

OT 3XI3/OT 6XI6 Isaiah

OT 2XI3 Preaching Isaiah Using Hebrew



Mark J. Boda, Ph.D.
Professor of Old Testament
McMaster Divinity College
(905) 525-9140^{x24095}
mjboda@mcmaster.ca

Winter Semester 2015
Online Hybrid—weekly beginning
January 5th
Class Sessions: Feb 17, 18 (all day)

Course Description

An introduction to the phenomenon and study of prophecy in the Old Testament through a focus on the prophetic book of Isaiah as to its message, theological content, literary structures, and present significance. The historical and cultural background of the 8th to 6th Century B.C. will be examined as it relates to the prophetic messages.

Course Purposes

Knowing: That the students have a firm intellectual grasp of the content, literary form, historical context and theological teaching of this prophetic book in their historical, canonical and contemporary contexts.

Being: That the students gain an appreciation for Hebrew prophetic books and their expression of theology. That the students experience a deeper relationship with God through their encounter of God and his ways with humanity in the prophetic books.

Doing: That the students acquire competency in interpreting prophecy maintaining a balance between ancient context and contemporary significance. That the students learn how to dialogue with the best of historical and contemporary research on prophetic books.

Course Overview

This course is an exegetical study of the book of Isaiah that will provide the foundation for interpretation of prophetic books in general. Orientation in the history and literature of this prophetic book will be our focus, but there will also be attention to the biblical-theological and contemporary relevance of these ancient texts for faith communities and societies today.

Textbooks

Oswalt, John. *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Oswalt, John. *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001.

Goldingay, John E. *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

All required textbooks for this class and others at the Divinity College are available from R.E.A.D. On Books, and should be purchased as early as possible, and at least by the beginning of the term when R.E.A.D. On Books has its book table here at the College. They can be contacted at: 195 The West Mall, Suite 414, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1; phone 416-622-0655 ext. 4; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca; or www.readon.ca.

Online Classroom

We will be using an Online Classroom (Avenue to Learn) throughout the semester to facilitate discussion, review of material and also provide secondary literature. Instructions on how to enter and participate in the online classroom will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

Reserved Books at Mills Memorial Library

Mills Library has placed key holdings on Isaiah on two-hour reserve so that all students in this course have equal access to the collection. A list of the books can be found at the course web site. These books should be your first reference for your papers in this course.

Course Schedule

Pre-Class Modules (January 5-February 16): Online

Introducing Prophetic Interpretation and Isaiah

- Week of January 5th: Interpreting Isaiah: Isaiah 6 as a sample
- Week of January 12th: Interpreting Isaiah: Isaiah 40 as a sample
- Week of January 19th: Authorship, Composition, and the Unity of Isaiah
- Week of January 26th: History of Israel and Isaiah
- Week of February 2nd: Isaiah, the NT, and Biblical Theology
- Week of February 9th: Interpreting Isaiah: Draft and Review (due Feb 14)

Class Modules (February 17-18): At McMaster Divinity College

Class Learning Experiences on Isaiah: Bring Proposal on Potential Themes (Goldingay) to course.

- Isaiah 1-5
- Isaiah 7-12
- Isaiah 13-27
- Isaiah 28-35
- Isaiah 36-39
- Isaiah 40:12-49:13
- Isaiah 49:14-55
- Isaiah 56-66

Post-Class Modules (February 23-April 2)

- Week of Feb 23rd: Feedback on Exegesis
- Week of March 2nd: Work on Exegesis
- Week of March 9th: Work on Exegesis
- Week of March 16th: Submit Final Version of Exegesis Paper
- Week of March 23rd: Work on Thematic Study
- Week of March 30th: Work on Thematic study
- Week of April 6th: Submit the Thematic study (April 8th)

Learning Opportunities

On Campus Classroom Experiences

The classroom presentations and discussions on Isaiah will orient you to the various sections of Isaiah, model interpretation for your exegetical paper and prepare you for your thematic paper.

Preclass Participation (OT 3XI3 and OT 2XI3)

We will spend the first six weeks of the course online preparing for the main assignments and the learning experience together at McMaster. You need to follow the instructions for each week and participate according to the schedule. Instructions on how to enter and participate on our online classroom will be sent to you via email at the beginning of the semester.

✓ Grade Value: 10%

Exegesis Project



Goal: The goal of this learning experience is to use principles for interpreting Hebrew Prophecy to interpret a prophetic pericope in Isaiah.

By the end of the semester you will complete a major research paper (minimum 15 pages double spaced) on a passage in Isaiah.

There are two phases to the writing of this paper:

Phase One: Draft Interpretation (OT 3XI3 and OT 2XI3)

The first phase is your basic draft interpretation following the interpretation guide provided on the course web site. This interpretation will provide a three dimensional reading which sets this passage in its historical, literary and contemporary contexts. While your research on this passage should ultimately draw on a minimum of 10 secondary sources beyond the textbooks for the class, at this stage you can focus on the textbooks and your own interaction with the text for your draft interpretation.

You will exchange this draft work with one other colleague in the course and an OT 6XI6 student by the final week prior to our on campus course experience. Your colleague and an OT 6XI6 student will read your draft work and make preliminary comments on your draft work during the first week after our on campus course experience. The more research you can do at this draft level the more feedback for improvement you will receive.

Phase One

✓ Grade Value:

- Draft Paper: 7%
- Response to draft paper: 8%

✓ Format:

- Draft Paper: email in .pdf format
- Response to draft paper: email in .pdf format

✓ Due Date:

- Draft Paper: 14 February 2014 (11:59 pm)
- Responses to draft papers: 28 February 2015 (11:59 pm)

Phase Two: Research Paper (OT 3XI3) or Expository Sermon with Research Appendix (OT 2XI3)

After you have provided your draft interpretation and interacted with your colleague, you will then have an opportunity to return to your paper and fill out your work further for the purpose of a research paper or sermon with research appendix. At this point you must ensure that you have used a minimum of 10 secondary sources beyond the textbooks for the class. These secondary sources must include *both books and articles* (for articles use the ATLA database through Mills Library), must reflect recent research (after 1990, best after 2000), and must be elongated treatments of your biblical text, period, or book. This requirement does not include ancient sources used (Josephus, Qumran) or Bibles, Versions, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries (or other reference works). Internet resources are usually **not** acceptable (unless they are from ATLA) and must be approved by the professor. Go through this material and revise your initial raw research. After all your good research on your passage you will need to present it in a way that is accessible and gets to the heart of the passage. All material which is submitted should be double spaced with 1" margins utilizing a readable font (12 point). It must have a title page and bibliography which is not included in the length required. It should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps an outline may accompany the paper but this is not included in the length of the paper. Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.

Research Paper (OT 3XI3)

Use this guide below (the percentages are the amount of your paper which should be devoted to each point):

- Introduction (2.5%)
- I. Translations and issues (5%)
- II. Referential Historical Context (10%)
- III. Describe the overall theme and flow of the passage (10%)
 - A. Form
 - B. Overall Rhetorical Flow
- IV. Verse by verse analysis (50%)
- V. Link the text to the book of Isaiah, the rest of the canon and our lives today
 - A. Book (10%)
 - B. Canon (5%)
 - C. Culture (5%)
- VI. Conclusion (2.5%)

This completed paper will be due two weeks after the on campus class.

Expositional Sermon with Research Appendix (OT 2XI3)

This 20 page written submission will include a 10 page sermon written in full sentences followed by a 10 page research appendix which follows the outline for the research paper above (and will include your translation from Hebrew with basic parsing of your passage) and is the basis for the sermon presented. The sermon must be preached in a way that draws a contemporary audience into a particular text of Isaiah, provides a depth of engagement with that text rooted in its ancient context, and connects the theme(s) of this text to a contemporary Christian audience. The research appendix should show deep engagement with the original text of the book of Isaiah in conversation with the best of scholarship. Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.

This expositional sermon with research appendix will be due two weeks after the on campus class.

Phase Two

- ✓ Grade Value: 35% (OT 3XI3) or 45% (OT 2XI3)
- ✓ Format: 15 (OT 3XI3) page research paper or 20 (OT 2XI3) page sermon with research appendix (.pdf) via email
- ✓ Due Date: 16 March 2015

Thematic Ministry Project



Goal: *The goal of this learning experience is to encounter major themes within Isaiah and identify their significance for the ministry of the church today.*

This 15 page (OT 3XI3) or 10 page (OT 2XI3) project requires students to integrate, synthesize and apply the elements learned in study sessions on Isaiah. Early in the semester students will identify three themes which run through much of the literature studied and which have potential for the shaping the life of the church today. At the end of a semester of study, students will write up a project which begins by identifying a target faith community (hopefully your own) and its present growing edges, then traces one of the major themes through the book of Isaiah (with evidence drawn from all three major sections: chs. 1-39, 40-55, 56-66), identifies how Isaiah's development of it relates to the rest of the canon and then summarizes how this theme should practically and specifically impact the life of the particular target faith community identified at the outset. Students in OT 3XI3 will provide a research paper focused on ministry practices, while students in OT 2XI3 will produce a sermon. This project will be researched throughout the semester as you prepare for each class by reading the biblical text, your colleagues' papers, class textbooks, journal articles (as well as any other secondary resources you find helpful, including the commentaries on reserve).

There are two phases to the writing of this project:

Phase One (OT 2XI3 and OT 3XI3)

Read Goldingay's *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* which provides an introductory overview of some basic themes in Isaiah. You may also find some further reflection on themes in Oswalt I:31-44, 54-64, II:12-19 (that means volume I, pages 31-44, 54-64 and volume II, pages 12-19). Another optional resource is John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah* (Word Biblical Themes; Dallas: Word, 1989) as well as the introductions to any of the commentaries on reserve.

As you read through these sections be on the lookout for key themes that have potential for the life of the church. By the time we arrive for our on campus course experience submit to me a report that you have read the material above with accompanying two-page essay (in .pdf format) identifying your target faith community and three initial themes that have potential for impacting this community.

Phase One

- ✓ Grade Value: 5%
- ✓ Format: 2 page essay (.pdf) via email
- ✓ Due Date: 17 February 2015

Phase Two:

Throughout our on campus course experience and as you read through the book of Isaiah, take focused notes on your theme with an eye to their impact on your target faith community. As you do this core sub-themes will arise as you move through the book. Consult secondary literature on the various passages where you have seen your theme developed as well as secondary literature on the book of Isaiah as a whole (books, journal articles) which treats your theme. You should use a minimum of 5 secondary sources beyond the textbooks for the class. These secondary sources must include *both books and articles* (for articles use the ATLA database through Mills Library), must reflect recent research (after 1990, best after 2000), and must be elongated treatments of your biblical text, period, or book. This requirement does not include ancient sources used (Josephus, Qumran) or Bibles, Versions, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries (or other reference works). Internet resources are usually **not** acceptable (unless they are from ATLA) and must be approved by the professor. Go through this material and revise your initial raw research.

Research Paper (OT 3XI3)

After all your good research on your theme you will need to present your results in a way that makes this material accessible. Besides a clear introduction and conclusion, the paper will be divided into three basic sections. First, on the cover page describe your target faith community, offering a quick overview of its present context, shape and impact. Second, provide an overview of the theme you have discerned throughout the book of Isaiah (giving exposure to the contribution of all three of the major sections in Isaiah, chs. 1-39, 40-55, 56-66). You must provide specific evidence from specific passages/verses (in context) in Isaiah with accompanying interaction with our course discussion and secondary literature. Third, having laid out the witness of Isaiah to this theme, you should briefly consider how this theme from Isaiah is related to the broader witness of Scripture, both OT and NT. Consider how Christ's coming impacts your theme from Isaiah. Finally, based on the witness of Isaiah, understood in light of the broader canonical witness, highlight how this theme should impact the life of your target faith community today. Use this outline guide below (the percentages are the amount of your paper which should be devoted to each point):

Cover page: Target Faith Community

Introduction (2.5%)

I. Theme: How is this theme developed in the book of Isaiah (60%)

II. Biblical Theological Connections (How is this theme from Isaiah related to the broader witness of Scripture, both OT and NT? How does Christ's coming impact this theme?) (15%)

III. Practical Implications (How does this theme impact the life of your faith community today?) (20%)

IV. Conclusion (2.5%)

This completed paper will be due at the end of the semester (see date below).

Thematic Sermon (OT 2XI3)

This 10 page written sermon must be written in a way that draws a contemporary audience into a particular theme that runs throughout Isaiah, provides a depth of engagement with the book in its ancient context, and connects the theme to a contemporary Christian audience. Where secondary sources are used, they should be cited and footnoted appropriately, but the main focus of this sermon is on creative and accurate presentation of the theme to a contemporary audience.

On the cover page of the sermon describe your target faith community, offering a quick overview of its present context, shape and impact. In the sermon you need to provide an overview of the theme you have discerned throughout the book of Isaiah (giving exposure to the contribution of all three of the major sections in Isaiah, chs. 1-39, 40-55, 56-66). You must provide specific evidence from specific passages/verses (in context) in Isaiah. Also you should consider how this theme from Isaiah is related to the broader witness of Scripture, both OT and NT. Consider how Christ's coming impacts your theme from Isaiah. Also, based on the witness of Isaiah, understood in light of the broader canonical witness, highlight how this theme should impact the life of your target faith community today in specific ways.

This thematic sermon will be due at the end of the semester (see date below).

Phase Two

- ✓ Grade Value: 35% (OT 3XI3) or 25% (OT 2XI3)
- ✓ Format: 15 (OT 3XI3) page research paper or 10 (OT 2XI3) page sermon (.pdf, via email)
- ✓ Due Date: 8 April 2015

OT 6XI6 Requirements

1. **Translations:** Translations from the Hebrew of individual passages assigned each week with accompanying notes on issues related to parsing, syntax, and text criticism must be submitted to the professor each Tuesday night (midnight).
2. **Review of OT 3XI3/OT 2XI3 draft exegesis work:** Students will provide extensive feedback and guidance to ministry student's initial exegesis work on a passage of Isaiah.
3. **Paper on the Critical Study of Isaiah:** This project will focus on an aspect of the Critical Study of the Book of Isaiah, producing a paper that could be a journal article, form part of a thesis or dissertation, and/or be presented at a scholarly conference. The paper should not exceed 8000 words, although appendices are accepted.
4. **Additional Meetings with Literature Review and Visiting Scholars:** Those taking this for OT 6XI6 credit will meet as a group with the professor once each month during the semester, to discuss key literature on Isaiah or interact with a visiting scholar.

Translations

- ✓ Grade Value: 25%
- ✓ Format: .pdf via email
- ✓ Due Date: Weekly before Thursday midnight

Review of draft Exegesis work/Participation in online and on campus course

- ✓ Grade Value: 15%
- ✓ Format:
 - Review—.pdf via email to professor and students
 - Course participation—to be determined
- ✓ Due Date: January-February for participation; Week of Feb 23rd for feedback

Paper on Critical Study of Isaiah

- ✓ Grade Value: 45%
- ✓ Format: .pdf via email
- ✓ Due Date: 25 November

Literature/Visiting Scholars Reviews

- ✓ Grade Value: 15%
- ✓ Format: .pdf via email
- ✓ Due Date: as per schedule



Format and Evaluation

So that I can properly evaluate your work the following format is to be used for the paper in this class.

- **Medium for Submission:** All material in this class is to be submitted in digital format to me via email. Please use .pdf format and ensure that what you send is what you want me to read. If you need a

program for creating .pdfs go to <http://primopdf.com> for a free .pdf maker.

- **Style:** All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/MDCStyleGuide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Title page, footnoting where appropriate and bibliography are not included in the length required. Material should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps an outline may accompany the “paper” but this is not included in the length of the “paper.” Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.
- **Gender Inclusive Language:** McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.
- **Citations:** You must cite the source of your material very carefully using a consistent system, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum as I favour integration of secondary literature (footnoted).
- **Statement on Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one’s academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

So I can properly evaluate your work and help you grow in your biblical and writing skills the following evaluation guide should be kept in mind as you write:

- **Presentation:** Is the spelling correct? Does the grammar/syntax reflect proper English? Is the paper laid out properly?
- **Argumentation:** Is there a good introduction and conclusion? Does the argument flow with ample support? Is the question answered?
- **Content:** Are all the points considered? Is there proper documentation of sources used?

Accountability

הלכה התמבטים: The Rule of the Timbits

To ensure a timely start to class we will be observing the Timbit Redemption Rule for this course. Because “tardies” raise the ire of the covenant community (bound by this covenantal syllabus document delivered here at the foot of the “Mountain”), those who are late for class must have a means by which to atone for such “accidental sins” (בשגגה, *bishgāgāh*; if they are defiant sins, בְּיַד רָמָה, *b^eyad rāmāh*, then the offender will be “cut off” from the community, see Num 15:27-31).¹ which means anyone late for class will need to bring Timbits for the entire class (מִנְחָה, *minḥāh*) no later than the next class meeting plus a Tim Hortons coffee (נֶסֶךְ) for the professor (cream, no sugar). This מִנְחָה (*minḥah*) and נֶסֶךְ (*nēsēk*) will function simultaneously as both a sin offering (חֲטָאתָ, *ḥattāt*, Leviticus 4) atoning for the accidental sin of the offender and a peace offering (שְׁלָמִים, *sh^elāmīm*, Leviticus 3) enhancing the fellowship of the covenant community. See the high professor for further details and any torah-rulings (see Hag 2:10-14) regarding specific situations. The full Rule of the Timbits will be available at our course website.

Especially important is to take seriously the cry of Joel of old in 1:13:

חַגְרוּ וְסַפְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים	Gird yourselves <i>with sackcloth</i>
הִלְלִילוּ מִשְׁרְתֵי מִזְבֵּחַ	And lament, O priests;
בָּאוּ לֵינוּ בַשָּׂקִים מִשְׁרְתֵי אֱלֹהֵי	Wail, O ministers of the altar!
כִּי נִמְנַע מִבַּיִת אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךְ:	Come, spend the night in sackcloth
	O ministers of my God,
	For <u>the grain offering and the drink offering</u>
	Are withheld from the house of your God.

And note his promise of a reward to those repent in 2:14:

מִי יוֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם	Who knows whether He will turn and relent
וְהִשָּׂאֵר אַחֲרָיו בְּרָכָה	And leave a blessing behind Him,
מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךְ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	<u>Even a grain offering and a drink offering</u>
	For the LORD your God?

Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

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¹ Of course, see the “definitive” work on this: Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 53-54.