Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Jacksonville
OT 750: Exegesis in Hebrew Prophets: Isaiah
Syllabus, Fall 2013

Course Instructor: Dr. Sarah Lebhar Hall
SGLHALL@hotmail.com

Class Meeting Times:
Fridays: 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Weekend 1: Sept 27-28
Weekend 2: Oct 25-26
Weekend 3: Nov 22-23

Course Objectives:
1. To equip students to observe and interpret Hebrew prophetic literature in order that they might effectively teach and preach it. This class will devote a good deal of attention to strengthening the exegetical skills which are particularly helpful in interpreting prophetic literature.
2. To increase students’ proficiency in Hebrew language, through reading and translation.
3. To explore the literary features and theological significance of the book of Isaiah.

Required Texts:
• Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Hebrew Bible).
• A Hebrew lexicon (either Brown, Driver, Briggs or Holladay). Electronic versions acceptable.
• Counterfeit Gods, Tim Keller
• Other articles/chapters of assigned reading will be posted on the class website.
• J. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah, 2 vols. These are expensive, but a wonderful, life-long resource. Some portions of this commentary will be posted on the class website. You may use the library copy of them if you like. There are often used copies of these two volumes available online. I am hoping that, having been introduced to them, you will decide they are a must-have for your personal library!

Please Note:
There will be a few class assignments that require use of reference works available in the library. If you are not resident in Jacksonville, please plan to (a) spend some study time in Jacksonville between sessions, (b) locate a theological library closer to home, or (c) make use of the excellent inter-library loan system of the public library.
**Attendance**

Attendance at all class sessions is required. According to seminary policy, any absence of more than three hours will result in a letter grade penalty for the course.

Please turn your cell phone to silent mode at the beginning of each class. **Internet usage is strictly prohibited during class** (whether on your computer, ipad or phone), but is permitted during breaks. Failure to abide by this internet policy will affect the student’s final grade for the course.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

**Graded exercises**

- **Hebrew Translation** (15% of grade). The translation of passages from Isaiah is to be completed according to the class schedule below. Please bring two copies of each translation to class: one to be submitted at the beginning of class, and one to be used for class discussion.
- **Exegesis Assignments** (45% of grade). Details of these assignments will be discussed at the first class session.
- **Reading Assignments** (20%): At the end of the semester, students will submit a written statement indicating what percentage of biblical (Isaiah) and secondary reading assignments they have completed.
- **Video Lectures** (15%): At the end of the semester, students will submit a written statement indicating what percentage of assigned online lectures they have viewed.

*Note: All students must provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope in order to have their graded coursework returned after the semester.*

**Grades**

Letter grades for all work will be assigned according to the following guidelines:

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All incompletes (I) and withdrawals (W) must meet the deadlines of the Registrar’s office, and follow the guidelines of the catalogue.
Course Structure:

Weekend 1: Sept 27-28
Introduction to the Prophets/Isaiah
Isaiah 1-11
Hebrew translation
Exegesis in the Prophets: observation, textual comparison, historical background

Weekend 2: Oct 25-26
Isaiah 12-39
Hebrew translation
Exegesis: word study, figures of speech, exegetical outline

Weekend 3: Nov 22-23
Isaiah 40-66
Hebrew translation
Exegesis: biblical theology, expositional outline, introduction/application
Isaiah in the New Testament

Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #1
(To be completed before Sept 27)

- **Watch** the assigned short video lectures posted on the class webpage. There are lecture outlines posted to accompany the videos. They cover the following topics: Old Testament ‘timeline’; Intro to the prophets (Nevi’im); Intro to the Latter Prophets; History of Israel in the time of the Prophets; Structure and authorship of Isaiah; Canaanite idolatry; Textual Criticism.
- **Read** (or listen to) the entire book of Isaiah in English, twice.
  - I would recommend reading it once and listening to it once.
  - The audio version of Isaiah is available free on biblegateway.com. I recommend the ESV audio, read by Max McLean.
  - As you read/listen (or after you read), make note of your observations. Write down (or type up) *anything* that catches your attention, raises a question, strikes you as important, or seems to be a repeated theme. Bring these observation notes to class; you won’t need to turn them in, but they will aid your class participation. This can be an informal, illegible list – one page at the most!
- **Translate** Isaiah 6 in Hebrew, including parsing each verb. Have your dictionary on hand, but do as much of this as you can without other exegetical aids. When you have gotten as far as you are able to get on your own, you may consult other sources. Make a note of any verb that you are unable to parse without help (by starring, highlighting it, etc.).
- **Read** the following:
Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #2 (Due Oct 25)

- **Watch** the assigned short video lectures posted on the class webpage. There are lecture outlines posted to accompany the videos. They cover the following topics: the difficulty of God’s judgment; God’s anger as good news; the perspective of a (Messianic Jewish) terrorism victim in Israel; God and the nations in Isaiah 13-23; Hezekiah in chs. 36-39.
- **Read** the following, all of which are posted on the class website:
  - Excerpt from Miroslav Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace*.
  - Allen Ross, “Isaiah 6 and the exegetical method.”
  - One of the two assigned articles on biblical figures of speech.
- **Translate** the assigned passage in Isaiah, and read Oswalt’s commentary on the same.
- **Prepare** drafts of your work on the first three exegetical steps (observation, textual criticism, historical/cultural background).

Pre-Class Assignment: Weekend #3 (Due Nov 22)

- **Watch** the assigned short video lectures posted on the class webpage. There are lecture outlines posted to accompany the videos. They cover topics including: Isaiah 40-66.
- **Translate** the assigned passage in Isaiah, and read Oswalt’s commentary on it.
- **Read** Oswalt’s commentary on Isaiah 40.
- **Prepare** drafts of your work on the second three exegetical steps (word study, figures of speech, exegetical outline).
- **Read** the book *Counterfeit Gods*, by Tim Keller. This work discusses the issue of idolatry (a major theme in Isaiah, of course!) in a contemporary way. Write a 1 to 2-page review/reflection paper, including:
  - a. What you see as the major strengths/weaknesses of the book.
  - b. One particular chapter or idea that was personally challenging or helpful for you.
  - c. How you think this book could be used for teaching/discipleship in the context of parish ministry, or in another ministry setting.

Post-Class Assignments (Due Dec 17)

- Submit the following statements (posted online)
  - Percentage of online lectures watched
  - Percentage of Isaiah read (twice)
  - Percentage of secondary readings read
- **Submit final exegesis project:** including final drafts of all nine exegetical steps.