

Bible 515: Biblical Prophecy
Hebrew College: Fall 2008
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This semester we will explore the phenomenon of classical prophecy by looking at selected and varied passages in Hebrew. Most of the passages chosen appear as a haftarah.

The first class will be a general orientation and a discussion of the legislative passages concerning prophecy. During the semester, please read the relevant articles on prophecy in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5.477-95. I also recommend the following three general books on prophecy: Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (especially the first half); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel*; and David Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature*. You should purchase and use all sections of Michael Fishbane, *Haftarot* in preparing for class. A variety of interesting essays are found in Robert P. Gordon, ed., *This Place is Too Small For Us*.

Preparing for class: You are expected to prepare carefully and extensively for each class. I will explain what this means in more detail during the first class, but it involves understanding the words and grammar of each passage, reading a selection of commentaries, understanding the historical background of each passage, understanding the literary structure of each text, and understanding the theology of the text. In some cases, I may give you specific articles to read or specific sub-topics to prepare.

Class requirements: I expect active class participation that results from careful preparation of the relevant text. In addition, by December 15 at 5 PM you must hand in a 10 page paper on a prophetic unit that we are not covering in class. For rabbinical students, this paper should have the following sections: a translation with notes; a discussion of the text's meaning based on historical and literary considerations; and a discussion (no more than two pages) of how you might use the text in your future rabbinic life. Non-rabbinical students are expected to write a 10 page paper without the last section.

The class will meet from 9 AM (sharp) until noon on the following dates:
Sept 9, 23; Oct. 28; Nov. 4, 11, 25; Dec. 2, 9.

Here is an outline of what I hope to cover; some of these represent more than one class:

1. Introduction—using biblical tools.
2. Legislation concerning prophecy in Deuteronomy 13 and 18
3. Pre-/Non-classical prophecy: 2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 2
4. The prophetic experience 1: Isaiah 6
5. The prophetic experience 2: Jeremiah 1; Ezekiel 1-3
6. The prophetic book: Amos
7. Early classical prophecy: Micah 5:6-6:8
8. Gender and the prophets: Hosea 1-3
9. Retribution: Isaiah 1:1-27

10. Personal responsibility: Ezekiel 18
11. Consolation: Ezekiel 37 and Jeremiah 33
12. Exilic prophecy: Selections of Isaiah 50-66
13. Post-exilic prophecy and the beginning of apocalypticism: Malachi and selections of Zechariah