NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OLD TESTAMENT II Prophets, Psalms, and Wisdom

BIBL 6121 Three Semester Hours Fall 2011 Core Requirement Professor James Bruckner, Ph.D. <u>jbruckner@northpark.edu</u> 773-244-5233 ©James Bruckner 2009. All rights reserved. Do not duplicate any course materials without permission.

Welcome to the Course

Welcome to Old Testament II! I love to teach the OT Prophets and Wisdom and look forward to our interaction together with these texts. Old Testament II is a seminary graduate course on the prophets, psalms, and wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible. (We will use English translations.) This three hour graduate course requires a lot of reading and writing. Please see this syllabus for details. It is your roadmap.

You will need access to a good Old Testament library to do your research projects. If you do not have access, you will need at least two (2) Bible Dictionaries, two (2) Introductions to the Bible, and one (1) book for deeper historical background. (see recommended list) in addition to your textbooks.

The power and passion of the prophets and the reflective poetry and wisdom we will read are essential parts of the "Scripture" to which 2 Timothy 3:16 refers. You should begin by reading the primary biblical document from Job through Malachi.

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Course Description

This course surveys five wisdom and seventeen prophetical books of the Old Testament. It seeks to provide knowledge of the over-arching content (events, characters, themes) and original cultural and historical settings. Attention will be given to literary genres, critical issues, and inter-biblical interpretations as they aid interpretation of texts. The goal is to prepare students to appreciate, interpret, and teach from these books in ministries of the Church.

Required Textbooks

The Holy Bible. Any modern translation. Good advanced student study editions are The New Oxford Annotated Bible and the Harper Collins Study Bible. (Read Job through Malachi.)

Coogan, N.D. editor. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). paperback 0195139372

Limburg, James. *Psalms*. Westminster Bible Companion Series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000). 0664255574

Miller, Patrick. *The Religion of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000). 0664221459

Ballard, Jr., H.W. and Tucker, Jr., W.D. *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000). 0865546525

Peterson, David L. *The Prophetic Literature: an introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). 0664254535

Course Requirements and Grading: In Brief

Successful completion of this course will include:

- 1) Reading the assigned weekly biblical texts and textbooks.
- 2) Weekly Writing assignments (500 words each) (20%)
- 3) Writing One Report on an assigned topic (4-6 pages) (10%).
- 4) Two objective Exams: a midterm (30%) and a final (30%).
- 5) Class Participation: attendance and engagement of material (10%).

Course Requirements: In Detail

1) Reading the assigned weekly biblical texts and textbooks.

Before you read the lectures for the week, you should read the Bible and the secondary literature assigned as background information. You may not always be able to discern a connection between them but as the course progresses the cumulative effect may become evident. Keep track (simple notes) of the main points of the secondary reading for future reference in exam preparation.

2) Weekly Writing Assignment Instructions (20% of grade).

Format

500 words. Cite all sources.

Content

Your short essays should be informed reflections on the 1) reading, 2) biblical texts, and 3) questions assigned in the "Class Schedule." For some assignments you will want to consult sources listed under "Recommended reading." Cite all sources and texts.

Grading

- + Your essay integrated reading, questions, and reflection exceedingly well (wow).
- $\sqrt{+}$ It integrated reading, questions, and reflection on them (very good).
- $\sqrt{}$ It demonstrated understanding of reading and questions (O.K.).
- √- It lacked some basic understanding of the reading or the questions (oops). (2% per day reduction in grade for late papers)

Note: In the week that you do a Report for the class you are exempt from the ordinary weekly writing assignment.

The Option: How To Write a *Précis* (The optional writing assignment; see Schedule for topics.)

Précis means "a brief summary of essential points" or "a precise abstract".

In 3/4ths of the page (3-4 paragraphs) answer these questions:

- a. What is the author's interest? What question or problem is she addressing?
- b. What is the main point of the author's "answer" to that question.
- c. How does the author build her argument? What warrants (proof or logic) does she offer?
- d. Briefly summarize the main argument, step by step.

In 1/4th of the page offer your "critique" of the arguments:

- a. What's missing?
- b. What assumptions do you question?
- c. Is the author's "interest" a helpful approach?
- d. What did you learn? What questions remain?

Note: Do not quote more than a phrase or two.

The précis should be on one page, single spaced, block-style paragraphs, about 500 words. Please include a header with the book title, author's name, and page numbers reviewed.

3) Write One Report on an assigned topic (4-6 pages).

Getting Started

- A) During the first week each student will be assigned a topic.
- B) You are exempt from the Writing Assignment for the week you prepare your report.
- C) Detailed Student Report Guidelines for your report are next:

Student Report Guidelines

This research based exercise requires that you condense much material into a brief presentation. Allow plenty of time for your research and for preparing your report.

Each student will present a summary of research for the class on the cultural and historical life-setting (*sitz im leben*) of their appointed biblical book or theme. Some specific assignments may be limited to a. and b. or c. and d. below because of their scope (see "Class Schedule").

Content

Describe the following in your presentation.

- a. Research the earliest **historical and political** setting of your assigned book or theme. Consider the international, regional, and local politics (as applicable). *Consider and describe* the politics that are relevant to your theme or the message of your biblical book.
- b. Research and briefly describe the relevant archeological evidence.
- c. Summarize the critical history (dates) of the **literary issues** of your biblical text including:
 - +the approximate dates proposed by scholars for the composition, the redaction (editing), and the final form of the text
 - +proposed authorship and editors
 - +other critical literary issues addressed by scholars
- d. State the main theological message(s) of the book received by the people in the original historical context.

Sources

A list of reliable recommended sources is included in this syllabus. From the sources listed in this syllabus, you must consult at least two Bible Dictionaries (Eerdmans, ed. Friedman + one other); two (Introductions to the Bible; and one book for deeper historical background. These books are listed by category at the end of this syllabus. Your textbooks may also be quite helpful! Cite all the books used for your report.

Written Format

Your report should be 1000-1500 words (4-6 pages). It must be accompanied by a one page, 12 point font, bullet style summary of your presentation. *Citations should include:* Author, <u>Title</u> (City: Publisher, date) page number.

Grading

Grading will follow the same protocol as the weekly writing assignments (above). The report is 10% of your course grade. It will be based on the quality of your research, significance of content, and style of presentation.

4) Two objective Exams: a midterm and a final.

I will post brief study-guides for you one week before the exams (see Schedule). The guides will give you an idea of what may be included, though it will not be comprehensive. It will also include the protocols for taking an on-line exam on Blackboard. You will be able to choose your exam time during the week.

Course Grading

Writing assignments 20%; Student Report 10%; Class participation (lecture responses) 10%; Mid-Term Exam 30%; Final Exam 30%. Late writing assignments will be marked down by 2% per day. Exams will be objective questions concerning your knowledge of the basic facts from the lectures, biblical text, and reading assignments.

A 93-100 B 86-92 C 78-85 D 70-77