

Micah for the Contemporary Church



McMaster Divinity College
Fall 2015

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Course Designation

OT 3X13 Micah for the Contemporary Church
Biblical Studies
Pastoral Studies

Course Schedule

Classes begin on Monday September 14th
Class meets each Monday 10:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
No Class Monday October 12th (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Classes end on Monday December 7th

Course Description

This course is an exegetical and expositional study of the book of Micah. The composition will be contextualized within the book of the twelve. The course will include a review of eighth century Israel as given in the biblical narrative within the context of ancient near eastern history.

Literary analysis of Micah will include its composition history, form critical and structural analysis, exegesis and exposition. Attention will be given to themes of the prophecy and their theological import, with particular attention given to the concepts of *justice and hope*.

Course Objectives

Knowing

- History of the first temple period of Israel and Judah
- Prophetic distinction of Micah within the book of the twelve
- Message of Micah among the eighth century prophets
- Importance of Micah to contemporary theologies of justice and hope in the church

Being

- Being aware of justice within society as a critical aspect of living a spiritual life
- Learning how to represent God as his image in a violent world
- Learning to live courageously in a world of conflict
- Being sensitive to justice issues according to the priorities of Christian ethics
- Living with hope especially when temporal situations create despair

Doing

- Teach the message of Micah to those that take this book seriously as a prophetic word
- Determine and address issues of justice within individual life circumstances
- Find ways to address issues of injustice at various levels of society engagement
- Inspire hope to those who feel that human life has become meaningless and desperate

Course Texts

The following two texts are required for all students in the course.

Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah: An Archaeological Commentary*, Westminster Press, 1988.

Bruce K. Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah*, Eerdmans, 2007.

Biblical Studies Text

The following text is required for students in the Biblical Studies Specialization, but optional for others.

Victor H. Matthews, *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods*, Baker, 2007.

Pastoral Studies Text

The following text is required for students in the Pastoral Studies Specialization, but optional for others.

Aaron Chalmers, *Interpreting the Prophets: Reading, Understanding and Preaching from the Worlds of the Prophets*, InterVarsity Press, 2015.

Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Lectures*

*The schedule below will be complemented by guest lectures on particular topics to be determined during the semester.

1. Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century
2. The text, compositional history, and canonical setting of the Book of Micah
3. Oracles of Doom: Judgment on Samaria and Judah (Micah 1:1-16; Isaiah 2:6-22)
4. Oracles of Doom: Judgment on Greedy Land Barons and False Prophets (Micah 2:1-13; Isaiah 5:8-30)
5. Future of Jerusalem: Zion Ploughed like a Field (Micah 3:1-12; Isaiah 3:1 – 4:1)
6. Future of Jerusalem: Mountain of Zion (Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 2:2-5; 65:17-25)
7. Future of Jerusalem: City of the Great King (Micah 4:6-13; Isaiah 54-55)
8. Future of Jerusalem: Rule of the Faithful Remnant (Micah 5:1-15; Isaiah 8:16-9:7)
9. Restoration of Zion: Guilty in the Divine Court (Micah 6:1-8; Isa 1:1-20)
10. Restoration of Zion: Curses on Jerusalem (Micah 6:9-7:7; Amos 4:1-13)
11. Restoration of Zion: Who is like our God? (Micah 7:8-20; Amos 9:11-15)
12. New Testament Fulfilment of the Prophecy of Micah

Course Assignments and Grading

I Biblical Studies Assignments

1. Reading Requirements (15%)

Biblical text of 1 Kings 16:1 – Kings 20:21 by September 21

Biblical text of Isaiah 1:1 – 12:6; 40:1 – 55:13 by October 26

Text by Philip King must be read by September 21 – **5%**

Text by Waltke must be read in preparation for the biblical material covered in each lecture – **10%**

Reading report will be **due December 7**. The report must indicate the date when readings were done and the number of hours for each time. There will be a 5% deduction if the biblical texts are not read.

2. History of the Eighth Century (20%)

A paper of about 2000 words will review the historical circumstances of Israel and Judah during the eighth century. The paper will provide background to explain the rise of Omride – Jehu and Judean dynasties during the eighth century. It must explain the events that transpired, including an account of the exile of Israel by Shalmaneser V and the attack against Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Information on life in Israel and Judah as illustrated in the text by King is a part of this review.

This is not a research paper. The student must consult at least two histories of Israel for this period and the text by King. Students are free to incorporate material from any source useful to their goals for the paper. This paper is **due on October 5th**.

3. Historical Methodology in Biblical Studies (30%)

Using the text by Matthews, clarify the issues in writing a history of Israel, showing the differing concepts of what can be known about Israel and Judah historically during the eighth century. Explain the methods of historical analysis, including the use of social sciences, archaeology, and historical geography. The paper should indicate how such historical study can contribute to understanding the book of Micah and biblical revelation.

No research is expected beyond the information of the text. The paper should be about 2000 words; it is due **November 16th**.

4. Exegetical Paper (35%)

Choose a passage of interest from the book of Micah. The paper must explain how this passage fits into the literary structure of the book of Micah. The passage will be analyzed for its genre, outline, and its contribution to the message of the book of Micah. This will require detailed study of all matters of exegesis (translation) and exposition (meaning).

This is a research paper. It must have a bibliography of a minimum of 12 items of commentaries and related journal articles. It should conclude with a comment on the significance of the passage for biblical theology. The paper should be about 2000 – 2500 words in length. It is **due November 30**.

Assignment Summary

1. Reading Requirements: 15%
2. History of the Eighth Century: 20%
3. Historical Methodology: 30%
4. Exegetical Paper: 35%

II Pastoral Studies Assignments

1. Reading Requirements (15%)

Biblical text of 1 Kings 16:1 – Kings 20:21 by September 21

Biblical text of Isaiah 1:1 – 12:6; 40:1 – 55:13 by October 26

Text by Philip King must be read by September 21 – **5%**

Text by Waltke must be read in preparation for the biblical material covered in each lecture – **10%**

Reading report will be **due December 7**. The report must indicate the date when readings were done and the number of hours for each time. There will be a 5% deduction if the biblical texts are not read.

2. History of the Eighth Century (20%)

A paper of about 2000 words will review the historical circumstances of Israel and Judah during the eighth century. The paper will provide background to explain the rise of Omride – Jehu and Judean dynasties during the eighth century. It must explain the events that transpired, including an account of the exile of Israel by Shalmaneser V and the attack against Jerusalem by Sennacherib. Information on life in Israel and Judah as illustrated in the text by King is a part of this review.

This is not a research paper. The student must consult at least two histories of Israel for this period and the text by King. Students are free to incorporate material from any source useful to their goals for the paper. This paper is **due on October 5th**.

3. Eschatology of Micah (30%)

The book of Micah is well known as a prophecy through the citation of Micah 5:2 in the birth story of Jesus. Matthew also quotes Micah 7:6 in the teaching of Jesus on the cost of discipleship. Using the lectures of the course, the texts by Waltke and Chalmers, and other resources (including journal articles) of your choice, do an approximately 2000 word paper on the eschatology of Micah. What is the hope of Micah for the fulfilment of promises to Israel and how are these to be realized in the hope of the Christian? The paper is **due November 16**.

4. Preaching Micah (35%)

Using the text by Chalmers as a resource, sketch a series of five sermons from Micah. The series must include at least four of the prophetic forms that are discussed by Chalmers in chapter four and must incorporate the guidelines of chapter six. The sermons should incorporate the appropriate theological themes discussed in chapter three.

These sermons are not to be written out. They should include five passages from Micah that form a logical sequence. Each sermon should have an outline of the text of Micah chosen, but there does not need to be an outline of the sermon itself. The passage should be explained in terms of the prophetic form, how it contributes to the book of Micah, and how it develops important theological themes. There should be indication of how the sermons segue logically. They should all be organized under one general theme that can be remembered as the message of the prophet. Each sermon should be two to three pages. The assignment is **due November 30th**.

Assignment Summary

1. Reading Requirements: 15%
2. History of the Eighth Century: 20%

3. Eschatology of Micah: 30%
4. Sermons: 35%

Course Policies

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 Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

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.

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.

Late Assignments

Late assignments are reduced two percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late, the grade will be reduced to 88).

Bibliography

Text

Barthélemy, Dominique. *Critique textuelle de l'Ancient Testament*. Vol. 3. Ezéchiél, Daniel, et les 12 Prophètes. OBO 50/3. Univ.-Verlag Göttingen / Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992.

Gelston, Anthony. *The Twelve Minor Prophets*. Biblia Hebraica Quinta 13. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011.

Tov, Emanuel. *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever*. DJD VIII. Clarendon Press, 1990.

Ziegler, Joseph. *Duodecim prophetae. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Gottingensis* 13. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 3. ed., 1984.

Commentaries

Allen, Leslie C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*. Eerdmans, 1976.

Andersen, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman, eds. *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 1st ed. AB 24E. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. *Micah*. FOTL. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Cheyne, T. K. *Micah, with Notes and Introduction*. 1889.

Hillers, Delbert R. *Micah : A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. Hermeneia. Fortress, 1984.

Limburg, James. *Hosea--Micah*. Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. John Knox, 1988.

Margolis, Max Leopold. *Micah*, 1908.

Mays, James Luther. *Micah : A Commentary*. OTL. Westminster, 1976.

McKane, William. *The Book of Micah : Introduction and Commentary*. T & T Clark, 1998.

McKeating, Henry, ed. *The Books of Amos, Hosea and Micah*. The Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.

Nogalski, James. *The Book of the Twelve: Micah-Malachi*. Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011.

Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi*. Word Biblical Commentary. Word Books, 1984.

Waltke, Bruce K. *A Commentary on Micah*. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2007.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Micah : A Commentary*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990.

_____. *Micah the Prophet*. Fortress, 1981.

Canon of the Twelve

Biddle, Mark E. "'Israel' and 'Jacob' in the Book of Micah: Micah in the Context of the Twelve." In *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 146–65. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Cuffey, Kenneth H. "Remnant, Redactor, and Biblical Theologian: A Comparative Study of Coherence in Micah and the Twelve." In *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, 185–208. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Hebrew Prophetic Composition

Clements, Ronald E. "Prophecy Interpreted: Intertextuality and Theodicy: A Case Study of Jeremiah 26:16-24." In *Uprooting and Planting*, 32–44. New York: T & T Clark, 2007.

Jacobs, Mignon R. *The Conceptual Coherence of the Book of Micah*. JSOTSup. Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.

Stansell, Gary. *Micah and Isaiah : A Form and Tradition Historical Comparison*. SBL Dissertation Series. Scholars, 1988.

Sweeney, Marvin A. "Micah's Debate with Isaiah." In *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature*, 210–21. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Wagenaar, Jan A. *Judgement and Salvation: The Composition and Redaction of Micah 2-5*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum. Leiden; New York; Cologne: E. J. Brill, 2001.

Theological Studies

Jenson, Philip Peter. *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: A Theological Commentary*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. London: T & T Clark, 2008.

Mason, Rex. *Micah, Nahum, Obadiah*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: JSOT, 1991.

Homiletical Studies

Aaron, Charles L. *Preaching Hosea, Amos, and Micah*. Preaching Classic Texts. Chalice, 2005.

Snaith, Norman Henry. *Amos, Hosea and Micah*. Epworth Preacher's Commentaries. Epworth, 1956.

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