

Houston Graduate School of Theology

OT 761 The Book of Isaiah

Spring 2012,

Friday, 5:30-9:00, Saturdays, 8:30-3:00, Jan. 27-28, Feb. 24-25, March 23-24, April 20-27

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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.

I. Course Description

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

II. Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A.** Summarize some of the basic interpretive issues in the Book of Isaiah, such as authorship, composition, structure, and theological importance, as discovered in the course of class discussions, exegesis, and research. This outcome will be measure through exegesis assignments, research paper, and final exam.
- B.** Utilizing adequate hermeneutical techniques, interpret selected texts of Isaiah in light of intertextual relationships, history of research, linguistic features, and theological teaching. This outcome will be measured through exegesis assignments.
- C.** Trace the historical background of the Book of Isaiah, including the issue of multiple contexts. This outcome will be assessed through exegesis papers and final exam.
- D.** Explain in detail one major interpretive issue relating to the Book of Isaiah. This outcome will be assessed through the research paper.
- E.** Describe on at least a cursory level the use of the Book of Isaiah in the New Testament. This outcome will be assessed through the final exam.

III. Required Texts

Oswalt, John N. *Isaiah*. NIV Application Commentary. Terry Muck, et al, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. ISBN 0310206138.

———. *Isaiah*. Two Vols. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986, 1998. 978-0802825292 & 978-0802825346

English Bible, preferably from a modern translation (ESV, NIV, NASB, NRSV, NLT, JPS).

IV. Course Requirements

- A. Attendance and class participation based on daily assignments (see policies below). The 5% attendance grade will be scored in this manner:
- Absent 0-2 hours—100%
 - Absent 2-4 hours—75%
 - Absent 4-6 hours—50%
 - Absent 6-8 hours—25%
 - Absent 8-10 hours—0%
 - Absent more than 10 hours—course failure
- B. Readings from Bible and textbooks as assigned in the schedule below. Required reading will be assessed by means of a question on the final day of class. On many days, a section of the required reading will be emphasized. That section is highlighted in the course schedule below and will correspond generally to the required reading pages in Oswalt. The student should also access and print Dr. Pitts' lecture notes available on his personal page on the HGST website.
- C. Exegesis Papers—The student will produce two exegesis papers. The student will produce an exegetical study of a passage from each major section of the Book of Isaiah. The passage may be as few as five verses and probably should not include more than about 15 verses. The scripture studied should be from a section included in the schedule below. The paper will be 6-10 pages long and include a variety of sources. The use of academic journal articles is required. The paper should include the following elements:
- Introduction to the text, that may include historical background, form-critical discussion, and the major theme
 - Exegesis of the biblical text, including grammatical, lexical, theological, text-critical, and historical study, as necessary
 - Relevant intertextual studies, particularly reviewing the New Testament usage of the text, as necessary
 - Conclusion, which should tie all parts of the paper into a coherent whole
1. Isaiah 1-39 Exegesis Paper. The student may choose a biblical text that is assigned for study on either Jan. 27-28 or Feb. 24-25. The paper is due on Friday, Feb. 24.
 2. Isaiah 40-55 Exegesis Paper. The student may choose a biblical text that is assigned for study on Mar. 23-24. The paper is due on Friday, Mar. 23.
- D. Research Project—The student may choose one of the following based upon the student's study of the Book of Isaiah. The research project will consist of two parts: paper and presentation. Possible topics are listed at the end of the syllabus. The paper is due on Friday, April 20.
1. The research paper should be a minimum of 3000 words (approximately 12 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font), not including bibliography, and include a minimum of 20 sources beyond the textbook and the Bible. (If the student chooses to meet only the minimum requirements, he or she should not expect the maximum grade.)

The goal of a research paper is that the student study relevant works in the field related to the topic, evaluate the material read, and draw critical conclusions. This requires both research and critical thinking. The student should choose a relevant topic, develop a research thesis, question, or problem, research the topic thoroughly, and produce a well-designed and written paper. Remember that this is a scholarly research paper, not a sermon. Sources should include biblical background works, commentaries, O.T. introductions and theologies, theological and historical texts, relevant monographs, and journal articles. The student should follow the writing requirements in the syllabus.

The paper should be a well-reasoned research project that includes an introduction with a clear thesis statement, a well-organized body with transitions between sections, and a conclusion that ties together the research into a coherent whole.

2. Presentation—The student will present his or her research during the last class period of the semester. The presentation should be at least 20-30 minutes. The student is encouraged to utilize audio-visuals or other means of making the presentation creative. The student should present the purpose of the research, the process of research, and the conclusions reached.

V. Grading Scale

Final grades will be calculating according to the following system.

Attendance/Class Participation	5%
Reading	5%
1-39 Exegesis	20%
40-66 Exegesis	20%
Research Paper	25%
Research presentation	5%
Final Exam	20%

VI. Policies

- A. Regular attendance and submission of assignments on due dates in syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. Attendance is required at scheduled classes and at the scheduled start time (see above for scoring of attendance grade). Missing more than ten hours of class time will result in failure of the course.
- B. Work is expected on the due date. Any paper submitted on the due date at the time of class should expect a reduction of one letter-grade. After one-week, the reduction will become two letter-grades. Only by special permission will any paper be received more than two weeks past the due date.
- C. Cell phones provide distractions to class. The student should turn cell phones to silence or vibrate and should only respond to calls during breaks.
- D. *Incompletes*
In cases of extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of the instructor, a student may request and apply for an extension on all required assignments, which are not completed by the end of the semester or term, subject to a 5-point grade reduction on the

final grade of each assignment. If an extension is granted, the instructor will record a grade of “I” (Incomplete) and set an extension of time, not to exceed thirty calendar days from the end of the class, within which to complete the work. Additional extensions may be granted only by the Academic Dean or Associate Dean 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. The student is responsible to ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted to the registrar’s office by the deadline published in the school calendar.

E. *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another person as one’s own without giving proper credit for the use of the information. Students must not quote books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below.

1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
 - The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean.
 - For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment.
 - For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Academic Dean.
3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Academic Dean. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President’s decision will be final.

F. *Library Usage*

A student’s ability to get the most out of library resources will enhance the possibility of earning a high grade in this class. Therefore, students should consider using, in addition to the HGST library, one or more of the following libraries.

1. *Houston Public Library*— Any resident of Texas can obtain a free Houston Public Library card. Library cardholders have access to all of the books in the library system as well as the use of free interlibrary loans, meaning that HPL cardholders can borrow almost any book available. Cardholders can use the library’s website, www.houstonlibrary.org, to search the catalog and manage interlibrary loans. The website also contains links to WorldCat and other online databases that will enhance your research. The HPL location that is closest to HGST, the Collier Regional Branch (832-393-1740), is located at 6200 Pinemont, which is less than three miles from

- campus. A better option would be the newly expanded and renovated Central Library (832-393-1313), which is located downtown at 500 McKinney. In addition, HPL has many other locations. The HGST library can give you an application for an HPL library card, or you can print the application form from their website.
2. *Fondren Library at Rice University*— The Fondren Library (713-348-5113) is located at 6100 Main. Please visit www.rice.edu/fondren for more information. The procedure for borrowing books at the Fondren Library is, first, go to the online catalog [www.rice.edu/fondren] to search for available books; second, go to the HGST library and fill out a form, signed by HGST library personnel, to take with you to the Fondren Library for each book; third, retrieve the book(s) yourself; fourth, take the book(s) and the signed form to the circulation desk to complete checkout (return the yellow copy to the HGST library; when the book(s) are returned to the Fondren Library, they will indicate so on the pink and gold copies; return the pink copy to the HGST Library and keep the gold copy for your records).
 3. Lanier Theological Library is a new resource for scholarly theological research in the Houston area. The library is open to the public, Monday, Wednesday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, and Tuesday, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM. 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/#>.
 4. *Cardinal Beran Library at St Mary's Seminary*—the home of an extensive theological library, St Mary's Seminary (713-686-4345) is located at 9845 Memorial Drive, only 4.6 miles from HGST. 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.
 5. *Library of the Presbytery of the New Covenant* – as an HGST student you have borrowing privileges at this library located at 1110 Lovett Blvd, Houston. To search their online catalog, go to <http://www.pbyofnewcovenant.org/cgi-bin/rqm/rqm.cgi>.
 6. Other options include Harris County Public Library (www.hcpl.net) and the libraries at the University of Houston and Houston Baptist University.

VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

- E. 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. Counseling students should pay particular attention to the *Manual* guidelines on submission of academic papers.
- F. The instructor requires 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 for the first page of the paper (not counting the title page). Margins should be one inch on all four sides, except where major headings require a two-inch top margin.
- G. The student should utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.
- H. Critical or formal writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The

instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly. Failure to do so will be penalized.

1. 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.
2. Never use contractions.
3. 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 limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
4. 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.
5. Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Dr. Pitts does not tolerate misspelled words. Failure to spellcheck will result in a substantive reduction on the grade for written assignments.
6. Grammar check works as well!
7. All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
8. Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

VIII. Class and Reading Schedule

**Due Dates for Assignments are Marked by Asterisks*

Selected readings should be completed prior to class discussion on the topic

Friday, Jan. 27

Introduction to Isaiah Studies

Isaiah 1 (**1:1-20**)

Saturday, Jan. 28

Isaiah 2-6 (**2:1-5, 3:8-9, 4:2-6, 5:1-17, 6:1-13**)

Friday, Feb. 24

****Exegesis Assignment 1: Isaiah 1-39 due**

Isaiah 7-8

Saturday, Feb. 25

Isaiah 9-12 (**9:1-7, 10:1-23, 11:1-11, 12:1-6**)

Isaiah 13-39 (**14:1-17, 24:1-13, 27:1, 29:13-16, 36-37, 39:1-8**)

Friday, Mar. 23

****Exegesis Assignment 2: Isaiah 40-55 due**

Isaiah 40

Saturday, Mar. 24

Isaiah 41-48 (**41:8-16; 42:1-9, 18-20; 43:14-21; 44:1-7; 45:1-7; 46:1-10; 48:20-22**)

Isaiah 49-55 (**49:1-16, 52:7-53:12, 55:1-11**)

Friday, Apr. 20

Isaiah 56, 58 (**56:1-8, 58:1-9**)

****Major Research Project Due**

Saturday, Apr. 21

Isaiah 59-66 (**59:1-4; 61:1-7; 65:1-15; 66:1-4, 22-24**)

Paper Presentations

Friday, May 11 (Graduates, Friday, May 4)

****Take-home Final Exam due by email**

The professor of record reserves the right to adjust classroom topics as the course develops.

IX. Research Paper possible topics

- Isaiah and His Times (or The Historical Background of Isaiah's Ministry)
- Isaiah and Ahaz
- Isaiah and Hezekiah
- Isaiah and Foreign Policy
- The Relationship of Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66
- Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah
- Isaiah's Eschatology
- The Impact of Isaiah 9 & 11 on Christology
- How Does Jesus Fulfill the Prophecies of Isaiah 9 & 11?
- Isaiah 7:14 and the New Testament and Christianity
- Justice and Righteousness as an Isaianic Ideal
- Covenant in Isaiah's Theology
- The Role of the Cult (i.e. Worship Ritual) in Isaiah's Theology
- The Role of the Temple in Isaiah's Theology
- The Role of the Priesthood in Isaiah's Theology
- The Role of Worship in Isaiah's Theology
- Idols & Idolatry in Isaiah's Preaching
- Metaphors/Images in Isaiah's Preaching (i.e. Light, Pot/potter, Vineyard, Word)
- The Role of the Spirit of God in Isaiah's Theology
- The Inviolability of Jerusalem (Temple) in Isaiah's Preaching
- Isaiah's Theology of God (i.e. "Holy One" & "Mighty One")
- Salvation in Isaiah's Preaching
- The Exile in Isaiah's Theology
- Exodus Theology in Isaiah 40-55
- Missional Theology in Isaiah
- Creation in Isaiah
- Isaiah's Call Narrative and the Call to Christian Service
- The Role of Worship in Isaiah's Preaching
- Isaiah 6 and Christian Worship
- Isaiah's Commission (Is. 6) and His Mission
- The Suffering Servant in Christian and Jewish Interpretation
(or "Who Was the Suffering Servant?")
- The Suffering Servant in the New Testament
- The Use of Isaiah in the Gospels (or one of the gospels)
- The Apostle Paul's Use of Isaiah
- Jesus' Use of Isaiah
- Isaiah and the Hermeneutics of the Early Church (or Reformation)
- Isaiah and the Nations

X. Take Home Final Exam

- 1. I have read _____% of the required reading for this course.**
- 2. Describe the historical situation of the 8th century prophet Isaiah, including historical issues that he addressed. Include specific people, places, and experiences from the biblical text as needed. (20 points)**
- 3. Explain in some detail the issues relating to the authorship of the Book of Isaiah. This should include a discussion of the reasons most scholars divide the book into at least two portions, with specific details from the book, especially in regard to the historical setting of Is. 40-55. (20 points)**
- 4. Explain Is. 6 as a text of worship. What are the characteristics of worship found in this chapter? Contrast this experience of worship with the criticisms of Judah's worship practices found elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah. (10 points)**
- 5. Explain how Is. 7 functions as both contextual prophecy (i.e., 8th century) and messianic prophecy. (10 points)**
- 6. How has the suffering servant passage in Isaiah been interpreted? Who could the servant be? What direct connections exist between this text and the New Testament? Be specific. (20 points)**
- 7. What do you believe is the most important theological teaching in the Book of Isaiah? Why? (10 points)**
- 8. In what ways is the Book of Isaiah applicable to contemporary society and the church? (10 points)**

XI. Bibliography

- Baltzer, K. *Isaiah 40-55*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 1-39, Isaiah 40-55, Isaiah 56-66*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 2000, 2003, 2003.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66*. Westminster John Knox, 1998.
- Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- . *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Goldingay, John, and David Payne. *A critical and exegetical commentary on Isaiah 40-55*. International Critical Commentary. New York : T&T Clark, 2005.
- . *The message of Isaiah 40-55: a literary-theological commentary*. New York : T&T Clark, 2005.
- Hanson, P. D. *Isaiah 40-66*. Interpretation. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Kaiser, Otto. *Isaiah 1-39*. 2 vols. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983, 1974.
- Knight, George A. F. *Servant theology: a commentary on the book of Isaiah 40-55*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- McKenzie, John. *Second Isaiah*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1968.
- McKinion, Steven A., ed. *Isaiah 1-39*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament, Vol. 10. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2003.
- Motyer, J. Alec. *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993.
- Moyise, Steve, and Maarten J. J. Menken, ed. *Isaiah in the New Testament*. New York: T&T Clark, 2006.
- North, Christopher R. *Isaiah 40-55: Introduction and Commentary*. The Torch Bible Commentaries Series. London: SCM, 1956.
- Oswalt, John D. W. *The Book of Isaiah*. 2 volumes. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Eerdmans, 1986, 1998.
- . *Isaiah*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

- Sawyer, John F. A. *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
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- _____. "Isaiah 40-66." *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VI, 307-552. Ed. by L. Keck, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.
- Skinner, John, ed. *Isaiah: Chapters I-XXXIX, Chapters XL-LXVI*. Cambridge Bible for Schools & Colleges. London: Cambridge University Press, 1896, 1898.
- Smith, G. V. *Isaiah 1-39*. New American Commentary. Vol. 15A. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007.
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- Tucker, Gene M. "Isaiah 1-39." *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VI, 25-306. Ed. L. Keck, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.
- Watts, John D.W. *Isaiah*. 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word Books, 1985, 1987.
- Webb, Barry G. *The Message of Isaiah*. Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1996.
- Westermann, Claus. *Isaiah 40-66*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969. A standard critical commentary.
- Wildberger, Hans. *Isaiah 1-12, Isaiah 13-27*. Continental Commentary. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991, 1997.
- Williamson, H. G. M. *Isaiah 1-5*. ICC. London: T. & T. Clark, 2006.
- Young, Edward J. *The Book of Isaiah*. 3 vols. (reprint of 1965-1972 eds.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC		
Criterion	Points Possible	Points Earned
Content/Development		
All key elements of the assignment are covered in a substantive way.	50	
Content is comprehensive, accurate, and/or persuasive.		
Major points are stated clearly and are supported by professional literature or logic.		
Meaningful use of source material and analytical reasoning to elaborate upon the topic or theme.		
Research is adequate and timely for the topic.		
The context and purpose of the writing is clear.		
Organization		
The introduction provides sufficient background on the topic and previews major points.	20	
Ideas flow in a logical sequence.		
The structure of the paper is clear and easy to follow.		
The paper's organization emphasizes the central theme or purpose.		
Paragraph transitions are present, logical, and direct the flow of thought throughout the paper.		
The conclusion logically derives from the paper's ideas.		
The conclusion reviews the major points toward the appropriate audience.		
Format		
The paper includes Title page, footnotes, and bibliography.	10	
The paper is laid out effectively and uses reader-friendly aids (e.g., section summaries, appendices, etc.) when appropriate.		
The bibliography page(s) contains adequate scholarly citations.		
The paper follows Turabian format guidelines.		
The paper is written in 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced and 1" margins.		
The work is original, giving credit to all borrowed ideas.		
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling		
Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed.	10	
Spelling is correct.		
Readability/Style		
Sentences are complete, clear, and concise.	10	
Sentences are well-constructed with consistently strong and varied structure.		
Sentence transitions are present and direct the flow of thought.		
Words used are precise and unambiguous.		
Total Points	100	