Required reading:


McEntire, Mark. *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices: Introducing the Prophetic Literature of Ancient Israel*. (2015). Westminster John Knox Press (2015). ISBN-10: 0664239986 ISBN-13: 978-0664239985. While there are many textbooks about the prophetic literature, most have taken either a historical or literary approach to studying the prophets. *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices*, by contrast, draws on both historical and literary approaches by paying careful attention to the prophets as narrative characters. It considers each unique prophetic voice in the canon, in its fully developed literary form, while also listening to what these voices say together about a particular experience in Israel's story. It presents these four scrolls--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve--as works produced in the aftermath of destruction, works that employ prophetic characters, and as the words uttered during the crises. The prophetic literature became for Israel, living in a context of dispersion and imperial domination, a portable and adaptable resource at once both challenging and comforting. This book provides the fullest picture available for introducing students to the prophetic literature by valuing the role of the original prophetic characters, the finished state of the books that bear their names, the separate historical crises in the life of Israel they address, and the "chorus of prophetic voices" one hears when reading them as part of a coherent literary corpus. McEntire is Professor of Biblical Studies at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. A widely published writer on the Hebrew Bible, he has written such books as *The Old Testament Story, Ninth Edition*, and *Portraits of a Mature God: Choices in Old Testament Theology*. He blogs at observingpointsofconvergence.wordpress.com.

This will be a reading and writing intensive class with two textbooks (a total of 600 pages of reading) and various Biblical books (amounting to c. 350 pages, depending upon the version used). There will also be five, one-hour, in-class essay responses, a term paper of c. 2,500 words, a written final examination, and oral presentations by the students. We will look at the Prophetic Literature of the Hebrew Bible in historical context, considering the events and people that it describes, the circumstances of its production and development as literature, and the significance and implications of that literature. We will begin with the simpler introductory format of Leclere’s *Introduction to the Prophets* and in week four introduce the somewhat more sophisticated and recent approach of McEntire’s *Chorus of Prophetic Voices*, and continue to read them side-by-side, Leclerc first, followed by McEntire’s treatment of the same material.
GRADING

5 Quizzes @ 10% each  
50%

1 Term Paper  
15%

1 Final Exam  
15%

1 Oral Presentation  
10%

Attendance and Participation  
10%

TOTAL  
100%

OUTCOMES

The aims of this course are to acquire the basic content and skills of the academic study of the Prophetic Literature of the Bible. This requires knowledge of the history of the period in which this prophetic literature was produced, and of its composition and redaction, along with some critical understanding of the history of religious behavior in general. These are the tools for the construction of relevant and sustainable opinions about sacred literature and prophetic activity.

The skills required to communicate those opinions clearly and persuasively will be developed.

The acquisition, analysis, assessment, and articulation of this information will be practiced and evaluated.

All student work should be well researched, well reasoned, and well written.

The successful student in this course will demonstrate their abilities:

- to acquire reliable knowledge of the content of Biblical Prophecy
- to consider critically various theories of the composition of this literature
- to acquire a critical understanding of the history surrounding the composition of this literature
- to articulate that understanding both orally and in writing
- to construct relevant, informed, and durable answers to questions about these Biblical traditions
- to articulate and communicate those answers coherently and convincingly both orally and in writing
- to discuss those answers openly and fairly with those of differing perspectives
These outcomes will be assessed by the submission of short written essays 5 times during the semester, and of the production, in on-going collaboration with the instructor, of a 2,500 word term paper, as well as a final written examination and an oral presentation before the whole class.

**Given the situation of a directed study with one student the schedule will be flexible but will follow this rough pattern:**

**WEEK ONE**


**WEEK TWO**


**WEEK THREE**


QUIZ #1.

**WEEK FOUR**


**WEEK FIVE**


WEEK SIX

QUIZ #2:

WEEK SEVEN: The Thesis and Topic of your Term Paper must be determined and approved by the Instructor by this time. Drafts of the paper will be periodically submitted to the instructor for comment and review before the final submission in the last class.

Leclerc, Chapter 9: “Micah of Moresheth,” pp. 188-204.


WEEK EIGHT


WEEK NINE
Time to discuss the material.

QUIZ #3.

An annotated bibliography of at least five sources must be turned in by this time. You must use as many peer-reviewed as internet or other online, un-reviewed resources.

WEEK TEN


**WEEK ELEVEN**

McEntire, Chapter 4: “The Scroll of Isaiah continued: Response to the Babylonian Crisis,” pp. 77-90.

McEntire, Chapter 8: “The Scroll of Isaiah continued again: Response to the Restoration Crisis,” pp. 149-162.

**WEEK TWELVE**

QUIZ #4.

**WEEK THIRTEEN**


**WEEK FOURTEEN**
McEntire, Chapter 12: “Hearing the Scrolls Together,” pp. 201-220.

Student Presentation.

**WEEK FIFTEEN**
Last Class. The Term Paper due. Discussion. Instructions for the Final Examination.