

# Micah and Contemporary Christian Ministry



McMaster Divinity College

**May 2 – June 3**

Spring 2022

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## Course Designation

*OT 3XM3 Micah and Contemporary Christian Ministry*

## Specializations

Biblical Studies

Pastoral Studies

Church and Culture

Christian Worldview

Each student will register the course with one of the above specializations. The texts and assignments will then be chosen according to the specialization. Be sure to check which specialization assignment you prefer if you have not already chosen a specialization for your degree or if this is an elective.

## Course Schedule

Synchronous online sessions Mondays 1:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.

## Course Description

*This course is to guide contemporary Christian leaders in the use of scriptures to engage the values of faith as expressed by Micah in their own society as Micah did in his time. The truths of **mercy, justice and hope** are timeless.*

The course includes an expositional and Biblical theological study of the book of Micah. The composition of Micah will be contextualized within the book of the twelve. There will be 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 involve its composition history, form critical and structural analysis, exegesis and exposition. Attention will be given to themes of the prophet and their theological import, with focus on the concepts of **justice and hope**. These two themes will be followed as an implementation of the covenant with Israel, particularly as expressed in the book of Deuteronomy. When Moses renewed the covenant with Israel, he described both their life and their future in the land. These are themes in the prophecy of Micah.

## Course Objectives

### ***Knowing***

- History of the first temple period of Israel and Judah in the eighth century
- Prophetic placement 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
- 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

Dempster, Stephen G. *Micah*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.

Chalmers, Aaron. *Interpreting the Prophets: Reading, Understanding, and Preaching from the Worlds of the Prophets*. Downers Grove, ILL. IVP Academic, 2015.

## Textbook Purchase

Read On Bookstore  
5 International Blvd  
Etobicoke, Ontario. M9A 3C3

Bookstore Phone: 416 620 2934  
**Cell to text orders:** 416 668 3434  
**Email for orders** [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca)

## Course Lectures

1. The Text of Micah (including Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever), Compositional History, and Canonical Setting of the Book of Micah
2. Oracles of Doom: Judgment on Samaria and Judah (Micah 1:1-16; Isaiah 2:6-22)
3. Oracles of Doom: Judgment on Greedy Land Barons and False Prophets (Micah 2:1-13; Isaiah 5:8-30)
4. Future of Jerusalem: Zion Ploughed like a Field (Micah 3:1-12; Isaiah 3:1 – 4:1)
5. Future of Jerusalem: Mountain of Zion (Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 2:2-5; 65:17-25)
6. Future of Jerusalem: City of the Great King (Micah 4:6-13; Isaiah 54–55)
7. Future of Jerusalem: Rule of the Faithful Remnant (Micah 5:1-15; Isaiah 8:16–9:7)
8. Restoration of Zion: Guilty in the Divine Court (Micah 6:1-8; Isa 1:1-20)
9. Restoration of Zion: Curses on Jerusalem (Micah 6:9–7:7; Amos 4:1-13)
10. Restoration of Zion: Who is like our God? (Micah 7:8-20; Amos 9:11-15)

## Course Assignments and Grading

### Due Date

All written assignments are due **six weeks** after the end of the course on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. They should be received not later than midnight on **Friday July 15<sup>th</sup>**.

### Assignments for All Specializations

#### 1. Reading Requirements (5%)

Biblical text of 1 Kings 16:1– 2 Kings 20:21

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

Biblical text of Micah

Aaron Chalmers, *Interpreting the Prophets*, 2015

Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah – An Archaeological Commentary*, pp. 13-107

Reading 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 milieu 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. These accounts should be contextualized in the cultural and social issues of the time that were the basis of conflict and suffering.

This is not a research paper. The readings of Chalmers and King should serve as a foundation for the paper. The history edited by Arnold and Hess as well as the one by Provan, Long, and Longman are recommended. Students should incorporate material from any source useful to their goals for the paper. The paper should be about 2000 words.

## *3. The Role of the Eighth Century Prophets in Israel (30%)*

The prophets are a diverse, changing, and sometimes enigmatic group during the centuries of Israelite society. Explain the distinct role and function of the eighth century prophets of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah within Israelite prophecy of their time and place, showing how they are unique in their calling, their rhetoric, and their intention. What are their beliefs (theology) concerning the work of God and what techniques of persuasion do they use?

The paper should be about 2000 words.

## *4. Specialization Assignment (35% for each specialization)*

### ***Biblical Studies Specialization (35%)***

Students in Biblical Studies will choose a passage or theological topic of interest from the book of Micah. The paper must explain how the theme of the passage or the theological topic is integral to the literary structure of the book of Micah. The passages referred to will be analyzed for their unique message and their function within the book of Micah. This will require analysis of genre, 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.

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

Students in pastoral studies will sketch a series of bible studies or sermons from Micah. The studies or sermons should incorporate appropriate theological themes that are the burden of the prophet Micah. *The studies must explain the interpretation of the passages within their literary, social, and historical contexts with supporting bibliographies.* The last chapter of Chalmers provides ideas on how this can be done.

These studies or sermons should be appropriate to a congregation you know or even one in which you serve. The content of what you intend to present should contain detail as you would use it and should explain the theology of Micah in a way that is significant for the audience. The series should be sufficient to know the content and message of Micah.

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

Students in the Church and Culture Specialization will do a paper of about 2500 words on current issues for Christians in contemporary culture, with a focus on the culture most relevant to the student. Micah is the prophet most famously known for his calls to justice and his proclamation of hope. *Compare the cultural and social issues of Micah's time with those of a contemporary situation (themes of greed and power are universal).* Show how the teaching of Micah could be used by the church in its mission to be a light to the world. This paper must include bibliographic support for both the *biblical and cultural* issues that are raised. It is a research paper.

### ***Christian Worldview Specialization (35%)***

The prophet Micah is very clear on certain elements of his own worldview. Develop that world view in your own terms using the information on covenant, theology, and the role of the prophet. *The study should demonstrate the prophet's view of the kingdom of God and its operation in society as well as its future.* What is the role of Jerusalem and its king in God fulfilling his purposes for creation? How is the view of Micah worked out in the New Testament, in books like Matthew and Hebrews? How would you apply the world view of Micah for the church in the world today? This paper should be about 2500 words. It is a research paper and must contain bibliography supporting the theology (world view) of Micah as well as its application to current culture.

### ***Assignment Summary***

1. Reading Requirements: 5%
2. History of the Eighth Century: 30%
3. Role of the Prophets: 30%
4. Specific specialization assignment: 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: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>  
Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

## **Bibliography for Micah Research**

### **Text of Micah**

Barthélemy, Dominique, and Alexander R. Hulst. *Ezéchiél, Daniel et Les 12 Prophètes*. Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament 3. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982.

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Chaney, Marvin L. "Micah—Models Matter: Political Economy and Micah 6:9-15." In *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context*, edited by Philip F. Esler, 145–60. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

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## Canonical Context of Micah

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