

## PROPHETIC LITERATURE

2017-2018 First Term Tue 2:30pm-5:15pm WMY 403

Course Code: THEO2212/THEO5318

Title in English: Prophetic Literature

Title in Chinese: 先知文學

### Course Description:

This course covers selected readings from the second portion of the Hebrew Bible, the Prophets, in particular the Latter Prophets, which includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets). Historical studies aided with contextual interpretations will be the approach taken in engaging the biblical text, while theological and exegetical studies of the text will interact vigorously with contemporary social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of the public life. Insights and influences from modern literary and critical theories, social sciences and humanities, and various inter-disciplinary approaches will also be introduced in the course of interpretation.

### Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the compositional background, major literary features, genres, and motifs of the prophetic literature
- Deepen their awareness of how social, cultural, and political contexts of ancient Southwest Asia may have shaped the literary production of the prophetic literature
- Demonstrate a familiarity of the critical issues and approaches in the scholarship of the Latter Prophets
- Develop a contextual awareness in their own reading of the prophetic literature and a critical attitude toward the implications of its ideological content to the contemporary world

### Course syllabus:

Topic	Contents/fundamental concepts
The social world of the Hebrew prophets	This section covers the role of a prophet and the nature of prophecy in ancient Southwest Asia and Israel in relation to the social issues of its time.
The historical context	The Hebrew prophets will be situated in their signifying contexts from the Neo-Assyrian empire to the Persian empire.
Major sections and Individual books	The structure and literary features of prophetic literature of different major sections (the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the Twelve) and individual books will be adumbrated.
Critical approaches	Recent scholarship in a variety of critical methods will be discussed.
Theological notions	Major theological notions include covenant, messianism, inviolability of Zion, theodicy, retributive logic, universalism, <i>hesed</i> , and restoration.
Critical issues	Critical issues include <i>vaticinium ex eventu</i> , the scheme of prophecy and fulfillment, social justice, the marital and sexual metaphor, divine violence, and historicity

### Course Components:

The course consists mainly of lectures, interwoven with class discussion, independent reading, educational excursion, and research activities. The time allocation (on average per week) of the learning activities is as follows:									
Lecture		Class discussion		Excursion/ Web-based report		Reading and research		Written assignments	
In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class
2-2.5 hrs	NA	0.5-1 hr	NA	0.5 hr	0.5 hr	NA	3 hrs	NA	2 hrs
M		M		M		M/O		M	
M: Mandatory activity in the course					O: Optional activity				

### Assessment Scheme:

Task nature	Purpose	Learning Outcomes
<b>Class Participation</b> (10%)	To encourage learning collaboration and exchanges of ideas among the students in class. To facilitate students' preparatory work on their term paper.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consolidate the students' understanding of the reading materials.</li> <li>2. Develop critical attitude toward the reading materials.</li> <li>3. Arrive at a viable thesis for their term paper.</li> </ol>
<b>Reading Report</b> (30%)  <i>Due on Oct 31 (T)</i> (Blackboard and VeriGuide)	To facilitate the students to critically synthesize and analyze the reading materials and to engage the content dialogically with one of the following books: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weems, Renita J. <i>Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets</i>. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.</li> <li>2. Pleins, J. David. <i>The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction</i>. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001 (Pages 3-38, 213-416 only).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write a book review of no less than 1600 words in English (or 2000 words in Chinese) of one of the two books listed and engage the course reading materials in the review.</li> <li>2. Summarize the author's approach, interpretive framework, thesis, and main arguments.</li> <li>3. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and his/her main arguments.</li> </ol>
<b>A Class-Excursion Reflection Paper or Sermon</b> (10%)  <i>Due on Nov 14 (T)</i> (Blackboard's discussion forum)	To heighten students' awareness of how an interpreter's social locations and contemporary situations, including their own, and presuppositions would affect the process of reading of an ancient biblical text. To exchange reflective ideas on Blackboard's discussion forum with other classmates.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write either a reflection paper or a reflection sermon of no less than 2400 words in English (or 3000 words in Chinese).</li> <li>2. Engage a prophetic text of student's choice in a reflective dialogue with the poverty issue in Hong Kong and the class excursion on Nov 7.</li> <li>3. Optional: Include a creative rewriting of a prophetic text for their contemporary context.</li> </ol>
<b>Term Paper</b> (50%)	To evaluate the students' ability to critically engage current scholarship in the criticism of the prophetic literature and to analyze and critique the strengths and weaknesses of	Write a term paper of 4000-4800 words in English (5000-6000 words in Chinese; BA, BD4 Year 1, and BD5 Year 1/2) or 4800-5600 words in English (6000-7000 words in Chinese;

<p><i>Presentation of Abstract on Nov 14 (T)</i></p> <p><i>Paper due on Dec 5 (T)</i> (Blackboard and VeriGuide)</p>	<p>different approaches and/or to apply a diachronic or synchronic model in an exegesis of a prophetic text.</p>	<p>BD3 and graduate level) on one of the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A critique of a major thesis on the prophetic literature</li> <li>2. A diachronic analysis of a passage or a literary theme in the prophetic literature</li> <li>3. A(n) (re)assessment of a textual issue of the prophetic literature</li> <li>4. An analysis of the literary structure or genre of a particular book of the prophetic literature</li> <li>5. A critical exegesis of a passage from the prophetic literature with a contextual, ideological-rhetorical, narrative-literary, reader-reception, social-scientific, psychological or theological perspective</li> </ol>
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### Recommended Learning Resources:

#### Textbooks (required):

Petersen, David L. *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002 [= *PLI*]. [BS1198 .P46 2002] 中譯本[C]: 大衛·彼得森著。伍美詩譯。《先知文學導論》。香港: 道聲, 2007。 [BS1198 .P4612 2007]

#### Books:

Collins, Terence. *The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetic Books*. Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1993.

Day, John, ed. *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. New York: T&T Clark, 2010 [= *PPAI*]. [BS1505.52 .O94 2010]

Gordon, Robert P., ed. *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996 [= *PTSU*]. [BS1505.2 .P57 1995]

Matthews, Victor H. *Social World of the Hebrew Prophets*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001. [BS 1505.2 .M355 2001]

Prévost, Jean-Pierre. *How to Read the Prophets*. New York: Continuum, 1997. [VS1286 ,P7413 1997]

Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *A Biblical Theology of Exile*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002. [BC1199 .B3 S55 2002]

#### Essays and Articles:

Berquist, Jon L. "Dangerous Waters of Justice and Righteousness: Amos 5:18-27." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 23.2 (1993): 54-63. [Online]

Brenner, Athalya. "Pornoprophets Revisited: Some Additional Reflections." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70 (1996): 63-86. [Online]

Carroll, Robert P. "Textual Strategies and Ideology in the Second Temple Period." In *Second Temple Studies 1: Persian Period*, ed. Philip R. Davies, 108-124. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.

Childs, Brevard S. "Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108.3 (1996): 362-77. [Online]

- Craig, Kenneth M. "Jonah and the Reading Process." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 47 (1990): 103-14. [Online]
- Fox, Michael V. "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51 (1980): 1-15. [Online]
- Gitay, Yehoshua. "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3:1-15." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42.3 (1980): 293-309.
- Haak, Robert D. "Mapping Violence in the Prophets: Zephaniah 2." In *The Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*, edited by Julia M. O'Brien and Chris Franke, 18-36. New York and London: T & T Clark, 2010. [BS1505.6 .V56 A37 2010]
- Holladay, John S., Jr. "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel." *The Harvard Theological Review* 63.1 (1970): 29-51. [Online]
- Lundbom, Jack R. "Poetic Structure and Prophetic Rhetoric in Hosea." *Vetus Testamentum* 29.3 (1979): 300-308. [Online]
- Magdalene, Rachel F. "Ancient Near Eastern Treaty-Curses and the Ultimate Texts of Terror: A Study of the Language of Divine Sexual Abuse in the Prophetic Corpus." In *A Feminist Companion to The Latter Prophets*, ed. Athalya Brenner, 326-52. The Feminist Companion to the Bible 8. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. [BS521.4 .F46]
- Mays, James Luther. "Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition." *Interpretation* 37.1 (1983): 5-17. [Online]
- O'Connor, Kathleen M. "Reclaiming Jeremiah's Violence." In *The Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*, 37-49.
- Petersen, David L. "The Temple in Persian Period Prophetic Texts." In *Second Temple Studies* 1, 125-44.
- Premnath D. N. "Latifundialization and Isaiah 5.8-10." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40 (1988): 49-60. [Online]
- Tucker, Geme. M. "The Role of the Prophets and the Role of the Church." In *Prophecy in Israel: Search for identity*, ed. David L. Petersen, 159-74. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1987. [PS 1198 .P75]
- Weinfeld, Moshe. "Ancient Near Eastern Patterns in Prophetic Literature." *Vetus Testamentum* 27 (1977): 178-95. [Online]
- Wong, Hung. "Is Poverty Eradication Impossible? A Critique on the Misconceptions of the Hong Kong Government." *China Review* 15.2 (2015): 147-69. [Online]
- Yaron, Reuven. "Social Problems and Policies in the Ancient Near East." In *Law, Politics, and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, eds. Baruch Halpern and Deborah W. Hobson, 19-41. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993. [UL DE71.L38 1993]

#### References:

- The Bible and Culture Collective. *The Postmodern Bible*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. [BS476 .P67 1995]
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. 3 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. [Online]
- McKenzie, Steven L., and Stephen R. Haynes. *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999. [BS 476 .T6 1999]
- Pritchard, James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969 [= *ANET*]. [BS 1180 .P83 1969]

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Requirements</b>
Week 1	Sept 5 (T)	Introduction to Prophetic Literature	<i>PLI</i> : 1-18 [C: 1-25]
Week 2	Sept 12 (T)	The Social and Historical Context of the Hebrew Prophets	Matthews: 3-18 Holladay: 29-51 Yaron: 19-41
Week 3	Sept 19 (T)	1. What was a prophet? 2. What was prophecy? 3. Prophets and institutions 4. <i>Vaticinium ex eventu</i>	<i>PLI</i> : 18-46 [C: 25-64] Weinfeld: 178-95 Childs: 362-77
Week 4	Sept 26 (T)	1. Prophetic genres 2. Critical approaches and reading strategies	Notes on Blackboard Westermann in <i>PTSU</i> : 98-104 Gitay: 293-309 Lundbom: 300-308
Week 5	Oct 3 (T)	1. <i>Navi'im</i> : The Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the Twelve 2. Female prophets	<i>PLI</i> : 169-76, 215-38 [C: 245-55, 311-45] Stökl in <i>PPAI</i> : 47-61 Williamson in <i>PPAI</i> : 65-80 Collins: 59-87 ( <i>Optional</i> )
Week 6	Oct 10 (T)	1. The eighth-century prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Proto-Isaiah 2. Social critiques	<i>PLI</i> : 47-96, 176-81, 184-89, 193-96 [C: 65-140, 255-62, 266-73, 279-83] Berquist: 54-63 ( <i>Optional</i> ) Premnath: 49-60 ( <i>Optional</i> )
Week 7	Oct 17 (T)	1. The late seventh-century minor prophets: Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah 2. Divine violence	<i>PLI</i> : 189-91, 196-203 [C: 273-75, 283-96] Haak: 18-36 O'Connor: 37-49
Week 8	Oct 24 (T)	The early sixth-century Prophets: Jeremiah	<i>PLI</i> : 97-136 [C: 141-97] Wilson in <i>PTSU</i> : 332-44. Brenner: 63-86
Week 9	Oct 31 (T)	1. The early sixth-Century prophets: Ezekiel 2. Marital and sexual metaphors	<i>PLI</i> : 137-68 [C: 199-243] Fox: 1-15 Magdalene: 326-52 Smith-Christopher: 75-104 ( <i>Optional</i> )
Week 10	Nov 7 (T)	<i>Class Excursion: Poverty in Hong Kong</i> [Time, venue and details TBD]	Wong: 147-69
Week 11	Nov 14 (T)	The Persian prophets: Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah <i>Excursion debriefing</i> <i>Presentation of term-paper abstract</i>	Lichtheim 3:36-41 <i>ANET</i> : 315-16 Blenkinsopp in <i>PTSU</i> : 392-412 Clifford in <i>PPAI</i> : 267-89
Week 12	Nov 21 (T)	The Persian prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel	<i>PLI</i> : 181-84, 205-14 [C: 262-66, 296-304] Carroll: 108-24 Petersen: 125-44
Week 13	Nov 28 (T)	The fictional prophet: Jonah <i>Concluding remarks</i>	<i>PLI</i> : 191-93 [C: 275-78] Craig: 103-14 Prévost: 125-35

**Contact Details for Teacher:**

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**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. In the case of group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submission. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.