

Ph.D./M.A. Seminar: Critical Studies in Prophecy

PhD – CHTH G105-C06

MA–OT6ZS6

McMaster Divinity College

Fall Semester 2019

Tuesday, 11:00-12:50pm

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I. Description

This course focuses attention on recent research on the prophets and prophetic books of the Old Testament. Key streams of research over the past few decades will be investigated with the opportunity for students to engage key passages utilizing new methodologies.

II. Purpose

A. Knowing: To have a thorough knowledge of critical studies on the history, sociology, literature, and theology associated with the prophetic books of the Old Testament.; to understand the key methodologies which have been used for study of these figures and books in the Old Testament and ancient Israel and Judah.

B. Being: To gain a deeper appreciation for the theological potential of the prophetic books for Christian believers; to be challenged to deeper personal faith in God by the prophets and their message.

C. Doing: To be able to access the best resources for the study of the prophets and prophetic books; to employ recent methodologies for the study of the prophets and their associated literature; to continue to increase Hebrew translation skills; to hone the ability to critically review literature and written papers in an oral setting

III. Reading Resources

The assigned readings listed in the schedule below will be distributed electronically.

Boda, Mark J. & McConville, J. G. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2012.

Sharp, Carolyn. *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

IV. Schedule

September

10 Orientation

17 Class

- Primary Text: Zech 11:4-16
- Critical Studies: From Inner-biblical Allusion to Intertextuality
- Assigned Reading:
 - Boda: *Exploring Zechariah 2* (preface, chs. 1, 9)
 - “Intertextuality and Innerbiblical Interpretation” by Michael Stead in DOTPr

24 Class

- Primary Text: Zech 8:1-13
- Critical Studies: Redaction and Compositional Criticism
- Assigned Reading:
 - Boda: *Exploring Zechariah 1* (chs. 3, 5, 11)
 - Boda: “Authors, Real and Implicit”
 - One of the following:
 - “Editorial/Redaction Criticism” by Paul Redditt in DOTPr
 - “Formation of the Prophetic Books” by J. Stromberg in DOTPr
 - “Redaction Criticism and the Prophets” by James D. Nogalski in OHP

October

1 Class

- Primary Text: Hag 2:1-9
- Critical Studies: Form and New Form Criticism
- Assigned Reading:
 - See Floyd readings below
 - “Form Criticism” by Colin Toffelmire in DOTPr
 - If wanted: “Genre Criticism and the Prophets” by Barbara Green in OHP

8 Class

- Primary Text: Isa 40:1-11
- Critical Studies: Prophets and the ANE
- Assigned Reading:
 - See Hilber readings below
 - “Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy” by J. Stökl in DOTPr
 - “Prophetic Intermediation in the Ancient Near East” by Martti Nissinen in OHP

15 No Class: Intensive Hybrid Week

22 Class

- Primary Text: Amos 4:1-13
- Critical Studies: Sociological Approaches
- Assigned Reading:
 - See Carroll readings below
 - “Social-Scientific Approaches” by Danny Carroll in DOTPr

29 Class:

- Primary Text: Zeph 1:1-6
- Critical Studies: Literary Approaches
- Assigned Reading:
 - See Heffelfinger reading below
 - “Literary Approaches” by L. Wray Beal in DOTPr
 - If wanted: “Metaphorization and Other Tropes in the Prophets” by Julia M. O’Brien in OHP

November

5 Class:

- Primary Text: Jer 1:1-10
- Critical Studies: Linguistic Approaches
- Assigned Reading: See Hayes readings below, HEBREW LANGUAGE by John Cook in DOTPr

12 Class:

- Primary Text: Joel 2:11-20
- Critical Studies: Liberation/Feminist approaches
- Assigned Reading:
 - See Dempsey readings below
 - One of:
 - FEMINIST INTERPRETATION by Carol Dempsey in DOTPr
 - “Feminist Interpretation of the Prophets” by Christl M. Maier or “Womanist Approaches to the Prophets” by Valerie Bridgeman in OHP

19 Class: Paper reviews

- Assigned Reading: At least 1 Review of Research from DOTPr (Isaiah by H.G.M. Williamson, Jeremiah by J. A. Dearman, Ezekiel by I. M. Duguid in subfolder in Dropbox) or Currents in Biblical Research (see subfolder in Dropbox) or OHP (Isaiah by Ulrich Berges, Jeremiah by Mark Leuchter, Ezekiel by Andrew Mein, The Twelve by Rainer Kessler) or the Future directions articles by Tiemeyer or Williamson in OHP.

26 No Class: SBL

December

3 Class: Paper reviews

- Assigned Reading: At least 1 Review of Research from DOTPr (Isaiah by H.G.M. Williamson, Jeremiah by J. A. Dearman, Ezekiel by I. M. Duguid in subfolder in Dropbox) or Currents in Biblical Research (see subfolder in Dropbox) or OHP (Isaiah by Ulrich Berges, Jeremiah by Mark Leuchter, Ezekiel by Andrew Mein, The Twelve by Rainer Kessler) or the Future directions articles by Tiemeyer or Williamson in OHP.

10 Class: Paper reviews

- Assigned Reading: At least 1 Review of Research from DOTPr (Isaiah by H.G.M. Williamson, Jeremiah by J. A. Dearman, Ezekiel by I. M. Duguid in subfolder in Dropbox) or Currents in Biblical Research (see subfolder in Dropbox) or OHP (Isaiah by Ulrich Berges, Jeremiah by Mark Leuchter, Ezekiel by Andrew Mein, The Twelve by Rainer Kessler) or the Future directions articles by Tiemeyer or Williamson in OHP.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Can the Prophets Shed Light on Our Worship Wars?: How Amos Evaluates Religious Ritual." *Stone-Campbell Journal* 8 2 (2005): 215-27.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "God and His People in the Nations' History: A Contextualised Reading of Amos 1-2." *TynBul* 47 1 (1996): 39-70.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "He Has Told You What Is Good: Moral Formation in Micah." Pages 103-18 in *Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture*. Edited by M. Daniel Carroll R and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Imagining the Unthinkable: Exposing the Idolatry of National Security in Amos." *Ex auditu* 24 (2008): 37-54.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Living between the Lines: Reading Amos 9:11-15 in Post-War Guatemala." *Religion & Theology* 6 1 (1999): 50-64.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Seek Yahweh, Establish Justice: Probing Prophetic Ethics--an Orientation from Amos 5:1-17." Pages Forthcoming in *The Bible and Social Justice: Old Testament and New Testament Foundations for the Church's Urgent Call* Edited by Cynthia Long Westfall and Brian R. Dyer. McMaster New Testament Studies. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Seeking the Virtues among the Prophets: The Book of Amos as a Test Case." *Ex auditu* 17 (2001): 77-96.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "The Prophetic Text and the Literature of Dissent in Latin America: Amos, García Márquez, and Cabrera Infante Dismantle Militarism." *BiblInt* 4 1 (1996): 76-100.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. "Visions of Horror, Visions of Hope: An Orientation for Urban Ministry from the Book of Amos." *Ex auditu* 29 (2013): 1-19.

Carroll R., M. Daniel. *Contexts for Amos: Prophetic Poetics in Latin American Perspective*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 132. Sheffield: JSOT, 1992.

Carroll R, M. Daniel. *Amos—The Prophet and His Oracles: Research on the Book of Amos*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

- Dempsey, Carol J.** "From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60-62." Pages 217-32 in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*. Edited by A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim. Ancient Israel and Its Literature 4. Leiden/Atlanta, Ga: Brill/SBL, 2009.
- Dempsey, Carol J. "Harrowing Woes and Comforting Promises in the Book of the Twelve." Pages 97–117 in *The New Form Criticism and the Book of the Twelve*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd and Colin Toffelmire. Ancient near Eastern Monographs 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015.
- Dempsey, Carol J. "Micah 1:1–16 and 7:1–10: A Poet's Cry of the Heart in the Midst of Tragic Vision." Pages 36–48 in *Why?—How Long?: Studies on Voice(S) of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Carol J. Dempsey and LeAnn Snow Flesher. T&T Clark Library of Biblical Studies. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Dempsey, Carol J. "Micah 2-3: Literary Artistry, Ethical Message, and Some Considerations About the Image of Yahweh and Micah." *JSOT* 24 85 (1999): 117-28.
- Dempsey, Carol J.** "The 'Whore' of Ezekiel 16: The Impact and Ramifications of Gender-Specific Metaphors in Light of Biblical Law and Divine Judgment." Pages 57-78 in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Victor H. Matthews, Bernard M. Levinson and Tikva Frymer-Kensky. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 262. Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic, 1998.
- Dempsey, Carol J. "Words of Woe, Visions of Grandeur: A Literary and Hermeneutical Study of Isaiah 24-27." Pages 209-25 in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24-27*. Edited by J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim. Ancient Israel and Its Literature 17. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.
- Dempsey, Carol J. *Hope Amid the Ruins: The Ethics of Israel's Prophets*. St Louis: Chalice Press 2000.
- Dempsey, Carol J. *The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading*. Liberation-Critical Reading of the Old Testament. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Dempsey, Carol.** "Whose God Is This Anyway?": A Response to Carleen Mandolfo." Pages 343-54 in *Daughter Zion: Her Portrait, Her Response*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Carol Dempsey and LeAnn Snow Flesher. Ancient Israel and Its Literature 13. Atlanta/Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature/Brill, 2012.
- Dempsey, Carol J.** "The Wilderness: Sacred Space, Endangered Homeland, Hope for Our Planet." Pages 62–80 in *Turning to the Heavens and the Earth: Theological Reflections on Cosmological Conversion (Essays in Honor Elizabeth A. Johnson)*. Edited by Julia Brumbaugh and Natalia Imperatori-Lee. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press (Michael Glazier), 2016.
- Dempsey, Carol J.** "From Drought to Starvation (Jeremiah 14:1-9): A National Experience, a Global Reality." Pages 41–66 in *By Bread Alone: The Bible Through the Eyes of the Hungry*. Edited by Sheila E. McGinn, Lai Ling Elizabeth Ngan, and Ahida Calderón Pilarski. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.
- Floyd, Michael H.** "Write the Revelation!" (Hab 2:2): Re-Imagining the Cultural History of Prophecy." Pages 103-43 in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.
- Floyd, Michael H.** "Basic Trends in the Form-Critical Study of Prophetic Texts." Pages 298-311 in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud ben Zvi. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Floyd, Michael H. "Introduction." Pages 1-16 in *The New Form Criticism and the Book of the Twelve*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd and Colin M. Toffelmire. Ancient near Eastern Monographs 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015.
- Floyd, Michael H.** "New Form Criticism and Beyond: The Historicity of Prophetic Literature Revisited." Pages 17-36 in *The New Form Criticism and the Book of the Twelve*. Edited by Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd and Colin M. Toffelmire. Ancient near Eastern Monographs 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015.
- Floyd, Michael H. "Prophecy and Writing in Habakkuk 2,1-5." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105 3 (1993): 462-81.

Hayes, Elizabeth R. "Whose World? Whose Time? A Text World Theory Examination of the Style and Message of Genesis 1:1–2:25." Pages xiv, 209 pages in *Doubling and Duplicating in the Book of Genesis: Literary and Stylistic Approaches to the Text*. Edited by Elizabeth R. Hayes and Karolien Vermeulen. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2016.

Hayes, Elizabeth. "Hearing Jeremiah': Perception and Cognition in Jeremiah 1:1-2:2." *Hebrew Studies* 45 (2004): 99-119.

Hayes, Elizabeth. "Of Branches, Pots and Figs: Jeremiah's Visions from a Cognitive Perspective." Pages 89-102 in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

Hayes, Elizabeth. *The Pragmatics of Perception and Cognition in Mt Jeremiah 1:1-6:30: A Cognitive Linguistics Approach*. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2008.

Heffelfinger, Katie M. "More Than Mere Ornamentation." *PIBA* 36-37 (2014): 36–54.

Heffelfinger, Katie M. *I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes: Lyric Cohesion and Conflict in Second Isaiah*. Bibint 105. Leiden: Brill, 2011. (chapter 5 at least)

Hilber, John W. "Cultic Prophecy in Assyria and the Psalms." *JAOS* 127 1 (2007): 29-40.

Hilber, John W. "Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms in the Light of Assyrian Prophetic Sources." *TynBul* 56 1 (2005): 141-45.

Hilber, John W. "Isaiah as Prophet and Isaiah as Book in Their Ancient near Eastern Context." in *Bind up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah*. Edited by Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2015.

Hilber, John W. "Prophetic Speech in the Egyptian Royal Cult." Pages 39-53 in *On Stone and Scroll: A Festschrift for Graham Davies*. Edited by Brian A. Mastin, Katharine J. Dell and James K. Aitken. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 420. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.

Hilber, John W. "The Culture of Prophecy and Writing in the Ancient near East." Pages 219-41 in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?* Edited by James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis Magary. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.

V. Course Internet Resources

This semester we will be sharing a Dropbox folder for distributing course materials and papers. Papers will not be distributed in paper form, but only digitally.

VI. Learning Experiences¹

A. Class Experiences

This is a graduate seminar style class of collaborative learning in which professor and students are engaged in active learning together. Learning to critically (in its positive sense) engage material is essential to functioning in a graduate program and is expected of all students in our MA/PhD. It is expected that all students will not only attend these sessions, but also that they will assume responsibility for contributing to and learning from the experience. This means that readings will be completed prior to arrival in class and that student and presenter alike will pursue the acquisition of knowledge in the learning environment. It is expected that ALL members of the class will ask questions and contribute insights whenever opportunity is given, during and following presentations by professor or student alike.

Value: 15%

¹ With thanks to Christopher Land.

B. Seminar Preparation Notes

1. Translation: Each week students will prepare for the seminar meeting by translating the assigned portions in the Hebrew Bible (BHS). Each person in the class will provide a basic translation of their own with rudimentary justification in footnotes of difficult elements. Then each person will provide a deeper analysis of the passage by attending to one of the following (a different one each week): 1) syntactical analysis; 2) lexical analysis; 3) poetic structural analysis; 4) voicing analysis; 5) metaphor analysis. Each student will then review one of their colleagues' work with comments on areas to improve by next seminar.

2. Reading: Each week students will prepare for the seminar meeting by reading assigned secondary readings, noting any comments and questions in a minimum two page review.

Value: 25%

Due: The eve of the seminar, 11:59pm; Review: by Friday 11:59pm following seminar.

Submission: PDF to A2L Discussion

C. Critical Studies Review

During the semester each student will prepare a review of critical scholarship on a key topic in the study of the prophets of the Old Testament. For these reviews an up-to-date bibliography on the topic must be prepared and distributed. The student will present a 20 minute overview of current scholarship on the topic, followed by a 20 minute session fielding questions from seminar participants. The bibliographies should indicate key works and their significance noted in a couple of sentences. The overviews should be synthetic and identify key and unresolved issues.

Value: 10%

Due: According to the schedule, eve of the seminar, 11:59pm

Submission: PDF to A2L in Assignments and Discussion

D. Critical Paper

For this assignment the student will write a critical paper on the prophets or prophetic books in the Old Testament (hopefully relevant to their doctoral work) engaging the best in recent scholarship while showing awareness of the classic works in the field. These papers should provide a new perspective on the field, such as would be expected in a journal article. The hope is that this paper will be useful for conference presentations in the near future. Papers are due in .pdf format by 2 Nov 2019, 11:59 p.m. (send to professor by email) to be posted on the course web site. Each member of the class will provide 2 page reviews of all the other papers in the class and must be prepared before the class in which the paper is presented and must be posted to the dropbox within 5 minutes after the end of class.

Value: 35% for paper, 15% for student paper reviews

Due: Paper: 2 Nov 2019 at 11:59 p.m.; Review: 19 Nov, 3, 10 Dec after class

Submission: PDF to A2L in Assignments and Discussion

VII. Format and Evaluation

So I can properly evaluate your work the following style guide is to be used for papers in this class.

- **Medium for Submission:** All material in this class is to be submitted in digital format to me via Avenue 2 Learn. Please use .pdf format and ensure that what you send is what you want me to read.
- **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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/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 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).
- **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 Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

***this is a special issue for those pursuing second and third degrees in theology. It is understood that students will be building on earlier ideas and work, but it is expected that students will not hand in material that is merely “warmed over” previous work. If there is reason for concern speak with the professor about this.

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?

VIII. Accountability

Note on Timeliness of Submissions: Since this is a seminar style course all participants must be timely in their submission of material. People will need to read the various submissions and once the schedule is set there is no room to switch dates. For that reason there are considerable penalties for late materials in this course. Each **DAY** a paper is late will mean the loss of half a letter grade (5%). Take this into account when planning out your semester.

Note on Timeliness of Attendance: From time to time you may find that you are late for class. Late arrivals, hereafter called “tardies,” are unacceptable and will lead to a negative disposition in the professor and your classmates. Such “tardies,” however, can be redeemed at the rate of Timbits for the entire class at the session following the tardy as well as a coffee for the professor.

Rule of the Timbits (הלכה התמבטים): 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, if they are defiant sins, בְּיַד רָמָה, then the offender will be “cut off” from the community, see Num 15:27-31).² which means anyone late for class will need to bring Timbits for the entire class (מִנְחָה) no later than the next class meeting plus a Tim Hortons coffee (נֶסֶךָ) for the professor (cream, no sugar). This מִנְחָה and נֶסֶךָ will function simultaneously as both a sin offering (חֲטָאת, Leviticus 4) atoning for the accidental sin of the offender and a peace offering (שְׁלָמִים, Leviticus 3) enhancing the fellowship of the covenant community. See the high professor for further details and any torah-rulings (see Haggai 2:10-14) regarding specific situations.

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

חָגְרוּ וְסָפְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים	Gird yourselves <i>with sackcloth</i>
הִילֵלוּ מִשְׁרְתֵי מִזְבֵּחַ	And lament, O priests;
בָּאוּ לִינִי בְּשָׁלִים מִשְׁרְתֵי אֱלֹהֵי	Wail, O ministers of the altar!
כִּי נִמְנַע מִבַּיִת אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֶסֶךָ:	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 who repent in 2:14:

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

² 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. For specific torah ruling also see the fuller הלכה התמבטים in our Dropbox.