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HB611: PROPHECY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

PURPOSE: This course will be a survey of the Hebrew Bible prophets, from early Israel to early Judaism. The course has these primary objectives:

- **Development of Biblical and Theological Understanding** The theology of prophetic preaching will be the focus for study. Built on a chronological outline which places the prophets into their historical settings, the course will emphasize the interplay between the prophets' contexts and their message and theology. As a background to this theological focus, the insights of critical scholarship will be assumed. This means each prophetic book will be viewed as a living tradition that preserves both the message and memory of an individual prophet and the faithful, theological re-interpretation of that message by later Israel. How Biblical texts can be appropriately related to contemporary contexts and issues will also be discussed.
- **Development of Practical and Pastoral Skills** A variety of pedagogical methods will be used in class to provide students an opportunity to experience, reflect on and use models for the interpretation and teaching of the Bible in contemporary contexts.

Prerequisites: HB500 and HB600

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

- **Development of Interpretation and Exegesis using Hebrew Language Tools** Focussing on prophetic texts, the course will give students a greater facility in interpreting Hebrew texts. Especially emphasized will be the transition from translation to exegetical and theological insights. The Major Exegesis paper required for various Basic Degree programs will be written as the final paper for this course.

Prerequisite: BIBL500 or equivalent.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES: In successfully completing this course, a student will be able to:

- **Demonstrate an intermediate level knowledge of prophecy and individual prophets in Ancient Israel**
 - A. Describe the historical and social context of the prophets and discuss how that interacted with their message and theology
 - B. Identify and discuss the narrative/poetic artistry, content, and theological issues of Hebrew Bible prophetic texts
 - C. Apply a range of critical methods to the interpretation of prophetic texts
 - D. Create a critical interpretation of an assigned passage following Critical Interpretation Paper Guidelines
- **Demonstrate a willingness and ability to relate prophetic texts to contemporary life and issues in church and public contexts**
 - A. Describe the interpretive principles upon which biblical texts can be used and applied in contemporary situations

- B. Evaluate and describe the application of prophetic texts to contemporary issues, including a discussion of interpretive insights from Third World, feminist, Native and other hermeneutical approaches and compare these to one's own interpretation

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

- **Demonstrate an ability to use Hebrew in translation and exegesis of prophetic texts**
 - A. Apply Hebrew language tools to explicate and analyze a text
 - B. Apply research and critical methods and appropriate hermeneutical methods to interpret a prophetic text both in its ancient context and in contemporary contexts
 - C. Create a critical interpretation of an assigned passage using Hebrew translation and interpretive skills following guidelines in Major Exegesis Paper Guidelines

FORMAT AND CONTENT

For all students work in the course consists of weekly classes including lectures, discussions, small group exercises, assigned readings and class exercises; a final exegesis paper following Critical Interpretation Paper Guidelines.

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency an additional tutorial will provide weekly experience in using Hebrew. The final paper will be the Major Exegesis paper using Hebrew translation and interpretive skills following guidelines in Major Exegesis Paper Guidelines.

Texts—available at UBC Bookstore

Bible (modern critical translation required; Oxford Annotated or HarperCollins New Revised Standard Version suggested)

David L. Petersen. *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. [=TEXT]

Walter Brueggemann. *The Prophetic Imagination*. 2nd edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

For those students using the course to meet the Hebrew Bible Major Exegesis competency:

A copy of or or access to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by William Holladay.

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

1. **Attendance as specified by VST requirements**; reading all required assignments before class, participation in class discussions, and preparation of in-class discussion exercises. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.
2. **Three out of five short in-class exercises** on theological themes in the prophets; as described in syllabus; due as assigned in calendar; evaluative criteria: papers show a close reading of the biblical text and demonstrate ability to extract and describe the most important theological themes in prophetic material.
3. **A final exegesis paper** following guidelines in Critical Interpretation Paper Guidelines. Passage must be selected in consultation with professor. Evaluative criteria:
 - Complete use of sources -- all sources/approaches represented accurately in paper

- Precision of response to exegetical task – paper draws appropriate conclusions about interpretation(s) and theology of the passage and distinguishes meaning(s) of passage in ancient context(s)
- Clarity and depth of thought about the task – paper articulates major interpretive issues appropriate to the passage and demonstrates depth of thought about *how* various interpretive approaches and the various interpretive issues affect the discovery or creation of meaning(s) for the passage
- Coherence and organization of the argument – paper manages and arranges information from the sources effectively to make a coherent argument in support of the interpretations and theology articulated for the passage
- Technical proficiency with language – paper communicates information well
- Critical interpretation—paper demonstrates ability to draw connections between the interpretation(s) and meaning(s) of a passage and significance of passage in contemporary contexts