I HAD A DREAM:
PROPHETS AND PROPHECY IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

I have heard what the prophets say, who prophesy falsely in My name:
“I had a dream, I had a dream.” (Jeremiah 23:25 JPS)

The phenomenon of prophecy was widespread in the ancient Near East. Outside of ancient Israel, prophets were largely unknown ecstatic visionaries who delivered divine guidance to kings about their political and religious affairs. This type of prophecy also existed in Israel, but from these humble beginnings the concept evolved until the prophets themselves became celebrated figures. The biblical texts often present them as solitary dissidents standing up for divine justice and denouncing the sins of Israel. After the destruction of Jerusalem in the 6th century B.C.E., the prophets also became voices of consolation to a conquered nation, offering visions of restoration in an idyllic age to come.

In this course, we use modern critical methods to study a variety of ancient Near Eastern prophetic texts, reading between the lines to uncover the interests and ideologies that shaped these “divine” messages. To that end, the overall approach we will use in this course will be to read and analyze the ancient texts as skillfully-crafted communications.

The primary goal of a University Writing Seminar is to prepare students for college-level academic writing. Students learn the standards of academic writing, practice those standards, and develop a critical vocabulary for thinking about the process of composition and revision. Through a series of three main writing assignments, students engage critically with texts, produce, organize, and develop ideas, and integrate outside sources to enhance their arguments. Peer reviews, individual conferences, class discussion, and revisions help students refine the style, grammatical form, organization, and overall quality of their analytical writing.

Classroom time will be discussion oriented. In addition to studying the assigned texts and academic articles, we will also devote a significant amount of our time to the process of writing. Classes will regularly include group work, including peer reviews and in-class group writing exercises. Each student will also meet one-on-one with me in 15–20 minute conferences four (4) times during the semester to discuss specific assignments, needs, and interests.

COURSE MATERIALS:
- Write Now!: a collection of Brandeis student essays
- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
- Other assigned readings, including primary sources, will be posted on LATTE

Important Note:
Preparation for class requires that you make detailed notes on the readings so that you may participate in in-depth discussions of the assigned material each meeting. To facilitate these discussions, on occasion I may ask you to print out and bring to class with you a copy of one or more assigned readings. Public printers are available on the main floor of the Goldfarb Library.
EVALUATION:

- Attendance, Conferences, and Participation 10%
- Peer Reviews and LATTE Postings 10%
- Three Required Essays (incl. pre-draft assignments & drafts) 75%
  - Essay 1: 20%
  - Essay 2: 25%
  - Essay 3: 30%
- Portfolio Review 5%

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:
Each of your three (3) essays will require a set of pre-draft assignments, a draft, and a revision. All assignments should be uploaded to LATTE by the deadlines given in the detailed course schedule that is posted on LATTE. In addition, drafts and revisions should be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the day they are due.

Essay 1: Close Reading
Assignment: A 5–6 page argument-driven essay examining a set of non-biblical prophetic oracles that is informed by your own careful analysis of the texts. In this unit we will focus on analyzing evidence and developing arguments.
Draft due: Monday, February 8
Revision due: Monday, February 22

Essay 2: Lens Analysis
Assignment: A 7–8 page essay discussing a biblical prophetic text that is shaped by critical sources. In this unit, we will focus on using sources and structuring arguments.
Draft due: Monday, March 14
Revision due: Monday, March 21

Essay 3: Researched Argument
Assignment: A 9–10 page essay on an “eschatological” or “apocalyptic” text that will be informed by your own critical research. In this unit, we will focus on conducting scholarly research in addition to refining the techniques introduced throughout the semester.
Draft due: Monday, April 18
Revision due: Wednesday, May 4

Portfolio Review
Finally, at the end of the semester, you will write a 3–4 page memo in which you will reflect on your development as a writer.
Portfolio review memo due: Friday, May 6

Pre-Draft Assignments, Peer Reviews and LATTE Postings
Preparation for many class meetings will include a writing assignment of some kind. These writing assignments fall into one of three categories: 1) a LATTE posting reflecting on one of the assigned readings; 2) a pre-draft assignment for one of the three required essays; or 3) a set of peer reviews.

Note: Peer review constitutes a key part of the course. When you submit your drafts, you will exchange papers with a small group of your peers. You should carefully and considerately evaluate your peers’ drafts in preparation for the following class session, when you will share your feedback with each other. These exercises will benefit your essays, so plan to participate actively for the sake of your classmates, and expect the same from them. Your revisions should demonstrate significant changes, especially changes that address issues raised by myself and by your peers.
Policies

Communication:
My main method of communicating with you outside of the classroom will be through email. Please be sure to check your email regularly during the work week, preferably at least once before each class meeting.

Attendance:
Attending class regularly is a basic expectation for this course. Your development as a writer at Brandeis will be enhanced if you are present every day, on time, and prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Our limited schedule necessitates that we move swiftly through the course material; we will not have much time to spend revisiting old material. You are responsible for all material covered in your absence.

The attendance policy for this course will be as follows: You are allowed only three (3) absences from either class or conferences. You should plan ahead in the semester if you know you will need to miss class, as an absence for any reason, planned or unplanned, will be counted. Your semester grade for the course will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade per absence after your third absence unless you have extenuating circumstances that have been discussed and documented with me. More than six (6) absences may result in a failing grade for the semester.

Conferences:
Four times during the semester, we will meet in my office for 15–20 minute conferences. These will be one-on-one discussions of your course work, and they will give you a chance to get detailed and personalized feedback from me on your writing and the directions your projects are taking. Conference attendance is mandatory. Any missed conference will count as an absence. If you need to reschedule a conference appointment, you must let me know before your scheduled appointment or the missed meeting will count as an absence.

Participation:
To ensure that class discussions create a supportive but challenging environment within which students can test new ideas and writing techniques, you should come to every class prepared to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Take notes on the assigned readings and be prepared to offer your thoughts and/or questions.

Essay Drafts and Revisions:
The purpose of having you write both a draft and a revision for each paper is so that you have the opportunity to turn a good essay (your draft) into a great essay (your revision). Therefore, I encourage you to treat all drafts as though they are final drafts. Moreover, while I don’t formally assign grades on drafts, you cannot receive a passing grade on an essay assignment unless you have completed both an acceptable draft and an acceptable revision.

In this course, an “acceptable” draft or revision is one that: 1) contains a complete argument; 2) meets the minimum required page length for the assignment; 3) properly cites all primary and secondary sources; and 4) has been spell-checked and proofread for typos and grammatical errors. In addition, all assignments should be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins (not 1.25 inches; check the page format). Your last name and a page number should occupy the right-side header of each page after the first page.

Mistakes do happen, but in general, submissions that deviate from these basic guidelines will be returned to you unread, you will be given 24 hours to fix the problem(s) with your work, and your final grade for the assignment will be docked 1/3 letter grade.
Students should use the Modern Language Association (MLA) citation format to cite secondary sources. Basic instructions regarding the MLA style are included on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/. If you would prefer to use another common citation style with which you are more familiar, please discuss it with me first.

**Late Work:**
In general, extensions will not be granted unless there are extreme, extenuating circumstances. If it is absolutely necessary to turn a paper in late, please see me as soon as possible to negotiate an extension. *Papers will lose 1/3 of a grade for every day they are late* (i.e. a B paper will receive a B- if it is turned in one day late).

If you take advantage of the Writing Center (see below), you may hand in a completed Consultation Overview Form in place of your *revision* (and only the revision) for a 24-hour extension. If you attend a writing seminar offered by the Writing Program, you may also receive a 24-hour extension on your next revision. No more than two (2) extensions, or a total extension of 48-hours, are allowed for each revision deadline.

**Writing Center:**
The Writing Center offers one-on-one writing tutorials with trained and experienced consultants. Visit http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/index.html to get a better idea of what the Writing Center offers or to sign up for an appointment. When you visit the Writing Center, you may have your consultant fill out a Consultation Overview Form, which will earn you a 24-hour extension on the revision of any paper (only one such extension is allowed per paper, and the consultation must be about the paper for which you are seeking an extension).

**Academic Integrity:**
You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/svpse/academicintegrity/). Faculty will refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Academic Integrity Office. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including, but not limited to, failure on the assignment in question, failure of the course, and/or suspension from the University and/or educational programs.

**Special Needs:**
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and you wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make suitable arrangements.

**Laptops and Cell Phones in Class:**
Laptops and cell phones tend to be distracting to me and to other students, in part because the temptation to take “just a second” to check email or web updates is hard to resist. Since distractions are especially problematic in discussion-based courses, all electronic devices should be turned off and stowed away during class. If you feel that your learning will be hampered by not having access to your laptop for note-taking or other legitimate purposes, please see me to discuss this. If you need to leave your cell phone in “silent” mode because of an emergency, please let me know at the start of class.

*On days when we are workshopping your pre-draft assignments or essays, you may use your laptop during the workshop instead of bringing a hard copy of your assignment to class. However, if I observe you using your laptop for non-course-related functions, your class participation grade for the semester will be reduced.*