RHS 406  Religious heritage Scripture: Israel’s Prophets

Rationale for the course

Do Amos and Isaiah still speak to us today? How can the biblical prophets been preached in today’s world? And when and how should (Lutheran) pastors preach prophetically? This course reflects on judgment prophecy, salvation prophecy, on the poetry and theology of Israel’s prophets. It introduces to the diversity and interpretation of Israel’s prophetic heritage and considers how prophetic texts can be preached from a Christian perspective. Emphasis will be on lectionary texts. The course introduces to traditional interpretations and discusses contextual approaches of the prophets: genderqueer, feminist, womanist, mujerista, African American, Latinx, post-holocaust.

This course seeks to enable students to creatively engage in the prophetic texts in today’s pluralistic world in ways that are culturally sensitive. Participants will reflect on: How can we preach prophetic texts today and what does it mean to be a prophetic church? We will look at the models of preaching prophetic texts in parish contexts and beyond. The goal of this course is to enable participants to effectively communicate and embody the witness of scripture and enables them to communicate the prophets’ messages as part of the Christian heritage in ways that are faithful to scripture, ecumenically sensitive and intellectually defensible.

Outcomes

By the end of the semester students will be able to

- discuss the methodology of the interpretation of prophetic texts.
- apply the methodological tools of historical and contextual exegesis of prophetic texts.
- describe themes and style of the prophetic books.
- discuss social reality in ancient Israel.
- explain prophetic identity in ancient Israel.
- analyse the meaning of prophetic texts for today.
- juxtapose contemporary social questions to the social realities in Ancient Israel.
- distinguish various models of preaching the prophets in antiquity, during the reformation, in contemporary contextual approaches.
- discuss contextual translations and approaches to prophetic literature: e.g. feminist/gender, post-holocaust, liberation theology readings.
- create strategies for preaching prophets.

Strategies for Learning

- Attendance.
- Reading the required biblical texts and assigned readings.
- Participation in classroom discussions.
- Present on one topic in class.
- Present and discuss one sermon in class.
• Write a 15-20 page paper (7,000 – 8,000 words) with an exegesis of a prophetic text and a prophetic sermon.

Assessment

• Thoughtful oral feedback during classroom discussions, small group work, presentations.
• Oral or written evaluation of the style, the structure, the poetics of the sermons.
• Written evaluation of the descriptive accuracy of the exegetical parts of the paper, including advice on bibliography.
• Individual academic mentoring for students with particular interests.

Content

• Introduction to Prophecy as a form of divinatory technique in Israel.
• Selected examples from judgment prophecy of the “classical” prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and from the former prophets (Judges-2Kings).
• Selected examples from the prophets of salvation in Isaiah 40-55 and others.
• The nature of prophecy.
• Prophetic voices in modern theology and prophecy today: Strategies for preaching judgment and salvation prophecy.
• Contemporary genderqueer, feminist, womanist, mujerista, African American, Latinx, post-holocaust perspectives on prophets.
• Protestant/Lutheran hermeneutics of the prophets.
• Preaching and teaching the prophets for various audiences.

Texts required:
Any modern translation of the bible, such as the NRSV, New American Bible, New International Version, or Tanakh (Jewish Publication Society); The Original African American Study Bible.

Hebrew Bible (if applicable): Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS; Accordance or Bible Works (recommended)

Textbook:
TBD.

Preliminary Bibliography (available in JKM library):


