

Biblical Prophecy

The Book of Jeremiah

NEJS 107A - Fall 2018

Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Lown Center for Judaic Studies 103

Instructor: Dr. Nathan Mastnjak

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Office hours: Tuesday/Friday 1:00-2:45 PM

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I. Course Description

The prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible pose a particular critical challenge. While prophetic divination is known from elsewhere in the ancient world, the biblical prophetic books are without precedent in their literary complexity and scope. This course will approach the unique phenomenon of ancient Israelite literary prophecy through a close reading of the Book of Jeremiah in Hebrew. Attention will be given to its composition, relationship to other texts, manuscript history, ideology, and themes.

This course combines the exegesis of primary texts in Biblical Hebrew, critical readings of biblical scholarship, and the analysis of manuscript variants. The goal is the development of proficiency in professional research skills.

II. Required Texts

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia – you must read from this book and not from a computer

All other readings will be distributed electronically

Recommended: the purchase of at least one commentary on Jeremiah is recommended (see recommended resources below)

III. Goals

Through engagement with the course materials, assignments, and each other, students will:

1. Gain expertise in biblical prophetic literature and especially the book of Jeremiah.
2. Advance in the mastery of the skills necessary for biblical philology (linguistic analysis, close reading, critical methodologies).
3. Achieve independence in the pursuit and communication of biblical scholarship.

IV. Course Requirements

1. Preparation/Participation—20%

Using commentaries and standard reference works, you will come to class prepared to read, translate, and discuss the texts (both primary and secondary) that you read prior to our class meeting. You should be able to analyze all the grammatical features of the text and discuss key interpretive issues

2. Weekly presentations—30%

Beginning in week two, students will prepare a 10-15 minute presentation each week. These presentations will be of two types. Three times during the semester, students will present a **Reading Report** on a secondary source reading. All students will need to prepare for all secondary readings, but the student giving a reading report will be responsible for preparing an outline of this reading for the rest of the class (to disseminate before the day we discuss it in class) and for leading the discussion of this reading in class. Sign up on the first day of class for your selections.

In every week that you do not present a Reading Report, you will prepare a presentation on some aspect of the text. Students should address the weekly **Presentation Prompts** in the schedule below. This presentation is an opportunity to engage deeply with one feature or phenomenon in the text, to try out possible research topics, and to learn from each other in a truly collaborative seminar environment.

3. Outlines—5%

Using English translations, you will prepare two content outlines of the book of Jeremiah, one based on the MT, and the other based on the LXX. These will be due the second and third weeks of the semester, respectively. NOTE: the Oracles against the Nations (46-51 in the MT) must be divided according to nation. The outlines should be no more than 2-4 pages.

Due:

MT Outline: Fri., Week 2
LXX Outline: Fri., Week 4

4. Paper presentation—15%

You will research a topic related to the book of Jeremiah or prophetic literature more broadly conceived. In the final week of class, you will give a 20-minute presentation on your research. You must submit to me, in writing, your paper topic by **week 10**.

5. Research Paper—30%

You will turn your talk into a 15-20 page (double-spaced) research paper.

Those of you also enrolled in NEJS 110b Readings in the Hebrew Bible-Ezekiel may elect to prepare a single paper that will fulfill the paper requirements for both courses. Both instructors must approve your topic. If you choose this option, your paper should be 20-25 pages (double-spaced).

Due: Fri., week 16.

V. Other Policies

Academic Honesty: You must complete all assignments alone. In your writing, you must follow rules of attribution, meaning that you must cite all sources consulted in preparing your papers. As stated in the *Student Handbook*, “Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student shall not receive credit for work that is not the product of the student’s own effort.” Examples of penalties for a student found responsible for an infringement of academic honesty are no credit for the work in question, failure in the course, and the traditional range of conduct sanctions from disciplinary warning through permanent dismissal from the University.

Electronic devices: Students are permitted to use a laptop or ipad (or similar) device in class for two purposes and two purposes only: looking at readings assigned for class and taking notes. When reading/translating Hebrew, however, students must read from the *BHS*. Students may not use devices for looking at social media (e-mail, facebook, twitter, etc.) or other internet use. Cell-phones may not be used for any purpose. Recording of class in any format is also not permitted without prior consent of the professor for the specific session. Under no circumstance may a recorded session or any portion thereof be shared or distributed.

Students with documented disabilities: Students with disabilities certified by the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and First Year Services will be given reasonable accommodations to complete required assignments. Disabilities that are not documented and approved by the Office of Academic Affairs will not be given accommodations.

Late Assignments: Papers submitted late may suffer a 1/3 grade deduction per day late. For example, a paper that would have received a grade of A on the assigned date would receive an A minus if submitted one day late, a B plus if submitted two days late, and so on.

Preparation time: Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

VI. Course Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to the Course

Primary Text: Jeremiah 1

Scholarship:

Friday: Habel, N. “The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives.” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 36 (1965): 297–323.

Recommended: Rofé, Alexander. “The Nature of the Prophetic Books.” Chapter 1 in *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible*, 301-36.

Week 2. The Deuteronomistic Redaction

Primary Text: Jeremiah 2

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Römer, Thomas. “How Did Jeremiah Become a Convert to Deuteronomistic Ideology?” Pages 189-99 in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*. Edited by Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 268. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Friday: Hyatt, Philip J. “The Deuteronomic Edition of Jeremiah.” *Vanderbilt Studies in the Humanities* 1 (1956): 71–95.

Due: Outline of the contents of MT Jeremiah.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 3. The Poetic Oracles

Primary Text: Jeremiah 3

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Holladay, William. "Elusive Deuteronomists, Jeremiah, and Proto-Deuteronomy." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 66 (2004): 55–77.

Friday: Mastnjak, Nathan. "Prestige, Authority, and Jeremiah's Bible." *The Journal of Religion* (forthcoming).

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Presentation Prompt (alternate): Discuss the possible relationship of one portion of this text with another text or tradition outside the book of Jeremiah. What is the nature of the relationship? If possible, discuss its function in the chapter. How does your chosen passage relate to the rest of the chapter as a whole?

Week 4. The Temple Sermon

Primary Text: Jeremiah 7

Scholarship:

Tuesday: no class

Friday: Holt, Else Kragelund. "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Deuteronomists: An Investigation of the Redactional Relationship between Jeremiah 7 and 26." *JSOT* 36: 73-87.

Due: Outline of the contents of LXX Jeremiah.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 5. Jeremiah and the Davidic Monarchy

Primary Text: Jeremiah 21:11-22:28

Scholarship:

Friday: Rom-Shiloni, Dalit. “Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117 (2005): 189–205.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 6. Prophetic Gender/Prophetic Lament

Primary Text: Jeremiah 11

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Graybill, Rhiannon. “The Hysteria of Jeremiah: Gender and Voice in the Confessions.” Chapter 3 in *Are We not Men: Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016.

Friday: Carvalho, Corrine L. “Sex and the Single Prophet: Marital Status and Gender in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.” Pages 237-67 in *Prophets Male and Female: Gender and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Ancient Near East*. SBL, 2013.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 7. The MT and LXX of Jeremiah I

Primary Text: Jeremiah 25 (MT)

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Rofé, Alexander. “The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah.” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101 (1989): 390-98.

Friday: Tov, Emanuel. “The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History.” Pages 211-237 in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*. Edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 8. The MT and LXX of Jeremiah II

Primary Text: Jeremiah 25 (LXX). NOTE: we will compare the LXX to the MT line by line. For this session only you are allowed to read from a computer.

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Gesundheit, Shimon. “The Question of LXX Jeremiah as a Tool for Literary-Critical Analysis.” *VT* 62 (2012): 29-57

Friday: Mastnjak, Nathan. “Jeremiah as Collection: Scrolls, Sheets, and the Problem of Textual Arrangement.” *CBQ* 80 (2018): 25-44.

Presentation Prompt: What strikes you as most significant or interesting about the differences between the LXX and MT here? How do the differences in these passages affect how the two books are read *as books*?

Week 9. The Book of Consolation

Primary Text: Jeremiah 31

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Otto, Eckart. *Old and New Covenant*. “A Post-exilic Discourse between the Pentateuch and the Book of Jeremiah. Also a Study of Quotations and Allusions in the Hebrew Bible.” *OTE* 19/3 (2006):939-49.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 10. The Prophet and the Scribe

Primary Text: Jeremiah 36

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Isbell, Charles D. “2 Kings 22:3-23:4 and Jeremiah 36: A Stylistic Comparison.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 8 (1978): 33-45.

Friday: Dearman, J. Andrew. “My Servants the Scribes : Composition and Context in Jeremiah 36.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 403–421.

Presentation Prompt: What is interesting or significant about the treatment of scribes in this narrative?

Presentation Prompt (alternate): How does the LXX differ from the MT in its description of the scribes? How might we account for these differences?

Week 11. The Aftermath Narrative

Primary Text: Jeremiah 42:1-43:7 (reread all of 40-44 in English)

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Goldstein, Ronnie. “Jeremiah between Destruction and Exile: From Biblical to Post-Biblical Traditions.” *DSD* 20 (2013): 433-51.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of this passage and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah as a whole.

Week 12. The Oracles against the Nations

Primary Text: Jeremiah 51

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Carolyn J. Sharp. “‘Take another Scroll and Write’: A Study of the LXX and the MT of Jeremiah’s Oracles against Egypt and Babylon.” *VT* 47 (1997): 487-516.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 13. The Fall of Jerusalem

Primary Text: Jeremiah 52

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Person, Raymond F. “II Kings 24, 18-25,30 and Jeremiah 52: A Text-Critical Case Study in the Redaction History of the Deuteronomistic History.” *ZAW* 105 (1993): 174-205.

Friday: Rofé, Alexander. “Not Exile but Annihilation for Zedekiah’s People: the Purport of Jeremiah 53 in the Septuagint.” Pages 165-70 in *Eight Congree of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Paris, 1992*. Atlanta, 1995.

Friday: no class

Presentation Prompt: What strikes you as most significant or interesting about the differences between the LXX and MT here?

Week 14. NO CLASS (SBL/THANKSGIVING BREAK)

Week 15. Jeremiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Primary Text: 4Q385a (The Apocryphon of Jeremiah C)

Scholarship:

Tuesday: Davis, Kipp. “Chapter 5. Character and Content: The “Emerging” (or Diminishing?) Jeremiah in the Literature of the Yahad.” In *The Cave 4 Apocryphon of Jeremiah and the Qumran Jeremianic Traditions : Prophetic Persona and the Construction of Community Identity*. Brill, 2014.

Presentation Prompt: Select any feature of the primary and present an in-depth interpretation of it. The feature that you chose may be a short passage or it may be a theme, image, or idea. Relate the chosen feature to the passage as a whole and to what you know of the book of Jeremiah. Consider relating the chosen feature to ideas, texts, or phenomena outside Jeremiah.

Week 16. Presentations

V. Recommended Resources

Commentaries

Carroll, Robert P. *Jeremiah: A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.

Fischer, Georg. *Jeremia 1-25*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg: Herder, 2005.

_____. *Jeremia 26-52*. Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament. Freiburg: Herder, 2005.

Holladay, William. *Jeremiah 1*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

_____. *Jeremiah 2*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989.

McKane, William. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986.

_____. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah XXVI-LII*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.

Monographs

Carroll, Robert P. *From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.

Davidson, Steed Vernyl. *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: T&T Clark, 2011.

Davis, Kipp. *The Cave 5 Apocryphon of Jeremiah and the Qumran Jeremianic Traditions*. Brill: Leiden, 2014.

Glanz, Oliver. *Understanding Participant-Reference Shifts in the Book of Jeremiah: A Study of Exegetical Method and Its Consequences for the Interpretation of Referential Incoherence*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 60. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Goldstein, Ronnie. *חיי ירמיהו : גלגולי המסורת נביא החורבן עד שלהי הקופה המקראית (The Life of Jeremiah: Traditions about the Prophet and their Evolution in Biblical Times)*. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2013.

- Hornkohl, Aaron D. *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for a Sixth-Century Date of Composition*. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 74. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
- Leuchter, Mark. *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Maier, Christl. *Jeremia als Lehrer der Tora: Soziale Gebote des Deuteronomiums in Fortschreibungen des Jeremiabuches*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 196. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002.
- Mastnjak, Nathan. *Deuteronomy and the Emergence of Textual Authority in Jeremiah*. FAT II 87. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
- Mowinckel, Sigmund. *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*. Kristiana: J. Dybwad, 1914.
- Nicholson, E. W. *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970.
- Parke-Taylor, Geoffrey H. *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah: Doublets and Recurring Phrases*. Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 51. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.
- Pohlmann, Karl-Friedrich. *Studien zum Jeremiabuch: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 118. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978.
- Schmid, Konrad. *Buchgestalten des Jeremiabuches: Untersuchungen zur Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Jer 30-33 im Kontext des Buches*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 72. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996.
- Sharp, Carolyn J. *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- Stipp, Hermann-Josef. *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26, 36-43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert*. Bonner Biblische Beiträge 82. Frankfurt am Main : Hain, 1992.
- Thiel, Winfried. *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 41. Neukirchen-Vluyn:

Neukirchener Verlag, 1973.

_____. *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981.

Wanke, Gunther. *Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchschrift*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 122. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971.

Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Weippert, Helga. *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 132. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973.

Key Articles (not otherwise assigned)

Rofé, Alexander. "Studies on the Composition of the Book of Jeremiah." *Tarbiz* 44 (1974): 1-29 (Hebrew).

Seeligmann, I. L. "Die Auffassung von der Prophetie in der deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtsschreibung (mit einem Exkurs über das Buch Jeremia)." Pages 255-84 in *Congress Volume: Göttingen, 1977*. Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 29. Leiden: Brill, 1978.