



Reuben Welch School of Theology and Christian Ministry

**Old Testament Prophets and the Holy Imagination:  
Power, Gender, Justice, and Economics**

**BIB 3014**

3 units

Spring 2026

<p><b>Meeting days/times: Mon. and Wed. 8:15 am – 9:30 am</b>          Meeting location: Smee 100          Final Exam: Monday May 4, 2026 at 7:30am</p>
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INFORMATION	SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE
<b>Instructor title and name:</b>	The Rev. Dr. Brad Kelle, Ph.D. (Prof. of Old Testament and Hebrew)
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**PLNU Mission**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Course Description**

**Catalog:** A study of the prophetic phenomena in the Old Testament, setting each book in its historical and canonical context, with attention to how these books speak to ancient and contemporary issues related to power, gender, justice, and economics.

**Course Summary:** The words of the Old Testament prophets have energized and criticized the people of God from ancient to contemporary times. This staying power of the prophetic texts is due in large part to their dual focus. Prophets like Amos and Hosea offered a specifically crafted message to their eighth-century BCE audience that drew upon and reflected historical, social, and religious events in that ancient setting. At the same time, however, the messages of these prophets that have been handed down continue to function as a valuable resource for contemporary social critique, religious formation, and Christian proclamation.

This course is designed to provide a foundation for a lifetime of dialogue with ancient Israel's and Judah's prophets. It seeks to introduce the student to the phenomenon of prophecy, to provide the student with a general background to each of the classical prophets, and to equip the student with a method of exegetical study for the prophetic literature. The aim of the course is to work specifically with the biblical texts in light of their historical, social, and religious contexts. It will also explore, however, the meaning and significance of the literature within Christian proclamation as well as the diverse literary, theological, and methodological issues connected with these texts. This course will have a decidedly exegetical focus. That is, the class's primary aim is to engage in a group reading or "exegesis" of the prophetic texts with an eye to the various historical, literary, and theological aspects therein. The course should also allow and encourage the student to practice and develop their own skills for exegeting the prophetic literature within its historical and literary context.

## Program and Course Learning Outcomes

### *Course Learning Outcomes:*

The class sessions, readings, and assignments should enable the student to

1. **exegete** the OT prophetic literature within its **historical, literary, and theological settings**. This goal will also enable the student to carry on an informed dialogue concerning the persons, ministries, and messages of the various OT prophets.
2. explore the **phenomenon of ancient Israelite prophecy** in light of its place within the broader context of the ancient Near East and within the context of its historical precedents.
3. encounter the **basic categories of prophetic literature** and the process by which spoken word became written word.
4. begin to identify **diverse ways of reading** prophetic literature that go beyond traditional historical and literary exegetical methods and appreciate their implications for understanding the texts and their interpretive issues.
5. explore the **broader theological, literary, and social issues** involved in reading these texts in a **contemporary setting** and thereby to apply these bodies of literature to contemporary situations and Christian ministry, proclamation, and instruction.

### *Program Learning Outcomes for Christian Studies:*

1. Interpret scripture evidencing biblical literacy
2. Articulate clear theological doctrines relevant to Christian life and ministry
3. Engage the perennial questions of the human condition using resources from philosophy
4. Apply principles of Christian formation for the practice of ministry

## Required Texts

Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

1. Mark McEntire, *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices: Introducing the Prophetic Literature of Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015.

2. Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniv Edition. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 202.
3. Julia O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor: Theology and Ideology in the Prophets*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
4. M. Daniel Carrol R., *The Lord Roars: Recovering the Prophetic Voice for Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.
5. A Bible of the student's choosing (NRSV preferred; modern translation required [i.e., no KJV, New KJV, Message, Living Bible, New Living Bible]).

### Course Requirements (Assignments At-A-Glance)

1. Class Participation and Attendance: Attendance is a necessity for optimum academic achievement. *If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings (more than THREE [3] classes), the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent (more than FIVE [5] classes), the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.* In addition, each student is expected to participate actively in class by contributing to the discussions on the basis of his or her reading of the assigned material.

2. Readings: All readings are required unless otherwise indicated. **Please bring your Bible to class.** It is important to keep up with the readings on a session-by-session basis or the information will quickly become overwhelming. *Evidence of reading preparation and completion for each class will be factored into the student's final class participation grade.* [Fulfills Outcomes #1-5]

\*Course Tag: Several of these readings introduce diverse perspectives on the prophets, especially interpretive perspectives that read the biblical texts in dialogue with issues related to gender, race, class, ethnicity, and trauma.

3. Homework Assignments: To enhance the quality and depth of our classroom discussions, various homework assignments will be assigned and should be completed on an occasional basis throughout the semester. Homework assignments are listed on the course schedule. [Fulfills Outcomes #1-5]

\*Course Tag: Several of these assignments, especially those involving readings from the O'Brien and Carroll books, introduce diverse perspectives on the prophets, especially interpretive perspectives that read the biblical texts in dialogue with issues related to gender, race, class, ethnicity, and trauma.

4. Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* Book Analysis: The student should read Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination* and complete the analysis following the instructions provided in the assignment (see Canvas and the back of this syllabus). The analysis is due **by the start of class on Monday Jan. 26, 2026.** [Fulfills Outcomes #1, 4, & 5]

5. Group Presentation on a Minor Prophet: The students will be divided into groups and assigned one of the Minor Prophets books to present to the class (see course schedule for assigned days). Each presentation should be **15 minutes long.** *Each group member will receive the same grade for*

the presentation. The exact books to be presented will be provided in class. **Students should follow the instructions included in this syllabus and on Canvas.** [Fulfills Outcomes #1, 4, & 5]

**(NOTE: a one-page handout and slide presentation must be emailed to the professor by noon on the day before your presentation). Both will be made available to the entire class.**

6. Prophetic Justice Example Essay: The student will write a 1,200 to 1,300 words essay on a person/organization/movement you deem to reflect the values of prophetic justice as we have studied them in this course. You will tell their story around **the central question: “How does this person/organization/movement reflect the values of prophetic justice as we have encountered them in the Old Testament?”** *The paper should follow the instructions given on Canvas and in the back of this syllabus.* NOTE: You will use this paper as the starting point for your final paper in the course. The essay is due **by the start of class on Wednesday Feb. 25, 2026.** [Fulfills Outcome #5]

7. Final Interpretation Paper: In place of a final examination, the student will prepare an interpretive paper that builds on the work done for the “Prophetic Justice Example Essay” and then engages in an interpretation of a text of his or her choosing from the OT prophetic books (excepting Daniel and Jonah). *The chosen text should be approximately 10 verses in length and should be a passage that could be the scriptural basis from the prophets for the justice work of the person/organization/movement described in the previous paper. The student should use the paper instructions in the back of this syllabus.* The paper should be about 3,000 words. The paper must be turned in on the scheduled day for the final exam of the course: **Monday May 4, 2026 at 7:30am** [Fulfills Outcomes #1, 4, & 5]

### Assessment and Grading

The student’s grade will be based on the following:

<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
110	Homework Assignments (11 at 10 pts each)
50	Brueggemann Book Analysis
75	Group Presentation
50	Prophetic Justice Example Essay
100	Final Interpretation Paper

**\*TOTAL: 385**

<u>*Grading Scale:</u>	93-100 A	84-86 B	74-76 C	64-66 D
	90-92 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C-	60-63 D-
	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	50s F

### Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs,

race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality. If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination).

### **Course Credit Hour Information**

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 16 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

### **Final Examination Policy**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

### **Content Warning**

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In this course, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include things pertaining to gender, justice, and violence. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in these areas, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

### **State Authorization**

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow distance education outside California.

### **PLNU Copyright Policy**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

### **PLNU Recording Notification**

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

### **PLNU Academic Honesty Policy**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

### **PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

### **PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy**

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

### **Lomabooks Instructions for Students:**

This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas. You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your

courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials. For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go: [HERE](#)

## Course Schedule (subject to change as needed)

### 1. Mon. Jan. 12

A. Starting Points for the Course

B. Starting Points for the OT Prophets

\*Readings: none

### 2. Wed. Jan. 14

Basics of the Prophets and Canon

\*Readings: 1) McEntire, *Chorus*, pp. xv-xvii; 2) Begin reading Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*; 3) Excerpts from John H. Walton, *The Lost World of the Prophets*, pp. 13-19, 35-50, 74-79 (on Canvas)

**\*MON. JAN. 19: NO CLASS (MLK HOLIDAY)**

### 3. Wed. Jan. 21

A. The Phenomenon of Prophecy in the Ancient Near East

B. Prophets and Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Sociology and Anthropology)

C. Approaching the Prophets: Canon, Literature, and History

\*Readings: 1) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 1; 2) Finish(!) reading Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*

### 4. Mon. Jan. 26

The Prophetic Consciousness Past and Present: Discussion of Brueggemann Book

\*Readings: 1) Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination* (whole book completed)

\*DUE: Brueggemann Book Analysis (due on Canvas by class time)

### 5. Wed. Jan. 28

A. Justice as a Lens for Reading the Prophets (Pt. 1)

B. The Assyrian Crisis Historical Background

\*Readings: 1) Carroll, *The Lord Roars*, ch. 1; 2) Harold V. Bennett, "Justice, OT" (from the *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 476-477 (on Canvas); 3) Brad E. Kelle, "Israelite History" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (IVP 2012), for today read only pp. 397-410 (on Canvas)

### 6. Mon. Feb. 2

The Assyrian Crisis: The Book of Amos

\*Readings: 1) Amos (entire book); 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, pp. 66-70; 3) Watch the video on "Amos" on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video "Amos" from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the "Top 3 Points" made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

7. Wed. Feb. 4

A. Finish Amos (if needed)

B. Engaging Justice in the Prophets

\*Readings: 1) Carroll, *The Lord Roars*, ch. 2

\*DUE: After reading the assigned chapter from the Carroll book, identify what are in your view the “Top 5 Points” made by the chapter. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

8. Mon. Feb. 9

Engaging Gender in the Prophets

\*Readings: 1) O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, chs. 2 & 3

\*DUE: After reading the assigned chapter from the O’Brien book, identify what are in your view the “Top 5 Points” made by both chapters (you only need 5 points total, not 5 points from each chapter). Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

9. Wed. Feb. 11

A. The Assyrian Crisis: The Book of Hosea

B. Hosea 1-3

\*Readings: 1) Hosea 1-3; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, pp. 51-65; 3) Watch the video on “Hosea” on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video “Hosea” from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the “Top 3 Points” made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

10. Mon. Feb. 16

Hosea 4-14

\*Readings: 1) Hosea 4-14

11. Wed. Feb. 18

A. Finish Hosea (if needed)

B. Engaging Gender in the Prophets

\*Readings: 1) O’Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, ch. 4

\*DUE: After reading the assigned chapter from the O’Brien book, identify what are in your view the “Top 5 Points” made by the chapter. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

12. Mon. Feb. 23

The Assyrian Crisis: The Book of Micah

\*Readings: 1) Micah (entire book); 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, pp. 70-75; 3) Watch the video on “Micah” on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video “Micah” from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the “Top 3 Points” made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

13. Wed. Feb. 25

A. Engaging Justice in the Prophets

B. Discussion/Share out of Prophetic Justice Example Essay

\*Readings: 1) Carroll, *The Lord Roars*, ch. 3

\*DUE: 1) Prophetic Justice Example Essay (see instructions in syllabus) (due on Canvas by the start of class)

14. Mon. Mar. 2

A. Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

B. Isaiah 1-39 (pt. 1)

\*Readings: 1) Isaiah 1-13; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 2; 3) Watch the video on “Isaiah 1-39” on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video “Isaiah 1-39” from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the “Top 3 Points” made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

15. Wed. Mar. 4

Isaiah 1-39 (Pt. 2)

\*Readings: 1) Isaiah 20-39

**\*MON MAR. 9 & WED. MAR. 11: NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

16. Mon. Mar. 16

A. The Babylonian Crisis: Historical Background

B. Isaiah 40-55 (“Second Isaiah”)

\*Readings: 1) Isaiah 40-50; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 4; 3) Brad E. Kelle, “Israelite History” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (IVP 2012), for today read only pp. 410-414 (on Canvas); 4) Watch the video on “Isaiah 40-66” on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video “Isaiah 40-66” from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the “Top 3 Points” made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

17. Wed. Mar. 18

Group Presentations on Minor Prophets: The Books of Obadiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

\*Readings: 1) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 7

\*DUE: Group presentations on Obadiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

**\*MON. MAR. 23: NO CLASS**

**\*Wed. Mar. 25: Special Class Session**

**\*\*For this class session, we will attend the Wiley Lecture in Theology together as a class during our regular class time. Report to Crill Performance Hall at 8:15am. Look for the sign-in sheet in the foyer.**

18. Mon. Mar. 30

A. Engaging Gender in the Prophets

B. The Babylonian Crisis: The Book of Jeremiah (pt. 1)

\*Readings: 1) Jeremiah 1-3, 7, 11, 13; 2) O'Brien, *Challenging Prophetic Metaphor*, ch. 5; 4) Watch the video on "Jeremiah" on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video "Jeremiah" from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the "Top 3 Points" made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

19. Wed. Apr. 1

The Book of Jeremiah (pt. 2)

\*Readings: 1) Jeremiah 29, 30-33; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 5

**\*MON. APR. 6: NO CLASS (EASTER BREAK)**

20. Wed. Apr. 8

The Babylonian Crisis: The Book of Ezekiel (pt. 1)

\*Readings: 1) Ezekiel 1-25; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 6

21. Mon. Apr. 13

The Book of Ezekiel (pt. 2)

\*Readings: 1) Ezekiel 26-48; 2) Watch the video on "Ezekiel" on [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)

\*DUE: After watching the video "Ezekiel" from [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com), identify what are in your view the "Top 3 Points" made by the video about the biblical book. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

22. Wed. Apr. 15

A. Finish Ezekiel (if needed)

B. Engaging Justice in the Prophets

\*Readings: 1) Carroll, *The Lord Roars*, ch. 4

\*DUE: After reading the assigned chapter from the Carroll book, identify what are in your view the "Top 5 Points" made by the chapter. Present these in a numbered list. For each point, give one to two sentences that explain why you thought that point was important.

**\*MON. APR. 20: NO CLASS**

23. Wed. Apr. 22

A. The Restoration Crisis: Historical Background

B. Isaiah 56-66 ("Third Isaiah")

\*Readings: 1) Isaiah 56-66; 2) McEntire, *Chorus*, ch. 8; 3) Brad E. Kelle, "Israelite History" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (IVP 2012), for today read only pp. 414-417 (on Canvas)

24. Mon. Apr. 27

Group Presentations on Minor Prophets: The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

\*Readings: 1) McEntire, *Chorus*, 11

\*DUE: Group Presentations on the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

25. Wed. Apr. 29

A. From Here to Where?

1. New Testament Appropriations of the Old Testament Prophets
2. What Then Should We Say?

\*Readings: 1) Excerpts from John H. Walton, *The Lost World of the Prophets*, pp. 89-107, 116-126 (on Canvas)

**\*Final Interpretation Paper due on the day of the Final Exam for the course: Monday May 4, 2026  
(7:30am)**

## Instructions for Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination* Book Analysis

While Brueggemann attempts to deal with the underlying meaning and function of a prophet, he is also concerned to deal with the way in which this ancient office provides a model for present day persons and communities of ministry. The task of this analysis is to answer questions that engage Brueggemann's work with a focus on understanding the office of the prophet as it relates to a community living under covenant obligation to Yahweh and to each other.

The format of the book analysis is a series of questions. **You should answer each question below with at least two full paragraphs (approximately 300 words for each question).** In your answers, be sure to cite specific items/points/passages from the book to support your responses (cite the page numbers from which you draw). Remember: if you quote any words directly, put them in quotations and cite the page number.

*\*\*Copy the questions and place your paragraph answers under each question as given.*

1. What is the author's thesis? What is he trying to say or accomplish overall in this book?
2. What is the writer's basic line of argument in attempting to prove his thesis? In other words, what are the main subpoints, how does he structure the book to get the argument across, etc.? (Note: Here is where you should unpack/explain his "criticize and energize" concept.)
3. What are **two points** in the book that seem the strongest or most compelling/interesting to you *and why*? And what is **one point** in the book that seems confusing/unclear/weak to you *and why*?
4. Perhaps one of the most significant movements that Brueggemann makes for the Christian community is his final link to present society and to the ministry of Jesus. How does he see the link between ancient prophetic understanding and contemporary application?

## Instructions for the Prophetic Justice Example Essay

You will write a 1,200 to 1,300-word essay on a person, movement, or organization you deem to reflect the values of prophetic justice as we have studied them in this course. You will tell their story around the central question: “How does this person/movement/organization reflect the values of prophetic justice as we have encountered them in the Old Testament?”

1. Begin your essay with a section that *summarizes a vision of biblical prophetic justice as we have presented it in class*. This section should be 300-500 words. Draw on the readings we used in class to define “justice.” Be sure to cite specific passages and examples from the OT prophetic literature in your explanation of biblical prophetic justice.

2. The rest of your paper should be dedicated to describing your chosen person, movement, or organization **and** explaining how they/it reflect(s) the values of prophetic justice as we have encountered them in the Old Testament prophets.

*NOTE: You will use this paper as the starting point for your final paper in the course.*

## Instructions for Class Presentation on Books of the Minor Prophets

**GOAL:** The goal of this presentation is to give a substantial but overall introduction to your assigned biblical book, informed by modern biblical scholarship's work on the book. *Think of your group as answering the question, "What is the book of x, what is modern biblical scholarship saying about it, and how does it relate to the other prophetic books?"* You have only **15 minutes**, so you will want to plan your presentation carefully in advance, yet you should still give a thorough presentation.

**1) PREPARATION:** To research your presentation, you should draw from two sources:

- a) Read the **introduction** for your book in at least **three** major critical academic commentaries found **in the library** (not online!). You could also look at these commentaries' discussions of the sample passage(s) you choose for that part of your presentation (see below).
- b) Watch the video about your book on the Bible Project website.
- c) Examine any discussion of your book that appears in McEntire, *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices*; Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*; and Carroll, *The Lord Roars*, and incorporate any insights there.

**2) PRESENTATION:** For your 15-minute presentation, you should include at least the following elements:

- a) Based on your reading of the material listed above, give an introduction/survey of the major content, themes, structure, and distinctive elements of your book (*i.e., what is this book and what is in it?*).
- b) Give a brief survey of the major critical interpretive issues that have been and are discussed in modern biblical scholarship (these might include the date, setting, genre, redaction, etc. or *difficult interpretive issues such as gendered language, divine violence, justice, ethics, etc.*). Give the class a rundown on the various views on the major issues and provide what you take to be the best options on these issues (*i.e., what issues do scholars discuss about this book?*).
- c) Walk the class through one or two substantial sample passages from the book, explaining how they, in your group's mind, illustrate the book's message, issues, circumstances, etc. (*kind of a "Here's a Taste of Our Book" presentation*). Note any passages that bear on the prophetic vision of justice and how it impacts the Christian work of justice in the world today.

**3) OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**

***A one-page handout and slide presentation must be emailed to the professor by noon on the day before your presentation.*** Both will be made available to the entire class.

***\*Failure to meet these requirements will result in 5 points subtracted from your presentation grade***

## FINAL INTERPRETATION PAPER GUIDE (Part 1): Instructions for **Researching** the Final Interpretive Paper

*\*OVERALL EXPLANATION: This paper is an opportunity for you to engage a specific passage from one of the Old Testament prophetic books that coordinates with your prophetic justice paper from earlier in the course. It asks you to undertake a specific interpretive engagement with that passage.*

**\*\*For the research part of your paper, work through the following steps.**

### STEP 1: REFLECT BACK ON YOUR “PROPHETIC JUSTICE EXAMPLE ESSAY”

Read back through your previous paper in the course to start thinking about a passage from the prophetic books that would coordinate with it.

### STEP 2: PICK YOUR BIBLICAL TEXT

- Choose a **passage from one of the OT prophetic books** we covered in this course that you think could be the **biblical basis/support** for the work of the person/organization/movement that you discussed in your previous paper on prophetic justice examples. The scripture passage should be **about 10 verses long**.
- Read through your passage carefully in *at least three different English translations*.

### STEP 3: ENGAGING THE TEXT

*Take some notes on these questions to use when you write the paper:* Why did you choose this specific biblical passage to go with the organization/movement you chose earlier as your example of prophetic justice? How does this passage provide a scriptural basis/support for them and the work they do?

### STEP 4: TRANSLATE YOUR TEXT

Read and compare *at least three different translations* (e.g. NIV, NRSV, NAB, etc.) of your text. Note any textual problems in margins or footnotes. Note words that seem significant or problematic. Look for differences in the translations, as well as which differences seem significant for the meaning of the passage.

### STEP 5: PUTTING THE TEXT IN LITERARY CONTEXT

- Formulate a summary of the unit or section that *immediately precedes* your text.
- Formulate a summary of the unit or section that *immediately follows* your text.
- Make notes on how your text *fits and functions* in this literary context (e.g., is it a transitional passage? Is it the climax? Is it the beginning? Etc.)

### STEP 6: ANALYZE YOUR TEXT USING BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES

- Choose **three** of the critical, scholarly biblical **commentaries from the library (not online)** and read each commentary’s analysis of your chosen passage.
- Write a **summary of each** of the three commentaries discussions of your passage. In your summary, look for the specific elements and interpretive issues of your passage that they discuss. Examples would include discussions of historical context, literary and rhetorical elements such as repetition, metaphor, simile, dialogue, key words (especially in Hebrew), theological issues in the text, and other interpretation issues.

### STEP 7: THEOLOGY OF THE TEXT

Analyze the theological issues in the text: What appear to be the major theological affirmations in this text? What is being said about God? about humanity? about salvation?

### **\*\*STEP 8: REFLECT ON YOUR TEXT IN LIGHT OF THE PROPHETIC VISION OF JUSTICE SEEN IN THE PROPHETIC BOOKS WE STUDIED IN THIS COURSE**

You will conclude your paper with a section devoted to giving your reflection on how your passage and the interpretation *relate to the vision and values of prophetic justice as articulated in the OT prophetic books*.

**To research this, you need more than just your off-the-top-of-your-head opinion.** You should look back through your interpretation notes and see what specific elements of the text speak to matters of justice/injustice. Look through your commentaries and other resources you used (our textbooks, too!) to see what insights you can apply from them.

**\*\*Your goal is to conclude your paper with a discussion of this question: “How does your passage and your interpretation of it speak to the vision and values of prophetic justice as articulated in the OT prophetic books.”**

## FINAL INTERPRETATION PAPER GUIDE (Part 2): Instructions for **Writing** the Paper

*\*\*Your main goal is to write your research from part one of these instructions. To do that, follow these guidelines in putting together your final paper:*

1. Your final paper should be about **3,000 words** long.
2. Make sure to reference any authors that you cite, including the book, page number, etc. in a consistent form throughout the paper. And use quotation marks for any direct words you take from them.

**\*\*REMEMBER:** *This paper is an opportunity for you to engage a specific passage from one of the Old Testament prophetic books that coordinates with your prophetic justice paper from earlier in the course. It asks you to undertake a specific interpretive engagement with that passage.*

### **Format for the Paper**

1. Provide a one-paragraph abbreviated summary of your previous paper on a person/organization/movement that was your prophetic justice example.
2. State the scripture passage you chose and explain why you chose this specific biblical passage to go with the person/organization/movement you chose earlier as your example of prophetic justice. How does this passage provide a scriptural basis/support for that group and the work they do?
3. Note and discuss any significant *textual and translation issues* that arise from your comparison of different English translations. Be sure to discuss not only the differences, but *which of them are significant* for the possible meanings of the passage.
4. Explain the literary context of your passage. *Summarize the content* of the passages that come immediately before and immediately after your text.  
-Also be sure to discuss how your text functions in that literary context.
5. Provide the summaries of the discussions found in your three chosen biblical commentaries.  
-\*The summary of each commentary should be detailed and should consist of at least two to three paragraphs for each commentary (be sure to provide page numbers for what you are citing and quotation marks if you directly use their words).
6. Discuss the major theological affirmations in the text (from Step 7 on the research guide)

**7. Don't omit this section!--> Drawing upon your work from Step 8 on the research guide, conclude your paper by discussing this question: "How does your passage and your interpretation of it speak to the vision and values of prophetic justice as articulated in the OT prophetic books."**