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 on biblical theology of the 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. 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. This course seeks to enable participants to effectively communicate and embody the witness of scripture and to communicate the prophets’ messages as part of the Christian heritage. Participants are encouraged to focus on lectionary pericopes.

Content

• “Thus says the LORD”: The prophetic ministry from political counsellor to divinatory expert.
• “The cup of wrath”: God’s anger and judgment in the words of the prophets from Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, to Jeremiah and Jonah.
• “O thou who tellest good tidings of Zion”: Salvation prophecy.
• “I am not a prophet...”: The nature of prophetic ministry.
• “I have a dream...” Taking the prophets in the pulpit: Strategies for preaching.
• “There is neither male nor female in Christ.” - Genderqueer, feminist, womanist, mujerista, African American, LatinX, post-holocaust perspectives on prophets.
• “Isaiah, Holy Prophet, It befell...” - Protestant/Lutheran hermeneutics for the prophets.
• “Speaking Truth in Love” – Responsibly preaching and teaching prophets for various audiences.

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.
• Write and discuss one sermon in class.
• Write a 15-20 page paper (6,000 – 7,000 words) with an exegesis of a prophetic text.

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 mentoring for students with particular interests.

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)

Preliminary Bibliography (available in JKM library):


