



BIHB9402 Interpreting the Former Prophets
Ph.D. Seminar - Biblical Interpretation
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Biblical Studies
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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Purpose, Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting the Bible. Spiritual Vitality, the focus core value for the academic year, is addressed by reminding students that principles of Scripture are to be studied and practiced. Mission Focus is emphasized in that interpreting the Bible is a key element in presenting the Gospel to the world. Characteristic Excellence by preparing students to be excellent interpreters of the Bible. Servant Leadership is modeled through classroom deportment. This course addresses the competency of Biblical Exposition by preparing the student to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.

Course Description

This seminar is an intense study of select portions of the Former Prophets, which cover the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The seminar includes introductory and background issues related to the development of Old Testament historiography in the context of the Ancient Near East. The study includes narrative analysis, social and cultural anthropological study, and historical geography. The study intersects with the current critical scholarly literature in historical narrative study.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately, the student, by the end of the course should:

1. Understand the meaning of books of the Former Prophets in their original context.
2. Demonstrate advanced skills in conducting exegetical research.
3. Understand the state of research and historical meaning of the material of the Former Prophets.
4. Appreciate the relevance of exegetical study of the Former Prophets based on the Hebrew text.
5. Demonstrate skill in using the Hebrew text of the Former Prophets and applying sound interpretive principles toward solid exegesis of the text.

Course Teaching Methodology

This course will use a combination of pedagogical methods, including but not limited to the following: lectures, student assignments, small group work, computer resources, textbook reviews, class discussions, and student presentations.

Textbooks and Resources

Each student should consult standard historical and theological works as well as standard contemporary commentary series (as illustrated in the attached Selected Bibliography).

Requirements of the Seminar

1. **Journal Article Review:** The student will read and critique a journal article (selected by the student) related to the study of interpretation of the Former Prophets (see instructions given). The student will lead in the presentation and discussion of the article review in class. **Due August 29.**
2. **Book Review:** The student will read and critique an assigned book related to issues of interpretation and/or history of the Former Prophets. (See entries with asterisks in Selected Bibliography. Students should contact the professor via email to choose the book to review, with the books being assigned on a first come basis.) The student will lead in the presentation and discussion of the book review in class. **Due August 29.**
3. **Interpretive Issue Paper:** The student will prepare a paper examining an interpretive issue related to the study of the Former Prophets. The paper can consist of a genre related issue or an interpretive difficulty arising from a particular passage within the Former Prophets. The paper should be 6-8 pages, single spaced.
4. **Major Research Paper:** The student will prepare a major research paper which must include a thorough exegesis of a passage from the Former Prophets. The exegesis should demonstrate appropriate interpretive principles, knowledge and use of the Hebrew language, understanding of the cultural, social, and theological backgrounds, and appropriate research into the subject. The research papers are to be from 25-35 pages in length, thoroughly covering the selected topic. The paper must be written according to the rubric below and posted on Blackboard no later than one week before the class session in which it is presented. Papers will be presented, evaluated, and defended at the class session.

5. Major Critique of an assigned classmate's research paper: The student will respond to an assigned fellow classmate's paper in writing and to the class orally. Like the paper, the response will be defended in class. The major critique should be three pages in length and address grammar, form, style, and content.
6. Minor Critique of all fellow classmates' research papers: The student will respond to all fellow classmates' research papers (except when serving as the major critic for one student's paper). The minor critique should be one page in length and address grammar, form, style, and content.

Major Research Papers Guidelines

1. Grammar and Style: spelling; sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to SBL/Turabian; use of quotations (use quotations sparingly to clarify analysis and interpretation).
2. Clarity and Coherence: organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper.
3. Research: bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary monographs, journal articles, etc.); [Most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations].
4. Interpretive awareness and insight: factual accuracy; awareness of context and connection to other material (i.e., continuity/discontinuity; cause/effect; relationships/comparisons; sensitivity to context; awareness of persons, movements, or forces, historical and otherwise).
5. Analysis and Evaluation: going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of the material at hand; demonstration of a thorough critique of the material being researched.

Each of the above five areas will constitute 20% of the grade for the research paper.

Journal Article and Book Review Guidelines

1. Grammar and Style: spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; conformity to SBL/Turabian
2. Summary: A fair, concise presentation of the journal article's content
3. Evaluation: A balanced, critical assessment of the journal article's strengths and weaknesses
4. Research Insight: Awareness of the journal article's interpretive significance and place in the study of the Former Prophets

Each of the above four areas will constitute 25% of the grade for the review.

Course Evaluation

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Class participation.	10%
Journal Article Review.	15%
Book Review.	15%
Interpretive Issue Paper.	15%
Major Research Paper.	25%
Critique of Class Papers.	10%
Final Examination.	10%

Schedule All classes will meet 8:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-5:00 PM

Aug 29 8:00-11:00 AM – Journal Article Reviews

1:00-5:00 PM – Book Reviews

Sept 26 **8:00-11:00 AM – Interpretive Issues Papers**

1:00-5:00 PM - Interpretive Issues Papers

Nov 7 **8:00-11:00 AM – Major Papers/Major Critic Responses**

1:00-5:00 PM - Major Papers/Major Critic Responses

Dec 5 **8:00-11:00 AM – Major Papers/Major Critic Responses**

1:00-5:00 PM - Major Papers/Major Critic Responses

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