

OT 203-3 Exegesis of Isaiah
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Spring 2020
Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30am – 9:50am

Instructor: Tyler Mayfield
tmayfield@lpts.edu
(502) 992-9375

Office: Schlegel 315
Office Hours: email for appointment

Course Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of the prophetic book of Isaiah through translation and exegetical exercises in the original Hebrew text as well as English translations. Students will gain greater familiarity with exegetical methods and interpretation of particular texts. In addition, greater facility may be attained in translating and interpreting biblical Hebrew and the use of secondary scholarly literature.

Course Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

- 1) Describe various historical divisions, literary features, and theological outlooks of the book of Isaiah.
- 2) Translate Hebrew prose and poetic texts with greater facility.
- 3) Exegete prophetic passages by asking historical, literary, and theological questions of the text.
- 4) Write an exegetical paper combining multiple methods on a selected biblical passage.

Required Books

- 1) English translation of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. I recommend the JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, or The New Interpreter's Study Bible
- 2) Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/77. Physical copy or through online software.
- 3) Clines, David J. A., ed. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009. [Or another suitable lexicon such as BDB or HALOT by Koehler & Baumgartner]. Physical copy or through online software.

In addition, students will be required to consult (but not purchase) multiple commentaries on Isaiah.

Assignments & Evaluation

1) Attendance and Class Participation (15%)

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend “all scheduled meetings of the courses” excepting illness or “other valid reasons.” In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify me of their planned absence from class preferably prior to the session. Tardiness also affects classroom dynamics; please make every effort to be ready to start class on time.

Students should come to class each day eagerly ready to discuss the assigned biblical passage and secondary readings. Active participation includes, but is not limited to, activities such as listening carefully to others’ presentations and thoughts, taking notes, asking relevant questions, responding to others’ comments, and inviting others into the conversation. It does not include dominating a group or class discussion.

2) Exegetical Presentation (25%)

Once during the semester students will lead in pairs a class presentation on a given Isaiah passage. Students should be ready to guide the class through the passage using multiple exegetical methods including the translation of certain key phrases or verses, the historical context of the passage, literary questions, and theological aspects. This presentation will require the consultation of multiple commentaries and articles. Further detailed directions are provided in Appendix A.

3) Bi-Weekly Translations with Exegetical Footnotes & HLT Statements (30%)

Students will bring to class and submit their weekly Hebrew translations and exegetical notes as gleaned from 2-3 critical biblical commentaries (see Appendix C for list of commentaries). They will also create an HLT statement for each assigned Isaiah passage. Further directions are provided in Appendix B.

4) 20 page exegesis paper (30%)

Students will write an exegesis paper on a selected Isaiah passage. This paper will be completed throughout the semester in sections and receive feedback from me in order to strengthen the final product.

Translation of Passage with Text Critical Notes 1 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Friday, Feb 28
Historical/Diachronic/Author Section 6 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Friday, March 20
Literary/Synchronic/Text Section 6 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Friday, April 17
Theological/Existential/Reader Section 6 pg <i>Draft</i> (5%)	Due Friday, May 1

Final Paper (with revisions of above sections) 20 pages (10%) Due Friday, May 15*

*I need a final paper from those graduating by Wed. May 13 so you can participate in ceremonies.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty: All work turned in is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an *early* date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students requiring accommodation for a physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center within the first few days of the course and should speak with me as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Inclusive Language: Our use of language, personally and as a community, is a powerful tool of both healing and oppression. In order to establish a more egalitarian environment and in accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. Avoid language for people that excludes part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. See http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

When referring to God, students are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. The God of the Hebrew Bible is envisioned in both personal and non-personal ways, as well as masculine and feminine terms. Naming God exclusively as "He" does not capture this splendid diversity.

Policy on late work: All written assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted. Late submissions will not receive full evaluative responses from the professor.

Use of electronic devices in class: I ask that we create a time and space in the classroom to set aside such distractions as email, Facebook, and texting in order to engage our minds and hearts. Do not send or read text messages during class. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask me for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking. You may not access the Internet during class time. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will negatively affect the course grade.

Course Schedule

Thursday, Feb 6

1. Introduction to course / syllabus
2. What is Exegesis? Historical, Literary, Theological Contexts

Tuesday, Feb 11

Isaiah 2:1-5. Translation, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*, Chapter 7 [CAMS]

Thursday, Feb 13

One Isaiah, Three Isaiahs: An Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

8th Century BCE Israel and First Isaiah

Class Readings:

Ulrich Berges, "Isaiah: Structure, Themes, and Contested Issues," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Prophets* (ed. Carolyn Sharp; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016):153-170. [handout]

Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000): 98-105. [Library Reserve]

Tuesday, Feb 18

Isaiah 7:10-16. Translation, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*,
Chapter 3 [CAMS]

Thursday, Feb 20

Class Presentation: Isaiah 5:1-7

Tuesday, Feb 25

Isaiah 9:1-7. Translation, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*,
Chapter 4 [CAMS]

Thursday, Feb 27

Class Presentation: Isaiah 6:1-10

Tuesday, March 3

Isaiah 11:1-3, 6-9. Translation, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*,
Chapter 5 [CAMS]

Thursday, March 5

Class Presentation: Isaiah 5:8-24

Tuesday, March 10

Isaiah 35:1-7. Translation, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*, Chapter 8 [CAMS]

Thursday, March 12

Class Presentation: Isaiah 36-39

Research and Study Week

Tuesday, March 24

Isaiah 40:1-11. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*, Chapter 9 [CAMS]

Thursday, March 26

6th Century BCE Israel and Second Isaiah

Class Readings: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002): 92-120. [Library Reserve]

Tuesday, March 31

Isaiah 49:1-6. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Thursday, April 2

Class Presentation: The Servant in Isa 42:1-9

Tuesday, April 7

Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tuesday, April 14

Class Presentation: Isaiah 45:1-8

Thursday, April 16

Isaiah 56:1-8. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tuesday, April 21

5th Century BCE Israel and Third Isaiah

Class Readings: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 42-54. [Library Reserve]

Thursday, April 23

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*, Chapter 6 [CAMS]

Tuesday, April 28

Class Presentation: Isaiah 58:1-12

Thursday, April 30

Isaiah 64:1-9. Translations, Exegetical Notes, and HLT Due.

In order to translate, produce exegetical notes, and create an HLT statement, students will need to consult and cite 2-3 Isaiah commentaries.

Tyler Mayfield, *Unto Us a Child Is Born? Isaiah, Advent, and our Jewish Neighbors*, Chapter 10 [CAMS]

Tuesday, May 5

Class Presentation: Isaiah 66:1-4

Thursday, May 7

Conclusion

Appendix A
Exegetical Presentation
(25% of final grade)

The biblical passage for your group presentation is prescribed on the syllabus. Presenters should be prepared to lead an hour long session. Presenters may ask their classroom peers to discuss a topic as a class, or in small groups, or as individuals (for a small portion of the hour). Presenters should assume that the class has read only the biblical passage in English (so, no commentaries or Hebrew knowledge assumed). Presenters should demonstrate knowledge of at least 5 commentaries (see Appendix C) and other secondary literature on the passage. Please provide a bibliography related to your assigned passage along with a handout to aid in following the presentation.

I suggest the following basic format for the presentation: (see grading rubric on other side)

- 1) General introduction to the passage including reading it aloud. (~5 minutes)
- 2) Translation Issues using Hebrew (~5 minutes)
- 3) Diachronic / Historical Issues (~15 minutes)
- 4) Synchronic / Literary Issues (~15 minutes)
- 5) Theological issues (~15 minutes)

Of course, presenters may want to emphasize a given approach above depending on their specific passage, but an excellent presentation will cover all the above listed topics. *Please be as specific as possible about your methodological approaches* (i.e. tell us what methods you are using as you use them). Presenters also need to leave time in their presentation to bring all the details of exegesis together to create meanings/interpretations of the text. This “overarching” thesis could come at the very beginning of the presentation in order to guide and shape the various details that follow OR it could come at the end so that the presentation builds from the various details to a thesis.

The presentation will be graded based on the following criteria:

Organization 5 points

The information is presented in a logical, interesting sequence that is easy to follow.

Handout 10 points

The handout provides (only) essential information that helps the audience to follow the speaker.

Elocution 5 points

The presenters speak clearly, correctly, and loud enough for audience to hear and slowly enough for easy understanding.

Time Management 10 points

Presenter is able to manage the clock so that all issues are covered, yet time is not remaining.

Bibliography 5 points

Bibliography provides at least 5 additional pieces of scholarly, secondary literature.

Content 65 points

Presentation includes meaningful, relevant, researched information.

Overarching thesis concerning the passage	10 points
Use of Hebrew / translation issues	10 points
Attention to historical issues	15 points
Attention to literary issues	15 points
Attention to theological issues	15 points

Appendix B

Hebrew Translations with Exegetical Footnotes and HLT Statement

When the syllabus asks students to translate a given set of verses, students should provide their own translations of the text using the BHS and a lexicon. You may want to consult *several* English translations after you have the general sense of the verse; be careful however—it is fairly easy to spot when someone is simply copying from a translation. Strive for a translation that captures the Hebrew word order and grammatical features (e.g., translate participles as participles, pay attention to verb tenses); elegant English is not necessarily the goal. Of course, readable English sentences are necessary.

In addition to this translation, students are expected to include *at least one footnote* per biblical verse that speaks to other interesting English translations, lexicon gleanings, text critical matters, or exegetical notes found in commentaries. So, one could note the places you differ or disagree with modern translations. Or one could quote or paraphrase a commentary's understanding of a word or phrase. Or one could jot down the ancient versions' variants (found in the critical apparatus).

In addition to your translation and exegetical footnotes, students will write an HLT statement for each biblical passage. An HLT statement is a succinct (1-2 sentences) statement about the biblical passage that includes 1 central historical statement, 1 central literary statement, and 1 central theological statement.

EXAMPLE

Isaiah 2:1-2

¹The matter¹ that Isaiah son of Amoz envisioned concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

² In future days², the mountain of the house of ADONAI³
will be established at the head of the mountains
and will be lifted up above the hills.
All the nations will flow to it like a river.⁴

HLT: Isaiah 2 contains a short prophetic oracle attributed to the 8th century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz, but perhaps written after the exile, that tells of an unspecified, future time period (not eschatological) in which Jerusalem will become the center of instruction and justice for all nations with the result of peace among nations.

¹ JPS and NRSV translate "word," which is appropriate to the Hebrew word. Yet, how can one "envision" a "word"?

² JPS translates "In the days to come," which is nice because the oracle seems to refer to an unspecified, future time period. Some interpreters have understood (wrongly in my opinion) the time reference to concern eschatological matters, i.e., the end of time.

³ "the mountain of the house of ADONAI" is a reference to the Jerusalem Temple Mount.

⁴ The Hebrew verb used here has as a derived noun, "river," so that the nations are presented as a river flowing naturally up to the Temple.

Appendix C

Isaiah Commentaries

On Library Reserve

Author	Title	Commentary Series	Date
R. E. Clements	Isaiah 1-39	New Century Bible Comm.	1980
Walter Brueggemann	Isaiah 1-39	Westminster Bible Companion	1998
Walter Brueggemann	Isaiah 40-66	Westminster Bible Companion	1998
Joseph Blenkinsopp	Isaiah 1-39	Anchor Bible	2000
Joseph Blenkinsopp	Isaiah 40-55	Anchor Bible	2002
Joseph Blenkinsopp	Isaiah 56-66	Anchor Bible	2003
Marvin Sweeney	Isaiah 1-39	FOTL	1996
Marvin Sweeney	Isaiah 40-66	FOTL	2016
Brevard Childs	Isaiah	Old Testament Library	2001
Patricia Tull	Isaiah 1-39	Smyth and Helwys	2010
Klaus Baltzer	Deutero-Isaiah	Hermeneia	2001
J.J.M. Roberts	First Isaiah	Hermeneia	2015
H.G.M. Williamson	Isaiah 1-5	International Critical Commentary	2006
H.G.M. Williamson	Isaiah 6-12	International Critical Commentary	2018
Gene Tucker	Isaiah 1-39	New Interpreter's Bible Comm.	2001
Christopher Seitz	Isaiah 40-66	New Interpreter's Bible Comm.	2001

Also, many of these commentaries are in the reference section of the library. See REF BS 491.2