

**RS-108**  
**Prophetic Literature**  
**The Book of Isaiah/Hosea/Amos, etc.**

Westmont College  
Spring XXX  
Tues-Thurs 1:15-3:05 pm

**Instructor:**

Dr. Sandra Richter  
srichter@westmont.edu  
(805) 565-6168

**Office Hours:**

Wednesdays 1:00-2:30 pm Porter Center

Thursdays 3:30-5:00 pm, Porter Center

\*\*Don't forget Wednesday lunches, appointments can be made outside these hours via email ☺

**Course Description:**

This class is designed for those who have already laid a foundation in biblical study by means of an introduction to the history and literature of ancient Israel in RS-001. We will pursue a "big picture" understanding of the book first via its larger historical, sociological, and canonical context, and then move on to exegete strategic passages. Our objective is to develop hermeneutical competence in the interpretation of biblical texts in general, in the genre of the prophetic books in particular, and in the Book of Isaiah specifically. As always, this goal will not be accomplished until our lives and lifestyles have been confronted and transformed by the words of the prophet as recorded in this God-breathed text.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Identify the literary form and genre of Prophetic Literature
- 2) Understand the socio-historical and theological role of the prophet in ancient Israel
- 3) Be familiar with the structure of the book of Isaiah, its major subdivisions and the transitions that give the book historical and theological coherence.
- 4) Responsibly discuss the socio-historical context of the book and the debate regarding its authorship.
- 5) Be able to identify and interpret individual pericopes within the book within the context of the whole.
- 6) Distill from any given passage the message intended to its original audience and interpret and articulate its present theological import for the Church.
- 7) For those students who choose an oral presentation for their final projects, students will effectively communicate orally as informed by rhetorical situation, audience, genre, and purpose.



Commented [s1]: #6

### Course Procedures & Requirements

#### Method of Instruction:

The first half of our class will consist of weekly lecture and assignments designed to bring the student into conversation with the the task of exegesis and the book of Isaiah. As a central ambition of this class is to connect the exegesis of this ancient book with contemporary concerns, the second half of the class will showcase student research as students teach their peers, integrating particular portions of the Book of Isaiah with contemporary issues and other liberal arts disciplines.

#### Textbooks:

##### Required:

John Oswalt, *NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2003)

*The Jesus Bible Journal, NIV*

##### Recommended:

Jeannine Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Baker Academic, 2021)

**Classroom Decorum:** Please bring lecture outlines, handouts, a notebook, a writing utensil of choice, your **Bible**, and any secondary readings necessary for classroom discussion.

**Auditors:** Two-thirds attendance and either (1) "Read the Book" or (2) the Inductive assignments.

**Absences:** You are allowed the equivalent of one week of cuts (2 class periods for this T-Th class). Any skips beyond that will **reduce your overall grade by 1.5 % points per absence**. If you are sick and going to miss an exam or quiz, you must contact me ***before the scheduled evaluation.***



**Accommodations:** Students who have been diagnosed with a condition that meets the criteria of a disability are strongly encouraged to contact the Accessibility Resource Office (ARO) as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by ODS. These accommodations may be necessary to ensure your full participation and the successful completion of this course. Please contact the website for more information, or send along an email to [aro@westmont.edu](mailto:aro@westmont.edu) Website: <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability/> Please know that accommodations do not release a student from any of the syllabus requirements.

**Library Stuff:** The subject librarian for Religious Studies is Jana Mayfield Mullen [jmayfield@westmont.edu](mailto:jmayfield@westmont.edu). Annelise Henderson [adaley@westmont.edu](mailto:adaley@westmont.edu) is also very

skilled and exceptionally helpful. These are available to help you with planning and organizing your research and locating resources.

**Writers' Corner:** *"The **writing center** is a creative, collaborative space where you can improve in writing skill and confidence. Peer tutors serve as friendly "test readers" for your projects, helping you develop and revise your writing before submitting it. We encourage you to meet with a tutor at least 48 hours before your writing deadline. Be ready to share your assignment prompt and your latest draft, no matter how rough. All tutorials are free of charge. **Make an appointment** at [Writers' Corner](#). We hope to see you soon!"*

**Requirements:**

**10% Short Essay** on Exegesis. Having engaged intelligently with the classroom lectures and read all of the assigned readings on exegesis, write a 2-3 page essay describing what you understand to be a responsible and effective interpretive method. Tag the major issues discussed. College level composition required. SBL Handbook of Style citation required.

**7.5% Map & History Quiz:** This quiz will be based on essential geographic locations and dates for understanding the book of Deuteronomy.

**7.5% 10 minute oral presentation:** Here the student will orally introduce their chosen topic from Deuteronomy. The expectation is (1) to describe the topic you have chosen clearly and succinctly; (2) flag the primary reason you chose to investigate this particular oracle and why it might be important to a contemporary audience; (3) name the involved passages and having made use of at least three of your approved bibliographic resources, introduce why these passages create conflict in the realm of biblical interpretation; (4) get your audience excited about your upcoming presentation; and (5) name three critical questions you want to answer in the course of your research project. Be creative; stay within your allotted time; rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. You will be evaluated by professor and peers for clarity of thought, ability to connect to your audience, delivery skill, and quality of content.

**15% Inductive studies:** These weekly, personal, inductive studies will draw the student into both interpretation and application.

**25% Read the Book!**

**Read:** On your own and/or with a small group, read the Book of Isaiah three times. One read with your favorite paraphrase (*The Message* is a good one); a second in a "dynamic equivalent" (that would be the NIV or the NLT); a third via a "wooden" translation (RSV, NAS, KJV). It doesn't matter the order you utilize the various translations. The goal here is that you as an English reader get a variety of perspectives on the text.

**Commented [s2]:** This requirement addresses # 1, 2, 3, 4, partly fulfills #5.

<p><b>Title each chapter:</b> As you read, offer your own title for each chapter. I encourage you to <b>defy the chapter and verse designations</b> offered by the scribes of previous generations and allow the biblical author's own agenda to drive where you open and close the messages offered. 25%</p>
<p><b>Ten reoccurring words/phrases.</b> Identify ten reoccurring words or phrases that capture you as you read. I suggest color coding to keep track as you move through the book. When you're done reading, go back and list (chapter and verse!) and <b>tally</b> the number of times you encountered the term/phrase. Record this in your assignment. 25%</p>
<p>Offer an <b>inductive definition</b> of 1-2 sentences for each term/phrase you have identified. Utilizing Richter's macro-map, think through how your reoccurring terms/phrases speak into the larger message/structure of the book and incorporate that into your definition. 15%</p>
<p><b>Map out</b> for me at least five intra-book relationships (e.g. preparation, particularization, expansion, repetition, resolution, etc.). You are answering the question: "How does one section of the book relate to another?" Make use of Richter's book map as you process that question. See Bauer and Traina "Part I" for a detailed description of this process. Pages 127-130 offer a summary list. 20%</p>
<p>Conclude the project with a one, substantive <b>paragraph</b> that narrates the overall message of the book 15%</p>
<p><b>Style:</b> Header or title page identifying the project, author, course; three-four written pages (feel free to include charts) with clear headers, page numbers, correct spelling and college-level composition that clearly communicates your message.</p>

### 35% Interpretive Projects

Students will present their research via a **classroom presentation**. Utilizing your "Read the Book" assignment, choose an oracle/chapter that rocks your world. Launch your presentation with *your single-spaced translation* of the pericope in question. Use footnotes to comment on unexpected translation choices.

**Presentations** In teams of two, class members will choose an *oracle/chapter* to present to the class as an **integrative** exercise in exegesis. Collegiate level research that fully contextualizes your chosen oracle is expected. Intelligent, engaging, and pedagogically effective presentation is expected as well. In sum, (1) **what** did Isaiah say; (2) to **whom** and **when**; (3) how do the students' **ancillary disciplines** help us to understand and apply this oracle to our worlds; (3) and how do we **apply** Isaiah's message to our lives right now?

You and your partner will be responsible for 50 minutes of our class on your assigned teaching day. Hence, the teaching section of the presentation should be approximately 40 mins, the discussion approximately 10 minutes. Speak to contemporary concerns. BE CREATIVE!

(1) A one page **proposal** naming team members and their disciplines, the oracle chosen, a succinct description of the team's anticipated findings and

**Commented [s3]:** This requirement addresses # 1, 2, 3, 4, partly fulfills #5.

- applications, and a **bibliography** of at least ten respectable sources. These will be returned with corrections and suggestions within ten days (10%). **Due by 3/9**
- (2) Engaging and intelligent **visuals**—all images and data must be cited on the slides and handouts! (10%)
- (3) A presentation **outline**, first submitted only to prof, **due 3/30**, then offered to the entire class on presentation day (10%)
- (4) A **translation** of the oracle offered to the class on presentation day (10%)
- (5) A preparatory reading/viewing/listening assignment (less than 15 pages of reading) **due one week before your presentation** (10%)
- (6) The presentation will be evaluated by the professor and by peers for preparation, content, and engagement! (60%).

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OUTLINE OF CLASS SCHEDULE

- 1/7 **Introduction to Isaiah and the task of Exegesis**
- 1/9 **More on the task of Exegesis**  
Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 11-28, 80-99 (skim the inbetween for content for your essay).  
Douglas Stuart, "Exegesis" *ABD* II: 682-687 (Canvas)  
William Dever, "The Bible as History, Literature, and Theology," *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did they Know it?* pp. 1-21 (Canvas)  
Gordan Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, "Introduction: The Need to Interpret," 16-32
- 1/14 **The Office of the Prophet**  
Isaiah 1  
LHB, "Prophets and Prophecy," pp. 221-230 (see chart, pp. 224-226)  
Atlas, 84-85; 104-105  
"Prophetic Lawsuit" (*rib*) handout  
*RANE* pp. 206-208 (#79-80), pp. 212-215 (#83) "Report of Wen-Amon"; pp. 218-221 "Divination," #87-89
- 1/16 **More on the Office of the Prophet**  
Isaiah 2-6:13  
Oswalt, 17 pp.  
Theodore Mullen, "Divine Assembly" *ABD* 2:214-17 (CANVAS)  
Fee & Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, "The Prophets," 181-204  
**Inductive Assignment #1 due 1/19**
- 1/21 **No Class: Observing Monday Schedule**
- 1/23 **Isaiah's World** **WE NEED AN EXTRA CLASS PERIOD!**  
Oswalt, 10 pages

Exegesis Essay 1/14!



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Richter, "Eighth Century Issues," pp. 319-340 in *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources* (Baker Academic, 2014)

OR

James Hoffmeier, "Seventh Century Prophets" pp. 173 ff. in *The Prophets of Israel: Walking the Ancient Paths*

Atlas, pp. 90-97

Ruth Hestrin, "Understanding Asherah—Exploring Semitic Iconography" *BAR* 17.5 (1991)

**1/28 The Book of Isaiah**

*Map of the Book of Isaiah* handout

Fee & Stuart, "The Basic Tool: A Good Translation," 33-53

LHB, "Isaiah," 276-312

Historical setting quiz  
Tuesday 1/30!

**1/30 The Prophet as Poet**

Isaiah 5

Oswalt, 12 pages on chapter 5.

LHB 231-42

Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, "Orchards & Vineyards," 101-133

**Inductive Assignment #2, due 2/2**

**2/4 The Prophet as Rhetorician**

Read "Rhetoric" article in **Wikipedia** seeking a definition of the term and a bit of its history  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric#Animal\\_rhetoric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetoric#Animal_rhetoric)

Isaiah 5

**2/6 Ahaz the faithless King**

Isaiah 7:1-12:6

Oswalt 10 pages chptr 7

Map quiz Thursday 2/11!

**2/11 Ahaz**

Matt 1:18-25, 4:14

Dan P. Cole, "Archaeology and the Messiah Oracles of Isaiah 9 and 11," pp. 53-69 in *Scripture and Other Artifacts* WestminsterJohnKnox Press, 1994 (CANVAS)

Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 12 pages on chptrs 8-12

**2/13 Hezekiah the (almost) faithful King**

Isaiah 36-39; 2 Kgs 18-20

Revisit Richter, "Eight Century Issues," pp. 340-349

Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 12 pages on chptrs 36-39

**Inductive Assignment #3, 2/16**

2/18 NO CLASS- PRESIDENT'S DAY!



2/20 **Hezekiah's Crisis, the "Poster Child of Biblical Archaeology"**

Dan Gill, "Jerusalem's Underground Water Systems How They Met: Geology Solves Long-Standing Mystery of Hezekiah's Tunnelers" *BAR* 20:04, Jul/Aug 1994-- available at

<http://www.basarchive.org/bswCanvasrowse.asp>

Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, "Light at the End of the Tunnel," *BAR* 25:01, Jan/Feb 1999-- available at <http://www.basarchive.org/bswbBrowse.asp>



2/25 **The Oracles Against the Nations & the Little Apocalypse**

Read Isaiah 13:1-23:18; **14:10-14**; 24:1-27:13

Beyer, *Encountering the Book of Isaiah*, pp. 95-140

G.E. Ladd, "Apocalyptic," *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 62-65 (CANVAS)

Neusner, "Apocalypse" and "Apocalypticism," in the *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, pp. 46-48 (CANVAS)

"Read the Book" is due!  
2/23

2/27 **Introduction to Judah's Exile & "Second" Isaiah**

Isaiah 40-43:21

Oswalt on chptr 40

Brevard Childs, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature," pp. 41-49 in *Interpreting the Prophets*

Sandra Richter, "The Message of the Master and the Content of our Calling: 'A New Thing' in Isaiah 43" pp. 105-120 in *Living Life on Purpose*

**Inductive Assignment #4**

3/4 **The Servant**

Isaiah 43:22-53:12, John 12:35-43; Matt 12:1-21; Acts 8:26-39

Oswalt 12 pages on the Servant Songs

R.T. France, "Servant of Yahweh," pp 744-47 in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* IVP

Gary V. Smith, "Excursus: The Early Interpreters of the Suffering Servant" pp. 465-72 in *The New American Commentary: Isaiah 40-66* (15B; B & H Publishing Group, 2009)

Inductive Assignment #4

Proposals due! 3/9

3/6 **More on the Servant**

Choose one!

- Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Sacrificial Life and Death of the Servant: Isaiah 52:13-53:12," *VT* 66 (2016): 1-14

- Adna Jostein, "The Servant of Isaiah 53 as Triumphant and Interceding Messiah" pages 189-216 in *The Suffering Servant*.
- R. Reed Lessing, "Isaiah's Servants in Isaiah 40-55: Clearing up the Confusion" *Concordia Journal* Spring 2011

**SPRING BREAK 3/10 - 3/14**



**Inductive Assignment #5, due 3/16**

**3/18 The Idol**

Isaiah 40:19-20; 41:6-7; 44-48

Michael Dick, "The Mesopotamian *mīš-pī* Ritual," *Made in Heaven, Born on Earth*, 55-117 (CANVAS)

Michael B. Dick, "Worshiping Idols," *Bible Review* 18.02 (Apr 2002)—available at <http://www.basarchive.org/bswbBrowse.asp>

**3/20 The Idol**

Oswalt, chptr 44

Pss 115, 135; Jer. 10:1-16

Victor Hurowitz, "The Golden Calf," *Bible Review* 20.02 (Apr 2004)—<http://www.basarchive.org/bswbBrowse.asp>

**Inductive Assignment #6, due 3/23**

**3/27 — The Fifth Gospel: The NT Use of the Book of Isaiah**

G.K. Beale, "Did Jesus and his followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" *Themelios* 14.3 (April 1989): 89-96.

R. Longenecker, "Can we Reproduce the Exegesis of the NT?" *TynBull* 21 (1970): 3-38.

**4/1 Presentation day!**

**4/3 Presentation day!**

**4/8 — Third Isaiah**

Guest Lecturer, Holly Beers?

Read Isaiah 54:1-59:21

Beyer, *Encountering the Book of Isaiah*, 215-52

Brevard Childs, "Isaiah," pp 311-338 in *Intro to the OT as Scripture*. Phil: Fortress Press, 1979 (CANVAS)

P. D. Hanson, "Third Isaiah: The Ideological Legacy of a Struggling Community," pp. 91-103 in *Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*.



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**4/10 Making sense of the whole: A Land Born in a Single Day**

Oswalt, chptr 66 & conclusion

Read Isa 60:1-66:24

Chris Seitz, "Isaiah 1-66: Making Sense of the Whole," pp. 105-123 in *Reading & Preaching the Book of Isaiah*

*Inductive Assignment #7, 4/6*

**4/15 Presentation Day!**

**4/17 Presentation Day!**

**4/22 Presentation Day!**

**Inductive Assignment #8, 4/20**

**4/24 Presentation Day!**

**Final Essay is due!  
4/28**

**4/30 FINAL EXAM DAY, 12:00-2:00 PM PRESENTATION DAY!**