Micah for the Contemporary Church

McMaster Divinity College
Fall 2018

August H. Konkel  Professor of Old Testament (Ph.D.)
konkela@mcmaster.ca; 905 525 9140 x 23505
mcmasterdivinity.ca/faculty/core/august-h-konkel

Course Designation

OT 3XM3 Micah for the Contemporary Church

Specializations

Biblical Studies
Pastoral Studies
Church and Culture

Doctor of Practical Theology

Students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course.
Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

**Course Schedule**

- Classes begin on Monday September 12th
- Class meets each Wednesday 2:00 p.m. – 3:50 p.m.
- No class on October 10 (Intensives / hybrid week)
- Classes end on Wednesday December 12th

**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 in 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 desperate
Course Texts

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


**Biblical Studies Text**

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


**Pastoral Studies, Church and Culture Text**

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


**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, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

**Course Lectures**

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)
7. Future of Jerusalem: City of the Great King (Micah 4:6-13; Isaiah 54–55)
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

Assignments for All Specializations

1. Reading Requirements (10%)

Biblical text of 1 Kings 16:1 – 2 Kings 20:21 by September 19
McEntire, Chorus of Prophetic Voices by September 26

Reading report will be due September 26. The report must indicate the date when readings were done and the number of hours for each time.

2. History of the Eighth Century (30%)

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 ninth-eighth centuries. 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.

This is not a research paper. The student must make a study of the relevant portions of Ancient Israel’s History edited by Hess and Arnold and should consult general histories of Israel for this period. Students are free to incorporate material from any source useful to their goals for the paper. This paper is due on October 10th.

3. The Role of the Eighth Century Prophets in Israel (25%)

Using the text by Myers and other relevant literature (an annotated bibliography is available for all those that request it), discuss the activity of Micah in the eighth century, providing some comparison to the other prophets of his time (Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah). Explain the intention and function of the written prophetic book both as an individual prophecy and as a part of the book of the twelve.

The paper should be about 2000 words; it is due October 31st.

Biblical Studies Specialization Only (35%)

Students in Biblical Studies will 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 2500 words in length. It is due November 28.

**Pastoral Studies Specialization Only (35%)**

Student in pastoral studies will use the texts by McEntire, *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices*, Smith, *Hosea / Amos / Micah* and other resources to sketch a series of five sermons from Micah. The sermons should incorporate the appropriate theological themes that are the burden of the prophet Micah.

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.

**Church and Culture Specialization Only (35%)**

Students in the Church and Culture Specialization will do a paper of about 2500 words on the question of social justice. Micah is the prophet most famously known for the lawsuit, as it has often been called, in chapter 6:1–8 calling for justice. Justice is prominent in the contemporary world serving a wide variety of causes of activism. Using the texts by McEntire, *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices*, Smith, *Hosea / Amos / Micah*, and other resources (an annotated bibliography is available), provide a description of the problem of social justice in Micah’s time and how the prophet addressed it. Compare it to some current social justice issues and show how the teaching of Micah could used by the church in its mission to be a light to the world. The assignment is due November 28.

**Assignment Summary**

1. Reading Requirements: 10%
2. History of the Eighth Century: 30%
3. Role of the Prophets: 25%
4. Specific specialization assignment: 35%

Penalty for late assignments will be 1% per day, excluding weekends.

**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: https://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 its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

**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: https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

**Bibliography for Micah Research**

The following is a bibliography of recent research on the book of Micah. It is arranged loosely by topic. Consequently a few sources are repeated in different sections.

**Resources on the Hebrew Text of Micah**


**Backgrounds to the Book of Micah**

These sources pertain to various background topics that are relevant for the study of the book of Micah.

*Historical Background*


Premnath, D. N. *Eighth Century Prophets: A Social Analysis*. St. Louis: Chalice, no date.


The Book of the Twelve

These sources pertain to the prophetic corpus within which Micah is situated.

General Corpus


'The Day of the Lord': A Theme in the Twelve


*Micah Among the Twelve*


Zapff, Burkard M. “The Book of Micah—the Theological Center of the Book of the Twelve?” In *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations* -


Literary and Canonical Backgrounds and Themes


---

**Messianic Expectation**


**The Book of Micah**

*Composition Background*


**General Commentaries**

These resources are the major commentaries available on the book of Micah.


*Homiletic Aids*


*Theological Commentaries*


Hermeneutical and Exegetical Studies on Micah

These resources contain research pertaining to specific passages and pericopes within the book of Micah.

**Micah 1**


**Micah 2**


*Micah 3*


MICAH FOR THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH


*Micah 4*


**Micah 5**


Micah 6


Micah 7


Hoffman, Yair. “‘Like Summer’s Gatherings, Like Vintage Gleanings’ (Mi 7:1) : The Structure, Composition and Purpose of Micah 7.” *Beit Mikra* 56 (2011) 40–64.


*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.*