

Jeremiah

OT 762
Summer 2011

Houston Graduate School of Theology
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HGST MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Houston Graduate School of Theology is empowering spiritual leadership through the intellectual, spiritual and vocational development of men and women in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the Book of Jeremiah. Attention is given to the content, form, and style, and to the historical and literary context as well as to exegetical methods, interpretation, and application.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, the student should be able to:

1. Trace generally the history of the last days of the nation of Judah in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BC and the early exile in the sixth century, especially as it relates to Jeremiah;
2. Describe the basic critical questions related to the text and canonicity of the Jeremiah;
3. Explain the primary themes of the Book of Jeremiah, with details given for passages discussed in class;
4. Discuss with some detail recent scholarly work in the Books of Jeremiah, both generally and in detail for topics discussed in class and researched by the student; and
5. Apply the teachings of the Book of Jeremiah to the life of the 21st century church and personal Christian life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and class participation based on daily assignments (see policies below).
2. Readings from the textbooks and listed journal articles, as assigned in the schedule below. The journal article readings are available from ATLAS. **Reading assignments will be assessed by means of a question on the final exam.**
3. Exegetical Papers—Each student will produce two exegetical studies of texts from the Book of Jeremiah. These two papers may be a study of any section of the Book of Jeremiah. Each paper will be a minimum 1000 words and include a minimum of 5 sources beyond the course textbooks. Sources must include ATLAS or other scholarly journal articles. **The papers are due the day that the passage studied is discussed in class.** The student should consider the following matters, as relevant to the chosen text:
 - a. Historical background;
 - b. Poetic or literary forms;
 - c. Repetitive themes;
 - d. Important terms;
 - e. Theological motifs;

f. Old and New Testament intertextuality.

4. Theological Paper—Each student will write a minimum 1000 word paper evaluating one of the central theological motifs discussed by Walter Brueggemann in *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*. The student should compare or contrast Fretheim’s discussion of the same motif, as relevant. Include brief discussion of relevant biblical texts. The theological paper is due on Aug. 2, the final day of class.
5. Take Home Final Exam—The exam is due on August 10, one week after the final class period of the semester. Students should answer the final exam questions primarily from class discussions, textbooks, and assignments from the class. The use of outside resources is, of course, permitted. However, proper documentation of all sources utilized is expected. Classroom sources may be documented with last name parenthetically, but footnotes are required for further resources. Do not copy (i.e. “cut and paste”) from the class notes for the final exam. Students should consider this exam to be an academic project, utilizing correct academic writing style and avoiding plagiarism.

GRADING SYSTEM

Final grades will be calculating according to the following system.

Class Attendance/Participation	5%
Daily Reading	5%
Exegesis Papers	40% (20% each)
Theology Paper	20%
Final Exam	30%

POLICIES

1. Attendance is required at scheduled classes, and at the scheduled start time. Two excused absences will not affect the student’s grade, but more than this will affect the student’s class participation grade. The student could lose as much as a letter grade for excessive tardiness and absences.
2. Work is expected on the due date. With prior permission from the instructor, late work will receive a letter grade reduction until it is one week late, and a two-letter grade reduction until two weeks late. After two weeks, the assignment will not be accepted and a zero will be entered for the assignment.
3. Cell phones and pagers are distractions to class and should be avoided. The student should turn pagers and cell phones off, or to vibrate.
4. Incompletes:
In cases of extenuating circumstance, and at the discretion of the Instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments that are not completed before the end of the semester or term, subject to a half-letter grade or more reduction on the final grade (e.g., A to A-; B to B-). If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of “I” (Incomplete) and set an extension of time within which to complete the work that shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days from the end of the term. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline listed in the school calendar.

Additional extensions may be granted only by the Dean of the Faculty and only after a student has petitioned the Dean in writing. If the course work is not completed within the extended time allotment, the grade of “I” will be converted to the grade earned by the student up to that point. A failing grade, or “F,” will be counted as hours attempted in computing the grade point average.

5. Plagiarism - Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable and severe penalties will be applied to any student who chooses to do so.
- a. Plagiarism is defined as representing the work (written, thought, or conclusion) of another as your own. Any phrase longer than three words obtained from the work of another must be attributed to its original author. Please use proper citations and credit the original author when necessary. Internet plagiarism is rampant in some schools. As a seminary, HGST holds its students to the highest standard and expects them to avoid temptation. Please do not “Cut and Paste” portions of documents from the Internet into your paper without proper citation. Papers will be checked online for plagiarism.
 - b. If a portion of a paper is plagiarized from the work of another the student will receive a grade of zero (F) for the paper or assignment. Blatant plagiarism of large portions a paper/ assignment, or a second offence of plagiarism will result in failing the course and a conference with the Dean of the Faculty to determine if dismissal from HGST is warranted.
6. Library Usage—The student will find it necessary to utilize the following library facilities, in addition to the HGST library.

a. Fondren Library at Rice University is probably the best Houston library for your purposes. The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. For more information, please visit www.rice.edu/fondren.

The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is:

- First, search the online catalog (www.rice.edu/fondren) for available books;
- Second, fill out the appropriate form for each book (available in the HGST library), have the form signed by an authorized HGST library representative, and take with you to the Fondren Library;
- Third, retrieve the book(s) yourself at Fondren Library;
- Fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form(s) to the circulation desk at the Fondren Library to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST Library);
- Fifth, when you return your book(s) to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; and
- Sixth, return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records.

b. Lanier Theological Library is a new resource for scholarly theological research in the Houston area. The library is open to the public, Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm. The library is a research library with no circulation privileges. Nonetheless, students should consider Lanier Library to be a valuable research option. The catalog of Lanier Library is available online: <http://alexandria.lanierlibrary.net/#>.

c. Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary is the home of an extensive theological library. St Mary's Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive. For more information, please visit <http://beran.stthom.edu>. The Doherty Library on the main campus of University of St Thomas is also an option.

d. The Houston Public Library is conveniently located for HGST students. The Central Library (832-393-1313) is located at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. For more information, please visit www.hpl.lib.tx.us. The HPL, as well as the Harris County Public Library, can obtain almost any desired published source through interlibrary loan, usually at no cost to the patron.

e. Harris County Public Library. For more information on locations and hours, visit www.hcpl.net.

7. Notes for Writing Projects

All writing assignments should conform to Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition. This includes matters of style and format. The instructor required the use of footnotes for documentation. The student should number pages. According to Turabian, page numbers should be in the upper right hand corner, except on pages with major headings.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing:

- Avoid 1st or 2nd person references (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.
- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e. The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but avoidance of passive is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e. Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Dr. Pitts does not tolerate misspelled words. Failure to spellcheck will result in a letter-grade reduction on the grade for written assignments.
- All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.

GRADING SCALE

The following grading system will be used for this class, remembering that an “A” is a superior grade, a “B” an above average grade, and a “C” is quality, satisfactory work.

A = 94-100%

B = 86-93%

C = 78-85%

D = 70-77%

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. **English Old Testament**, preferably in a modern translation (ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV, NLT, JPS).
2. **Fretheim, Terence.** *Jeremiah*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002. ISBN 978-1573120722
3. **Walter Brueggemann.** *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN 0521606292

COURSE SCHEDULE

July 5	Introduction to Course Introduction to Jeremiah	<i>Fretheim 1-44;</i> <i>Brueggemann 1-42.</i>
July 7	Jeremiah 1:1-2:13; 3:6-4:4	<i>Fretheim</i> <i>Duke, "Jeremiah 1:4-18"(ATLAS)</i> <i>Thompson, "Jeremiah 1:1-10" (ATLAS)</i> <i>Yates, "Jeremiah's Message" (ATLAS)</i>
July 12	Jeremiah 17:1-13; 6:1-30	<i>Fretheim</i>
July 14	Jeremiah 7:1-8:3; 26:1-24; 23:9-40	<i>Fretheim</i>
July 19	Jeremiah 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18	<i>Fretheim</i> <i>Fretheim</i> <i>Holmgren, "The Elusive Presence"(ATLAS)</i> <i>Avioz, "Call for Revenge"(ATLAS)</i> <i>O'Connor, "Lamenting Back to Life" (ATLAS)</i>
July 21	Jeremiah 18:1-17; 19:1-20:6	<i>Fretheim</i>
July 26	Jeremiah 23:1-8; 24:1-10; 28-29; 30:12-17	<i>Fretheim</i> <i>Bartusch, "From Honor Challenge" (ATLAS)</i>
July 28	Jeremiah 30-33	<i>Fretheim</i> <i>O'Connor, "Rekindling Hope" (ATLAS)</i>
Aug. 2	**Theology Papers Due—Student Discussions** Conclusions Discussion of Brueggemann	<i>O'Connor, "Ideal Survivor" (ATLAS)</i>
Aug 10	Take Home Final Exams due	

Supplemental Reading from ATLAS

- Avioz, Michael. "The Call for Revenge in Jeremiah's complaints (Jer xi-xx)." *Vetus testamentum* 55, no 4 (2005): 429-438.
- Bartusch, Mark W. "From Honor Challenge to False Prophecy: rereading Jeremiah 28's Story of Prophetic Conflict in Light of Social-science Models." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36 no 6 (D 2009): 455-463.
- Duke, William. "Jeremiah 1:4-18," *Interpretation* 59, no 2 (Apr 2005): 184-186.
- Holmgren, Fredrick Carlson. "The Elusive Presence: Jeremiah 20:4-11." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 no 5 (Oct 2006): 366-371.
- O'Connor, Kathleen M. "Jeremiah as Ideal Survivor." *Journal for Preachers* 28, no 2 (Lent 2005): 19-24.
- "Lamenting Back to Life." *Interpretation* 62 no 1 (Ja 2008): 34-47.
- "Rekindling Hope, Igniting Hope." *Journal for Preachers* 30, no 2 (Lent 2007): 30-34.
- Thompson, Philip E. "Jeremiah 1:1-10." *Interpretation*, 62 no 1 (Ja 2008): 66-68.
- Yates, Gary E. "Jeremiah's message of judgment and hope for God's unfaithful 'wife.'" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 no 666 (Ap-Je 2010): 144-165.

Final Exam—Take Home
The Book of Jeremiah
Summer, 2011

1. I have read _____% of the required reading for the course.
2. Discuss the historical background of the prophet Jeremiah. (When did he live and minister? Who were the kings and leaders? What important historical events occurred and how did Jeremiah relate to those events?) [20 points]
3. Describe the difficulties found in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah, including some discussion of the origin of the text and possible explanations for the difficulties in the book. Include the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls relating to the text of the Book of Jeremiah. [10 points]
4. What was Jeremiah's opinion regarding the religion and religious activities of Judah and Jerusalem? Be specific, with examples from the Book of Jeremiah. [10 points]
5. Why did Dr. Pitts suggest that Jeremiah 31:28 is a theologically central verse to the Book of Jeremiah? [10 points]
6. What was Jeremiah's attitude toward Babylon and the exile? Include a brief discussion of Jeremiah 29, including why Dr. Pitts considers Jer. 29:11 to be "the most misused verse in the Old Testament." [10 points]
7. Briefly describe 3 of Jeremiah's "sign-acts" and their meanings. [10 points]
8. Explain the meaning and the importance of the "New Covenant" passage in Jer. 31:31-34, including the text's interpretation in light of the New Testament. Include some discussion of the "New Heart" passage in Ezekiel 11:18-21 & 36:24-36. [10 points]
9. If someone at your church asked you, "What is the central message of Jeremiah?," what would you tell them, along with verse(s) to support your opinion? [10 points]
10. How is the message of Jeremiah relevant for you and the people in your life, church, and world? [10 points]