



Texas A&M
UNIVERSITY
Central Texas

RELS 4300
Prophets of Ancient Israel
Spring 2019

Class Location: FH 209
Class Hours: T 6-9
Instructor: Floyd Berry, PhD
Office: HH 204 S
Office Hours: MTWR 2-5 (please make an appointment)
Email: (prefer Canvas message) fberry@tamuct.edu
NOTE: If contacting instructor outside of Canvas, students must use their official TAMUCT emails.

1.0 Course Description

Examines the prophetic phenomena of the ancient Near East and Israel according to typology (eponymous ancestors, leaders, wonder-workers, and literary prophets).

2.0 Accessing Canvas

This is a lecture course with online components in Canvas. The student accesses Canvas at <https://tamuct.onecampus.com/> and locates the “card” for the Canvas platform.

3.0 Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to discuss the different types of prophets in ancient Israel.
2. Students will be able to discuss the role of prophets in ancient Israel.
3. Students will submit prose reactions to material and topics covered in class discussions.
4. Students will gain an appreciation for the study of ancient literature, based on readings, commentaries, and class discussions.
5. Students will submit acceptable essays for mid-term and final exams. To be accepted, the student shall discuss all aspects of an essay question, using standard English prose and grammatical construction.

4.0 Textbook

4.1 Required for Course

Ward, J. M. (1991). *Thus says the lord: The message of the prophets*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Jewish Publication Society. (2014). *The Jewish study bible* (2nd ed.). Edited by A. Berlin & M. Z. Brettler. Oxford: Oxford.

4.2 Recommended but Not Required

Armstrong, K. (1993). *A history of God: The 4,000-year quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. New York: Ballantine.

- Armstrong, K. (2007). *The Bible: A biography*. New York: Grove.
- Bullock, C. H. (2007). *An introduction to the Old Testament prophetic books* (2nd ed.) Chicago: Moody.
- Charlesworth, J. H. (Ed.)(1983). *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha, volume one: Apocalyptic literature and testaments*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Charlesworth, J. H. (Ed.)(1983). *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha, volume two: Expansion of the "Old Testament" and legends, wisdom and philosophical literature, prayers, psalms, and odes, fragments of lost Judeo-Hellenistic works*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Coogan, M. D. (2013). *A reader of ancient Near Eastern texts: Sources for the study of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford.
- Coogan, M. D., & Chapman, C. R. (2018). *The Old Testament: A historical and literary introduction to the Hebrew scriptures* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford.
- Day, J. (Ed.). (2010). *Prophecy and the prophets in ancient Israel*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Friedman, R. E. (1987). *Who wrote the Bible?* New York: Harper Collins.
- Hackett, J. A. (2010). *A basic introduction to biblical Hebrew*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Hoffman, J. M. (2004). *In the beginning: A short history of the Hebrew language*. New York: New York University.
- Johnson, P. (1987). *A history of the Jews*. New York: Harper.
- Koren Publishers Jerusalem. (2008). *The Koren large type Torah: Hebrew five books of Moses*. N.P.: Toby Press. 9789653010598.
- Leclerc, T. L. (2007). *Introduction to the prophets: Their stories, sayings, and scrolls*. New York: Paulist.
- Niditch, S. (1997). *Ancient Israelite religion*. New York: Oxford.
- Nissinen, M. (2003). *Prophets and prophecy in the ancient Near East*. Atlanta: SBL.
- Oxford University Press (2018). *The new Oxford annotated bible with Apocrypha* (5th ed.). Edited by M. D. Coogan. Oxford: Author.
- Pritchard, J. B. (Ed.). (1969). *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.). Princeton: Princeton.
- Sáenz-Badillos, A. (1993). *A history of the Hebrew language* (J. Wolde, Trans.). New York: Cambridge.
- Schama, S. (2013). *The story of the Jews: Finding the words, 1000 BC-1492 AD*. New York: Harper.
- Sharp, C. J. (2009). *Old Testament prophets for today*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.
- Schniedewind, W. M. (2004). *How the Bible became a book*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- Toorn, K. van der. (2007). *Scribal culture and the making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge: MA: Harvard.
- Wise, M., Abegg, M., & Cook, E. (2005). *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A new translation* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper.

5.0 Course Requirements

5.1 Exams (400 pts)

The student shall take two exams, a mid-term and a final. The exams are not “open-book,” nor may the student use any notes or messages from cell phones. The exams are essays, written in a blue book. **Work not done in a blue book will not be graded.** Blue books are available from the bookstore. Each exam is valued at 200 points. The student has a maximum of two hours to take the exam, given immediately after roll call. The exam window closes, however, when two hours have elapsed. The mid-term exam will receive comments from the instructor and will be returned to the student. Students are encouraged to review their work before submission. The following rubric will guide the instructor:

Qualities & Criteria	Poor	Good	Excellent
Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of topics to be addressed • Information is correct • Coherency <p>(Weight: 70%)</p>	Not objective and poorly addresses the issues. Information is unnecessary or insufficient to discuss the issues. (0-109 pts)	Mostly objective and addresses most of the issues. Information is mostly necessary and sufficient to discuss the issues. (110-131 pts)	Objective and addresses all the issues. Information is necessary and sufficient to discuss the issues. (132-140 pts)
Quality of Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity • Grammar and English usage • Organization and coherence <p>(Weight: 30%)</p>	Poorly written and contains flagrant spelling and grammatical errors. Poorly organized, lacks clarity, and is incoherent. (0-40 pts)	Mostly well-written, without egregious spelling or grammatical errors. Organized, clear, and ideas are presented in coherent ways. (41-55 pts)	Well-written, without egregious spelling or grammatical errors. Well organized, clear, and ideas are presented in coherent ways. (56-60 pts)

A week before each exam, the instructor will provide students with two exam questions. This practice provides the student with a week’s worth of preparation. It is highly recommended that students compose some outline of how they will write their essays and commit that outline to memory. Blue books must be blank before students may begin their exams. After beginning the exam, however, students may wish to write working outlines on the exam questions page or on the inside cover of the blue book. A simple outline provides coherency and organization for one’s essay.

NOTE: Upper-level students are expected to have adequate knowledge of the essentials of grammar, writing style, and essay organization in accordance with writing manuals. If the student does *not* have adequate knowledge in these areas, then the purchase and use of additional books are highly recommended. Failure to provide written work in accordance with the essentials of acceptable, English writing style will result in poor grades. Examples of non-standard English

usage include, among other things, sentence fragments, run-ons, dangling modifiers, lack of agreement between pronouns and their antecedents or subjects and verbs, bulleted items, slashes, flagrant misuse of punctuation, slang or abbreviated expressions, “etc.” and excessive use of metaphorical language. In Modules, there is a Power Point on “Typical Problems with Essay Exams.”

5.2 Class Participation (300 pts)

Students are expected to participate in class discussions, indicating an understanding of the reading material and how to apply it. Students earn a point for full attendance on a specific day (appear on time and do not leave early). Students earn an additional point for participating in class discussions. (No points are awarded on exam days.) Thus, the student earns 0-2 points on each class day (total of 14 days), which corresponds to the following grade:

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
28	300	12-13	145
26-27	285	10-11	125
24-25	265	8-9	105
22-23	245	6-7	85
20-21	225	4-5	65
18-19	205	2-3	45
16-17	185	1	15
14-15	165	0	0

NOTE: If students are tardy (appear in class after roll is called), it is their responsibility to notify the instructor at the conclusion of class (before leaving the classroom that evening), that they arrived in class and would like to receive some credit for class participation. Failure to notify the instructor *may* result in an absence for that day. Cell phone use is forbidden during class, and such behavior is not awarded class participation points.

5.3 Academic Integrity Document

During the first week of class, the student is to read the section in the syllabus on Academic Integrity (§ 8.0) and the link provided in that section regarding plagiarism. The student must sign the document (also in Canvas, under Modules) pertaining to Academic Integrity and return it to the instructor. **NOTE: Students will not be allowed to continue in the course without notifying the instructor of their comprehension of this material (by signing the document and submitting it to the instructor).**

5.4 Reaction Comments (300 pts)

At the conclusion of each class (except when exams are taken), students will submit a Reaction Comment (RC), due before midnight. In Canvas, the student will send an email to the instructor, reacting to material discussed or

experienced in class. A paragraph or two is sufficient. Students express their reactions to something discussed or experienced in class. The reaction may be emotional, cognitive, insightful, positive, negative, or neutral. **A mere summary of material discussed in class, however, is insufficient for credit.** Students should make some comments on assigned reading or discussion, coupled with their reactions. Students shall identify their email with the headings of RC1, RC2, etc., as indicated in the course calendar (§ 7.0). Using headings other than RC1, RC2, etc. may result in no credit. **Obviously, students must attend class before they can react to material presented or discussed in class.** RC's correspond to the following grades:

# of RC's	Grade	# of RC's	Grade
14	300	7	157
13	280	6	137
12	260	5	116
11	239	4	96
10	219	3	76
9	198	2	55
8	178	1	21

6.0 Grading Matrix and Conversion

6.1 Matrix

	Points
Exams (2 @ 200)	400
Class Participation	300
Reaction Comments	300
Academic Integrity Document	-----
Total:	1000

6.2 Conversion to Course Letter Grade

Points	%	Grade
900 – 1000	90 – 100	A
800 – 899	80 – 89	B
700 – 799	70 – 79	C
600 – 699	60 – 69	D
0 – 599	0 – 59	F

7.0 Course Calendar¹

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1/15/19	Syllabus	Syllabus	RC1 due before midnight
	Academic Integrity	Academic Integrity/ plagiarism readings (§ 8.0 of syllabus)	
	Religious Studies	Power Point Discussion	

1/22/19	Tribal leaders, seers and wonder-workers	Genesis 12.1-9 Genesis 17.1-8 Genesis 18.1-8 Exodus 3.1-10 Exodus 15.20-21 Judges 4.4-7 1 Samuel 3.1-14 1 Samuel 9, 10.1-13 1 Kings 14.1-18 1 Kings 18.16-40 2 Kings 2 2 Kings 9.1-3	Academic Integrity document due before 6 pm (hard copy) RC2 due before midnight
1/29/19	Message of the prophets	Ward, chs 1-2 2 Kings 17.1-23	RC3 due before midnight
2/5/19	Pre-exilic Prophets: Isaiah Huldah	Isaiah 6-8 2 Kings 19.1-7 2 Kings 20.1-11 2 Kings 22	RC4 due before midnight
2/12/19	Isaiah	Ward, chs 3-4	RC5 due before midnight
2/19/19	Amos Hosea	Ward, chs 10-11 Amos 3-4 Amos 7.10-17 Hosea 1	RC6 due before midnight
2/26/19	Micah	Ward, ch 12 Micah 1-3	RC7 due before midnight
3/5/19	Mid-term Exam		Blue Book!
3/12/19	Spring Break		
3/19/19	Zephaniah	Ward, pp 258-261 Zephaniah	RC8 due before midnight
3/26/19	Jeremiah	Ward, chs 7-8	RC9 due before midnight
4/2/19	Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1-2 Jeremiah 13.1-14 Jeremiah 19, 20.1-6 Jeremiah 22.1-12 Jeremiah 27-28	RC10 due before midnight
4/9/19	Exilic Prophets: Ezekiel	Ward, ch 9 Ezekiel 1-3	RC11 due before midnight
4/16/19	Second Isaiah	Ward, ch 5 Isaiah 40	RC12 due before midnight
4/23/19	Post-exilic Prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	Ward, pp 262-267 Haggai Zechariah 1-8 Malachi	RC13 due before midnight

4/30/19	Prophetic Apocalyptic, Eschatology Non-prophetic apocalyptic: Daniel	Isaiah 24-27 Ezekiel 38, 39, 40.1-4 Zechariah 9-14 Ward, pp 267-268 Daniel 7-12	RC14 due before midnight
5/7/19	Final Exam		

¹ Events are subject to minor revision (see § 14.0).

² **Ward** = Ward, *Thus Says the Lord*; **ch** = chapter, **chs** = chapters, **pp** = pages

8.0 Academic Integrity

TAMUCT expects all students to maintain high standards of personal and scholarly conduct. Students guilty of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, self-plagiarism (“recycling”), or collusion. The instructor shall initiate action for each case of academic dishonesty and report it to the Associate Director of Student Conduct. Zero points will be assigned for any course product that violates academic honesty. The student should access this link for more information: <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html>.

9.0 Disability Support

If students believe that this course may present barriers to learning due to a disability, they must contact Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831 in Warrior Hall, Ste. 212. For more information, students may visit their website at <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>. Any information that the student provides is private and confidential and will be treated as such. The instructor cannot accommodate students’ disabilities unless they first communicate with Access and Inclusion.

10.0 Diversity in the Classroom

Respect for cultural and human biological diversity are core concepts within the social sciences. In this course, each voice in the classroom has value in contributing to class discussion. The student should respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by one’s fellow students and instructor, and refrain from derogatory comments about other individuals, cultures, groups, or viewpoints. In this course we welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.

11.0 Classroom Etiquette

Students shall show respect to other students and to the instructor in all communications, whether verbal or in writing (e.g., online). For example, arguing, complaining, and challenging that is not based on readings, rationality, and the course objectives are a violation of classroom etiquette.

12.0 Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students. The UWC is located in Warrior Hall, Rm 416. One may contact Dr. Bruce Bowles at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu for more information.

13.0 Late Work

As a rule, make-up work for the two exams will not be accepted. The mid-term exam may be accepted late, but with a 20-point deduction for each day late. *In no instance will a make-up for the mid-term exam be given after two weeks from the original exam date.* To be considered as a prospect for making up the mid-term exam, the student must contact the instructor within 24 hours of having missed the exam for purposes of making it up. The final course grade will be posted within a few days of the final exam; therefore, *no incompletes will be awarded for this course.* If students foresee that they will be unable to complete the course, then they should either drop the course or accept the posted grade.

14.0 Modification of the Syllabus

This syllabus may be revised in minor ways at the discretion of the instructor. The student is responsible for noting any changes in the syllabus. More than likely, a change in the syllabus will pertain to typos or events in the course calendar (§ 7.0). If modified, a revised course calendar will be posted on Canvas and will replace § 7.0 of the syllabus.

15.0 Contact with the Instructor

The student should contact the instructor via the message feature of Canvas about any topic or issue that pertains to the course.

16.0 Announcements

The student is responsible for checking Canvas on a near-daily basis for ongoing announcements or messages pertaining to the course.