah 13:1-23:18

25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah

Translate Isa 14:10-17 with Bibleworks

**Recommended:**


Pages 65, text for the day Isaiah 14

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**Week 7, October 18: Hezekiah**

Read Isaiah 36-39

Reread HarperCollins Atlas, 82-83

25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah

Translate with Bibleworks Isa 37:28-29, 33-38

James Luther Mays, “Isaiah’s Royal Theology and the Messiah” pp. 39-51 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*

Pages 40, text Isaiah 37

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**Week 8, October 25: Introduction to “Second” Isaiah**

Isaiah 40-44:21

Reread HarperCollins Atlas, 84-89

25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah


Robert R. Wilson, “The Community of the Second Isaiah” pp. 53-70 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*

Listen to S. Richter’s sermon “A New Thing” (on regular reserves at Info Commons desk)

46 pages + sermon, text for the day Isaiah 40:1-5

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**Week 9, November 1: The Servant**

*Word Study due*

Guest lecturer: Ben Witherington!

Isaiah 43:22-53:12 (Compare Servant Song #1 with Matt 11:1-5; 12:1-21; Servant Song #4; cf. John 12:38-41; Acts 8:32-35; Romans 9:29)

25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah


100 pages, Isa 53

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**Week 10, November 8: and the Idol**

Isaiah 44-48

25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah

Translate Isaiah 44:15-20 with Bibleworks

Michael Dick, “The Mesopotamian $\circ \heartsuit \bullet \kappa \theta \rho \nu$ Ritual,” *Made in Heaven, Born on Earth*, 55-117 (online reserves)

**Recommended:**

Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 1-59 (on regular reserves at Info Commons desk)

92 pages, text for the day Isaiah 44

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*Ryan Lectures 11/9-10*
**Week 11, November 15: More on 2nd Isaiah**
Read Isaiah 54:1-57:13 (2nd Isaiah concludes)
Compare Isa 55:1-5 with John 7:25-44 for small and large group discussion
What does this intertextuality tell us about the mission of the Messiah? How would Isaiah or his audience have interpreted Jesus' words and actions in the John 7?

62 pages, text for the day Isa 55:1-5

**Reading Week**

**Week 12, November 29: “The Little Apocalypse”**
Read Isaiah 24:1-27:13
25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah
“Apocalypse” and “Apocalypticism,” in the *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period,* pp. 46-48
Translate Isa 24:1-6 with Bibleworks
34 pages, text for the day Isaiah 24

**Week 13, December 6: Conclusions, “Third” Isaiah, & Isaiah the Missionary**
Read Isa 58:14-66:24 (cf. Lk 4:14-22)
25 pages from the commentary of your choice on this section of Isaiah
HarperCollins Atlas, pp.90-91
Paul D. Hanson, “Third Isaiah: The Ideological Legacy of a Struggling Community,” pp. 91-103 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*
Christopher Seitz, “Isaiah 1-66: Making Sense of the Whole,” pp. 105-123 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*

Final Projects due at 5:00 pm on December 14.