Micah and Contemporary Christian Ministry



McMaster Divinity College
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Course Designation

OT 5XM5 Micah (Doctor of Practical Theology)

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.

Zev I. Färber and Jacob L. Wright, eds. *Archaeology and History of Eighth-Century Judah*. Ancient Near East Monographs 23. Atlanta: SBL, 2018.

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

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 3rd. They should be received not later than midnight on **Friday July 15th**.

Literature Review

- 1. The student will conduct a literature review of approximately 15-20 resources (4000 pages) related to a selected topic on the history or theology of Micah and write a 100-150 word annotation for each one. The required texts for the course should be included as part of the book list. The literature review will be approximately 2,000 words. This assignment will constitute 25% of the course grade.
- 2. A paper will be prepared that summarizes the key learnings from the literature review and provides a cogent foundation for a theology and practice of *the topic of the literature* review. The paper will be approximately 3,000 words. It will constitute 25% of the course grade.

Major Paper

The paper should include four key sections. First, a brief but clear explanation of how the paper is rooted in a Practice Led-research approach (for example the practice of justice or the influence of eschatological views). Second, an exploration of the challenges and problems that provoke this study (i.e. why does this ministry practice need to be addressed? What are the

problems that you want to identify?). Third, a consideration of a foundational theology of the practice of ministry under consideration in this course and a deep consideration of how new approaches to this practice can be employed in helping to address and improve ministry practice in this area. Fourth some reflection on the application of these ideas to the student's own ministry context (both in terms of the local church and their ministry beyond the local church). The paper should be approximately 8,000 words. It will constitute 40% of the course grade.

Class Presentation

The student will offer a class presentation of their paper and its findings to the class. *The presentation is due at a time agreed upon by the instructor and the student and will constitute 10% of the course grade.*

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

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Canonical Context of Micah

The Scroll of the Twelve

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Day of the Lord in the Scroll

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Coherence of the Scroll

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