OT 631 Book of Jeremiah

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Course description
This course explores selected exegetical issues in the Book of Jeremiah, and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to the book’s strategic passages. The primary concern in any exegetical work rests in the attempt to see beyond the limited perspectives resulting from our particular cultural heritages and experience the text of the OT as a witness from a time, place, culture and ethnic location far removed from our own. Once we have learned to receive God's word across a cultural and ethnic divide, we become better able to communicate our witness to God's word across the cultural divides of our times. So our attention to language, textual matters, style, syntax, literary genres, social settings, etc. is only partly antiquarian. These matters also open up to us how God's word speaks through cultural and ethnic horizons very different from our own. In a world in which ministry must necessarily deal with cultural and ethnic differences, learning to negotiate such differences as an integral part of hearing God's word makes exegesis an effective preparation for living and serving in a diverse world.

Likewise, the prophet Jeremiah spoke in the midst of historic changes in the life, politics, and culture of ancient Israel. The tribalism that divided the Hebrew People, the imperialism that threatened them, the provincialism that prevented them from responding effectively to their moments of crisis, all play out in the solitary ministry of the prophet Jeremiah. The tensions and conflicts of tribe, race, empire, culture, and faith that play out in his life continue to mark our lives today. Thus time spent with the prophet Jeremiah provides a meaningful encounter with a model of ministry in a fractured and changing culture.

The objectives below, as they note matters such as language, text, historical and cultural setting, etc. should be understood as the specific steps necessary toward the fulfillment of this encounter.

Course objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Confirm and refine by recourse to the Hebrew text of Jeremiah literary analysis of longer units previously studied in translation,
2. Assess the state of preservation of shorter passages of Jeremiah employing the BHS text and apparatus and basic text-critical methodology,
3. Analyze the semantic import of the morphology, sentence structure, and prosodic form, where appropriate, of brief passages using the Hebrew text,
4. Present the significance of key terms in a given brief passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,
5. Identify the function of a given, brief passage of Jeremiah 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,
6. Situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Jeremiah in the context of the Old Testament’s unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,
7. Demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Jeremiah, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one’s own interpretation in the ongoing discussion of biblical interpretation,
8. 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.

Course procedures and requirements

Class presentations will hope to model direct study of Jeremiah, relying primarily on exegetical skills introduced in OT 501. After an introduction overviewing the issues of interpreting the book as a whole, class sessions will involve working systematically through selected crucial passages of Jeremiah, employing basic exegetical techniques and resources. Grammatical and linguistic details of selected passages will be highlighted in order to illustrate the chosen passage's contribution to the message of the whole.

Students will be expected to prepare each assigned text for class discussion and read the relevant sections in Thompson. Assigned reading constitutes 5% of the grade. These include McCarter and King plus the relevant sections of Thompson. Falsification of reading reports is a breach of academic integrity. In addition to these readings, students will read through the book of Jeremiah itself in translation at least twice in the term. Deadlines for these readings are in the course schedule below.

The professor will continuously assess students' preparedness as demonstrated in class. While this assessment is necessarily subjective, student's should be aware that it is painfully obvious when the text of the day has not been adequately prepared. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned passages approximately in the same form that the exegesis papers are to be written.

Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Attendance will be taken and will form 5% of the class grade.

Three exegetical papers will be written on assigned texts from Jeremiah utilizing the skills acquired in OT 501 and the augmentation of those skills provided in class sessions. These papers should be single-spaced, typed, and no more than 1500 words in length. Only minimal use of secondary resources is allowed for the first two papers, since the student will be encouraged to rely on his or her own reading of the text. Students are strongly cautioned about secondary sources. If they are used, they must be cited appropriately. Failure to cite sources upon which one has depended is plagiarism. For the third paper the student is expected to make substantive, constructive and critical use of at least 5 secondary sources. This is more than merely tossing in a quotation or a footnote, but should be a significant engagement with other interpreters. Papers will be graded on the following considerations:
1. A presentation of the state of the text as represented in the BHS apparatus, with suggestions, where appropriate, for emendation

2. A brief analysis of the context of the unit and its character as a unit

3. An analysis of the clause and/or poetical structure of the unit based on the analysis of phrases and clauses and standard rhetorical and structural principles (recurrences, causation, climax, etc.)

4. Observation of the import of derived stems, construct phrases, verb tenses, etc.

5. Identification of terms worthy of further study, with such study where appropriate.

6. Identification of the pertinent historical and cultural issues in the text. In the 3rd and 4th papers this will also include integration of appropriate secondary sources

7. Identification of the theological issues posed in the text

8. An accurate translation incorporating the best exegetical insights gained from study.

9. Excellent writing: organization, clarity, sound reasoning, mechanics

10. Creativity and Freshness—clearly engaged with the text, engaging in its presentation.

These 10 features do not have to form the outline of the paper. Each paper will be assessed on a scale of 0-3 for each of the 10 items, with the resulting score turned into a percentage for the grade. A "3" indicates outstanding work in connection with the given rubric. A "2" is satisfactory work. A "1" indicates work is present, but is inadequate. A "0" indicates no significant work related to the given rubric. Item 10 in particular needs attention. A mechanical following of the "list" will net a "1" on item 10. Students are encouraged to find engaging ways of structuring papers, integrating these rubrics appropriately. For example, you might, from your study, have a sense of a single thesis or claim that could be made about the text, and organize the paper to present the data in support of that thesis or claim.

The Fourth paper should demonstrate the student's full capacity to do exegesis within the limits of the paper's format. Personal study is to be integrated with substantive use of secondary sources, and substantive theological reflection should derive from the analysis of the text. The paper should also include a sermon outline or lesson plan incorporating the specific learning presented in the paper. These papers should be double-spaced and no more than 2200 words in length. Papers 1-3 are due no later than 5 PM on the due date at the professor's office or via attached MS Word file sent by e-mail. The final paper is due at the final exam session and will be graded by the same rubrics used for papers 1-3.

Paper 1: Jeremiah 4:3-4
Paper 2: Jeremiah 9:23-24
Paper 3: Jeremiah 15:15-18
Paper 4: Jeremiah 29:10-14
Course Grade will be based on the following:

- Attendance: .................5%
- Required Reading.......5%
- Daily Preparation ........10%
- Paper 1 ....................15%
- Paper 2 .....................20%
- Paper 3 .....................20%
- Paper 4 .....................25%

Course texts

Required specifically for OT 631.

Required in previous courses (OT 501).
- Arnold/Choi Xerox Manuscript on Hebrew Syntax
- Access to a Standard Hebrew Lexicon other than BDB

Recommended
- Köhler-Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill: Multiple Volumes through late 1990’s, also on CDROM)

General Reference (consult FIRST among Secondary Sources)

Specific Bibliography on Jeremiah
- Students of Jeremiah have been favored with an enormous amount of published material. In addition to the select bibliography at the end of this syllabus, see the following:
- Bauer, *Biblical Resources for Ministry*. 
Assignment Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
<th>Fridays</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2, 4,</td>
<td>Organization and Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 9, 11</td>
<td>See Note on &quot;First Assignment&quot;</td>
<td>McCarter to be Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 16, 18</td>
<td>NICOT Intro Completed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 23, 25</td>
<td>Paper 1 Due</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 30, Oct 2</td>
<td>Paper 2 Due</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7, 9</td>
<td>1st Reading of Jeremiah Due</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 14, 16</td>
<td>Paper 2 Due</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 21, 23</td>
<td>King to be Completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 28, 30</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 4, 6</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 11, 13</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 18, 20</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 25, 27</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Paper 4 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2, 4</td>
<td>2nd reading of Jeremiah due</td>
<td>Final Exam Period</td>
</tr>
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The schedule above does not indicate daily exegetical assignments. Our normal procedure for handling texts in class will be to look at the larger literary context and text-critical issues for one class period, then do a detailed study of the text during the second class-period. The instructor will also make presentations periodically on some topic of importance in the study of Jeremiah. Passages to be studied will come from the list below.

First assignment: Jeremiah 1:1-3.
1. Work out complete language identification for this whole passage.
2. Do your best to interpret the textual apparatus
3. Judging from this passage, what knowledge would make one a competent reader of the book?
4. What expectations about the book does this unit create?

Passages to be Studied
1:4-6
2:20-25
3:1-5
7:1-7
10:1-5
10:23-24
20:7-9
23:16-22
25:1-7
29:4-9
31:31-34
33:14-18
45:1-5