LMN 362

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

Student’s Guide

PROGRAM: ACHIEVE LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY

SEMESTER: 2

COURSE PREPARED BY: Owen Dickens, Ph.D.

DATE: March 10, 2008

Copyright 2009 by Asbury College

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or by any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of Asbury College unless such copying is expressly permitted by federal copyright law.

Address inquiries to: Copyright Permission
Provost
Asbury College
One Macklem Drive
Wilmore, KY 40390
ASBURY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Asbury College, as a Christian Liberal Arts College in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, is to equip men and women, through a commitment to academic excellence and spiritual vitality, for a lifetime of learning, leadership and service to the professions, society, the family and the Church, thereby preparing them to engage their cultures and advance the cause of Christ around the world.

ACHIEVE PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ACHIEVE Program is to provide a quality academic program, within a Christian context, that equips nontraditional students to achieve professional excellence in their chosen field. The ACHIEVE Program prepares students for leadership and service to others, cultivates attitudes of lifelong learning, and fosters spiritual development.
# LMN 360 OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Letter from Course Author</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instructor’s Syllabus</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Class Overviews</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Course Final</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Devotions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Session 5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

This course is designed as an undergraduate level introduction to the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Students preparing for a variety of ministries in the church as well as for further theological education will find this study especially rewarding. The course should not, however, be considered a substitute for seminary level work.

As with all courses in the ACHIEVE program, there are only 20 hours of class interaction. Much of the learning, therefore, must occur outside the classroom with diligent attention to the required readings and written assignments. Class time will focus on directed group discussion and the instructor’s developing various topics in depth and sharing insights. Group interaction becomes much more lively and beneficial when each student comes prepared and feels comfortable participating in the discussion.

The books of the prophets constitute one of the largest sections of the Old Testament. Chronologically, the classical or writing prophets stretch across more than four centuries of Old Testament history, from the eighth century B.C. to the end of the Old Testament period. Earlier pre-classical prophetic figures, such as Moses, Samuel, and Elijah, ministered from the beginning of the Israelite nation through the period of the monarchy.

In each prophetic book God presents Israel with a distinctive message concerning a wide range of issues. Often the prophets were sent to announce God’s coming judgment on the Israelites because of their failure to keep the covenant. The prophets often point out the Israelites’ religious sins, but they also focus upon Israel’s abuse of the poor and powerless. At other times the prophets brought messages of hope and assurance, proclaiming that God would deliver them from their enemies and restore them to lives of peace and security. There are messages that relate directly to the Israelite’s contemporary situation in the ancient world, and there are messages that relate to the distant future.

The books of the prophets contain many different types of literature. The prophets are primarily written in poetry and therefore bear similarities to other poetic literature. There are hymns praising God, oracles of judgment, salvation oracles, prophecies of a coming Messiah, and penetrating allegories, just to name a few. Most of the prophets were masters of the Hebrew language, expressing their messages in ways that were striking and memorable to both their ancient audience and to believers across the ages. This course will survey many of these marvelous passages.

Because the prophetic literature is so vast and diverse, a course like this cannot hope to cover every prophet in any comprehensive way. Therefore, the course will examine important representative passages from the Major and Minor Prophets that exemplify the primary characteristics of prophetic literature. The hope is that after studying these prophets, students will be better equipped to study the other prophets on their own and in group settings throughout their lives and ministries.
It is important to keep in perspective the role the Old Testament prophetic literature plays in the overall scope of the Holy Scriptures. Christians often read the prophets only with the goal of finding proof-texts to prove that Jesus is the Messiah or possibly to support a particular view of the end times. Although this approach is not entirely inappropriate, it is unfortunate because it misses the tremendous resources the prophets give us to enrich and expand our Christian lives. The prophets tell and show us a great deal about the very nature and character of God. They help us understand his purpose for creating the universe and humanity; they enable us more fully to comprehend his principles of justice and judgment on the one hand, and his mercy and forgiveness on the other. In some ways the prophets open to us a window on the very heart of God.

In light of this, this course will endeavor to survey the breadth of prophetic literature, including both the passages revered by Christians across the centuries and those parts scarcely read by most Christians. The hope is that this will enable us more completely to know God and live our lives in relation to him and the world he has created.
Dear student,

The study of the Bible is one of the great privileges we enjoy as Christians. Today we have unparalleled access to the Bible and we possess many tools for its study. We enjoy many different translations of the Bible, study Bibles, countless commentaries, web sites devoted to biblical studies, computer-based study tools, and many other resources. It really is almost an embarrassment of riches. But at the same time we must be aware of a subtle danger these riches present to us: Too often we spend our time reading about the Bible rather than reading the Bible itself. My first request of you is that you don’t fall into this trap. In addition to completing the textbook readings and assignments, please take time to read the biblical texts carefully and prayerfully, asking God to open your heart and your mind to his eternal message.

I have been teaching the Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew for 27 years at the college level. Although most of my teaching has been done at the undergraduate level, I have had the privilege to teach graduate students and also to teach outside the United States. As many teachers have said before me, I have learned far more from my students than I can possibly have taught them. I say this to acknowledge that learning is both cooperative and reciprocal; you will be my teacher just as I will endeavor to teach you. I value your contribution to the class and our communal effort to study the Bible.

My graduate education was done at Asbury Theological Seminary and at Brandeis University. Because Brandeis is a Jewish university, I have had the opportunity to study the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible as Jews usually call it) from a somewhat different perspective than many Christians. One of the textbooks we will use for this class was written by a Jewish author. Even though Abraham Heschel did not accept Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, nevertheless he has a great deal to add to our understanding of the prophets. I hope that this perspective, alongside more traditional Christian perspectives, will be helpful to you in your journey through the Scriptures.

Above everything else, I encourage you to ask questions of the Bible and also allow the Bible to ask questions of you. God bless you as you study the Bible in this course and throughout your life.

Owen Dickens, Ph.D.
Professor of Bible and Theology
Asbury College
Wilmore, Kentucky
March 5, 2009
COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE NUMBER:  LMN 362

COURSE TITLE:  Old Testament Prophets

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A study of the prophetic books, Isaiah to Malachi, including the chronology of the prophets with special attention given to the religious, social, political and apocalyptic messages of the prophets.

INSTRUCTOR:  Owen Dickens, Ph.D.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Telephone:  859-858-3511 ext. 2217  
Email:  owen.dickens@asbury.edu  
Office:  Reasoner 110 D

OFFICE HOURS:  MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m.  
TR  2:00-3:00 p.m.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS:

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the phenomenon of biblical prophecy in its ancient Near Eastern context.

2. To demonstrate how understanding the historical, political, and social situation in Israel and the ancient Near East is essential for interpreting the message of the prophets.

3. To survey the contents and primary themes of each of the classical prophets.

4. To examine the theological emphases of classical prophetic thought from the time of its inception through the end of the Old Testament canon.

5. To analyze how the authors of the New Testament appropriated the Old Testament prophets in their presentation of the Christian Gospel.

6. To develop a theological hermeneutic that makes appropriate use of the Old Testament prophets for contemporary Christian life and ministry.

COURSE GOALS:

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

1. Describe the historical setting of the classical prophets from the eighth century through the fifth century.

2. Define the basic biblical terms for “prophet,” including nabi’, ‘ish ha’elohim, ro’eh, and hozeh.

3. Discuss and define the foundational principles of Biblical Hebrew poetry.

4. Explain five characteristics of biblical prophets and prophecy.

5. Present a basic chronology of the classical prophets.

6. Describe social and political background of the book of Amos.

7. Discuss the theological message of the book of Amos.

8. Identify the changing historical situation during the ministry of Hosea.

9. Articulate the role of Hosea’s marriage as a theological symbol central to the prophet’s message.


11. Discuss the source-critical issue of the multiple authorship of Isaiah.
12. Describe the literary and theological differences between Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66.

13. Identify and discuss the Messianic hope in the book of Isaiah.

14. Discuss the theological message of Micah.

15. Identify the theological message of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.


17. Articulate the contribution of Jeremiah to biblical theology.

18. Discuss the message of hope and restoration presented in the book of Ezekiel.

19. Describe the setting and message of Obadiah and Joel.


21. Discuss the historical setting and theological message of Haggai and Zechariah.

22. Explain the “disputation” style of the book of Malachi.

23. Identify the characteristics of apocalyptic literature as exemplified in the book of Daniel.

24. Describe the theological message of Daniel.

ATTENDANCE: Students are required to attend all class sessions. A student is considered tardy if arriving more than one half hour late for class or if leaving more than one half hour before the end of class. Such tardy or early class departure is considered a one-third absence. Three times of such tardiness/early departure will equal one class absence. More than one class absence in a course requires an “F” grade regardless of circumstances. The student is responsible to formally withdraw from a course through the Registrar’s Office. There are no exceptions to the absence policy. The ACHIEVE Program Director is not authorized to make exceptions.

MISSED AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Students are responsible for contacting an instructor regarding missed and late assignments. This arrangement should be made prior to the missed class when possible, or as soon as possible thereafter. If a student misses a class due to extenuating circumstances, the student must seek to arrange an alternative assignment with the instructor that will take a minimum of four hours to complete for the class participation grade for that missed class session. If no assignment is given or completed, the portion of the grade for class participation will be deducted.
Any assignment turned in later than the due date will incur a grade reduction for that assignment, usually a letter grade cut. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed and late assignments. Students are responsible to deliver to the instructor all required work. The ACHIEVE Program Office is not responsible for arranging delivery of assignments to an instructor for a student.

CHILDREN IN CLASSROOMS: Due to various disruptions and distractions (whether real or potential) associated with the presence of children in the classroom setting, no minor children will be permitted to accompany either faculty or students into ACHIEVE classes.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic honesty is expected. Scholastic dishonesty is a serious violation of academic standards and biblical teachings. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, submitting work completed by someone else, submitted essentially the same paper/project in more than one course without prior consent of instructor, acts which violate the rights of other students from completing their academic assignments (e.g., deliberate withholding of necessary academic material in a group project).

SOURCE CITATIONS: Sources used in course work must be cited appropriately. The citation system for the ACHIEVE Program is the American Psychological Association (APA) citation method.

COURSE GRADE:  
A=Excellent; B=Good; C=Average; D=Passing; F=Failure
The Asbury College Bulletin spells out the further division of grading into + and – and their numerical point values.

I=Incomplete grades may be granted by the Associate Academic Dean only in extenuating circumstances. When an Incomplete grade is granted, course work must be completed by the 5th week after the last class of the course, at which time a permanent grade will be recorded. Failure to submit the incomplete work by the deadline will result in a grade of ‘F’ being recorded. A student who requests an incomplete must contact the instructor for approval and then submit the approved request through the Director, ACHIEVE Program, to forward to the Associate Academic Dean for final approval.

INFORMATION: Students should also consult the Asbury College Bulletin and ACHIEVE Program Student Handbook for other important information.
REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PERCENTAGES:

**Weekly Homework Assignments:** 50% of term grade. Weekly assignments include required reading and written responses to related questions. These five reading/written assignments will together comprise half of your grade for the course. Each assignment (including that for Week 1) is turned in to the instructor at the beginning of each class session. Make sure your work is neatly and clearly presented in computer printed form. Use a 12-point, easy-to-read font. Place your name, course name, and instructor’s name at the top of the first page together with the session number (Week 1, Week 2, etc.). Your essay-type answers (may be single spaced) should reflect the correct question numbers respectively (see further instructions for individual class sessions below).

- Session 1 – Reading/homework: 10% of grade
- Session 2 – Reading/homework: 10% of grade
- Session 3 – Reading/homework: 10% of grade
- Session 4 – Reading/homework: 10% of grade
- Session 5 – Reading/homework: 10% of grade

**Final exam:** 30% of term grade [3 four-page essays, each counting 10%—see page 22 below]. The final exam essays are due no later than the first session of the next course in your program sequence. The instructor will evaluate the essays and return them to you graded.

**Class participation:** 10% of term grade. Class participation assessment will include promptness in attendance, alertness during class, and quality of contribution to class discussion. Questions and comments in class (always with kindness and respect for others) should reflect conscientious reading and openness to learn.

**Journal:** 10% of term grade. Each student must keep a journal with entries each week giving personal interaction with what he/she is learning in the course. Label your entries Week 1, Week 2, etc. This journal is not to be a summary of class material but an expression of your thoughts/reflections/questions/observations/new insights/incentive for deeper probing, etc. Show the instructor that you are thinking about some of the issues that have arisen in your “journey” through the Old Testament. You don’t need to draw specific conclusions. At times you may simply say, “Here’s where I am now in my thinking….” and tell why. You may write your thoughts in your journal any time during the week. Each week’s entry should be at least a half page to one page in length (single-spaced). *You are to submit the entire journal at the end of the course along with the final exam.*

**COURSE SCHEDULE:** Consult the schedule for your cohort for dates of class sessions. The course final is due at the beginning of the first class meeting of the course following this one.
OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the phenomenon of biblical prophecy in its ancient Near Eastern context.
2. To survey the historical setting of the eighth century prophets.
3. To examine the structure, contents and message of Amos and Hosea.

GOALS:

Following this session students will be able to:

1. Describe the historical setting of the eighth century prophets.
2. Define the basic biblical terms for “prophet,” including nabi’, ‘ish ha’elohim, ro’eh, and hozeh.
3. Discuss and define the foundational principles of Biblical Hebrew poetry.
4. Explain five characteristics of biblical prophets and prophecy.
5. Present a basic chronology of the classical prophets.
6. Describe social and political background of the book of Amos.
7. Discuss the theological message of the book of Amos.
8. Identify the changing historical situation during the ministry of Hosea.
9. Articulate the role of Hosea’s marriage as a theological symbol central to the prophet’s message.

REQUIRED READINGS: You are required to read all assigned pages from the text and chapters from the Old Testament prior to each class session. Class participation should give evidence of conscientious reading and reflection. At the top of your homework write the approximate percentage of reading you actually completed (e.g., 100%, 90%, 75%, etc.). Your instructor will take this into consideration in grading each week’s work.

Old Testament: Amos 1-9; Hosea 1-14

LaSor: Chapters 16-19, pages 221-269

Heschel: Chapters 1-3

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: When you complete all your reading, write essay-type answers to the following questions (may be single spaced). Some may need fuller
development than others. Your answers should be based on your reading of the Bible and the textbooks as well as your own reflection on the issues. Turn in each week’s written assignment by the day of class. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade.

1. Briefly describe the prophetic characteristics of ecstasy and call. Do you think there are authentic prophets in the Church today who exemplify these characteristics?
2. Most Christians think that prophecy is only about predicting the future. Why is this a “simplistic” approach that does not accord with the prophets themselves?
3. What is “Parallelism” in Hebrew Poetry? What is the difference between synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, and parallelism of specification?
4. Carefully read the book of Amos. Write a paragraph summarizing the message of the book. Imagine that you were explaining the book to someone who had never read it. What is it about? What are the primary ideas, emotions, images?
5. Briefly describe the historical and social situation during the ministry of Amos.
6. To what extent did Amos proclaim a “social gospel”? What relationship is there between Amos’ demand for social justice and the teachings of Jesus?
7. Briefly summarize the three theological insights of Amos.
8. Carefully read the book of Hosea. As you did with Amos, write a paragraph summarizing the message of the book. Briefly compare the message of Hosea to that of Amos.
9. Briefly describe the historical setting of Hosea’s prophetic ministry including the Assyrian threat from Tiglath-pileser III.
10. How do Hosea’s marriage to Gomer and the names of the three children serve to symbolize God’s message to sinful Israel?
CLASS SESSION 2 OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the historical setting of the remaining eighth century prophets.
2. To survey the message of Micah.
3. To explore the great prophetic book of Isaiah, paying special attention to its historical settings and its literary and theological diversity.

GOALS:

Following this session students will be able to:

1. Discuss the theological message of Micah.
2. Discuss the source-critical issue of the multiple authorship of Isaiah.
3. Describe the literary and theological differences between Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66.
4. Identify and discuss the Messianic passages in the book of Isaiah and their use by the authors of the New Testament.

REQUIRED READINGS: You are required to read all assigned pages from the text and chapters from the Old Testament prior to each class session. Class participation should give evidence of conscientious reading and reflection. At the top of your homework write the approximate percentage of reading you actually completed (e.g., 100%, 90%, 75%, etc.). Your instructor will take this into consideration in grading each week’s work.

Old Testament: Micah 1-7; Isaiah 1-12; 40-55

LaSor: Chapters 20-22, pages 270-312

Heschel: Chapters 4-5, 8

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: When you complete all your reading, write essay-type answers to the following questions (may be single spaced). Some may need fuller development than others. Your answers should be based on your reading of the Bible and the textbooks as well as your own reflection on the issues.

1. Carefully read the book of Micah. As you did with Amos and Hosea, write a paragraph summarizing the message of the book. Briefly compare the message of Micah to that of Amos and Hosea.
2. How does the structure of Micah, presenting both bad news and good news, help us understand the prophet’s message?
3. Carefully read Isaiah 1-12. Summarize the message of this part of the book, briefly comparing it to the prophets Amos, Hosea and Micah.

4. Why do scholars consider the book of Isaiah to be “the centerpiece of prophetic literature”?

5. What do we know about Isaiah from the Bible and Jewish tradition?

6. Briefly describe the historical situation during Isaiah’s ministry, including the Syro-Ephraimites War.

7. Why do most biblical scholars today think that the book of Isaiah was written by more than one author? How do the authors of our textbook evaluate the arguments for the multiple authorship of Isaiah?

8. Carefully read Isaiah 40-55. Summarize the message of this part of the book. To what extent is it true that as we turn from Isa. 39 to Isa. 40 we been “carried to a different time, place, and situation” (LaSor 295)?

9. Describe the concept of the Lord’s Servant in Isa. 40-55. Who is the Servant, Israel, the prophet, Cyrus, or Jesus? How have Christians interpreted the Servant?
CLASS SESSION 3 OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES:
1. To understand the historical setting of the seventh-century prophets.
2. To survey the messages of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.
3. To investigate the significance of the historical setting of Jeremiah.
4. To examine the theological message of Jeremiah.

GOALS:
Following this session students will be able to:

1. Identify the theological message of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.
3. Articulate the contribution of Jeremiah to biblical theology.

REQUIRED READINGS: You are required to read all assigned pages from the text and chapters from the Old Testament prior to each class session. Class participation should give evidence of conscientious reading and reflection. At the top of your homework write the approximate percentage of reading you actually completed (e.g., 100%, 90%, 75%, etc.). Your instructor will take this into consideration in grading each week’s work.

Old Testament: Zephaniah 1-3, Nahum 1-3, Habakkuk 1-3; Jeremiah 1-20; 30-33

LaSor: Chapters 23-24, pages 313-355

Heschel: Chapters 6-7

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: When you complete all your reading, write essay-type answers to the following questions (may be single spaced). Some may need fuller development than others. Your answers should be based on your reading of the Bible and the textbooks as well as your own reflection on the issues.

1. Carefully read the brief books of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Nahum. Briefly compare and contrast the literary style and message of these three prophets.
2. What does Zephaniah say about the Day of the Lord? How does his view compare with that of Amos?
3. Carefully read Jeremiah 1-20. As you have done previously, summarize the message of these chapters paying special attention to the personality of Jeremiah.
4. What do we know about Jeremiah, especially his background, his call, and his character?
5. Jeremiah performs several symbolic acts of prophecy in the book. Identify several of these and discuss why he did these acts.

6. How does the Hebrew text of Jeremiah differ from the Greek text? Why do you think they are so different?

7. Carefully read Jeremiah 30-33. This section of his prophecy is usually called the “Book of Comfort.” What types of literature does it contain? How would you compare it to Jeremiah 1-20?

8. Briefly summarize each of the theological contributions LaSor finds in the book of Jeremiah.
CLASS SESSION 4 OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES:

1. To evaluate the contribution of the prophets of the Exile.
2. To survey the historical setting and theological message of Ezekiel.
3. To examine the prophecies of Obadiah and Joel.
4. To compare the book of Jonah with the classical prophets.

GOALS:

Following this session students will be able to:

1. Discuss the message of hope and restoration presented in the book of Ezekiel.
2. Describe the setting and message of Obadiah and Joel.
3. Explain two interpretive approaches to the book of Jonah.

REQUIRED READINGS:  You are required to read all assigned pages from the text and chapters from the Old Testament prior to each class session. Class participation should give evidence of conscientious reading and reflection. At the top of your homework write the approximate percentage of reading you actually completed (e.g., 100%, 90%, 75%, etc.). Your instructor will take this into consideration in grading each week’s work.

Old Testament:  Ezekiel 1-24; 33-39; Obadiah; Joel 1-3; Jonah 1-4

LaSor:  Chapters 25-27, pages 356-389

Heschel:  Chapters 9-10

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:  When you complete all your reading, write essay-type answers to the following questions (may be single spaced). Some may need fuller development than others. Your answers should be based on your reading of the Bible and the textbooks as well as your own reflection on the issues.

1. Carefully read Ezekiel 1-24. Write a brief summary of these chapters focusing on the prophet’s message and personality.
2. Describe what we know about Ezekiel the prophet and his times.
3. Briefly compare and contrast Ezekiel’s vision in chapter 1 with Isaiah’s vision in Isa. 6.
4. How is the term, “son of man,” used in Ezekiel? How is this term used in the New Testament?
5. Carefully read Ezekiel 33-39. How do these chapters offer hope to the Jewish exiles in Babylon? Especially note chapter 37, the vision of the valley of dry bones.

6. What does the book of Joel say about God’s control of nature? How does this perspective of God deny both dualism and pantheism?

7. What is the theological importance of Joel for the Old Testament and the New Testament?

8. Carefully read Jonah 1-4. How is this book different from any of the prophets we have studied thus far?

9. Is the book of Jonah a historical account or is it a non-historical account? Briefly survey these positions and the issues at stake.
CLASS SESSION 5 OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the mission and message of the post-exilic prophets.
2. To examine the distinctive messages of Haggai and Zechariah.
3. To recognize the unique disputation style of Malachi.
4. To study the characteristics of apocalyptic literature.
5. To survey the message and theology of Daniel.

GOALS:

Following this session students will be able to:

1. Discuss the historical setting and theological message of Haggai and Zechariah.
2. Explain the “disputation” style of the book of Malachi.
3. Identify the characteristics of apocalyptic literature as exemplified in the book of Daniel.
4. Describe the theological message of Daniel.

REQUIRED READINGS: You are required to read all assigned pages from the text and chapters from the Old Testament prior to each class session. Class participation should give evidence of conscientious reading and reflection. At the top of your homework write the approximate percentage of reading you actually completed (e.g., 100%, 90%, 75%, etc.). Your instructor will take this into consideration in grading each week’s work.

Old Testament: Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 1-14; Malachi 1-4; Daniel 1-12

LaSor: Chapters 28, 29, 30, pages 390-422, and chapter 43, pages 566-582

Heschel: Chapter 11

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: When you complete all your reading, write essay-type answers to the following questions (may be single spaced). Some may need fuller development than others. Your answers should be based on your reading of the Bible and the textbooks as well as your own reflection on the issues.

1. Briefly describe the historical setting of Haggai.
2. Carefully read Haggai 1-2. Why did the prophet believe that rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem was so vital for the Jews?
3. How does Zechariah 1-8 differ from Zechariah 9-14?
5. How is the concept of a “forerunner” in Malachi appropriated in the New Testament?

6. What is apocalyptic literature? In what sense is the book of Daniel apocalyptic prophecy?

7. Briefly discuss the issue of the authorship and date of the book of Daniel.

8. What does LaSor mean when he says that the theme of the book of Daniel is that the eternal Kingdom of God will surpass the kingdoms of the world?
COURSE FINAL EXAM

The final exam essays comprise 30% of the grade for the course. (See page 11 above for a description of the grading percentages.) Most of the material needed for these essays can be gleaned from the lectures and reading assignments. These questions are intended to show your ability to synthesize what you have learned in the course. However, other published materials may be consulted as resources as long as proper credit is given in citations and in a “works cited” bibliography. Biblical references do not need quoting in full; simply give the proper citation with verse numbers.

No student is to receive help from any other person. (See the sections “Academic Integrity” and “Source Citations” on page 10 above.) The instructor will penalize the student’s grade severely if these guidelines are not followed.

The essays are to be submitted on 8½ x 11 white paper, double-spaced, using a 12-point font with 1" margins all around. The student may choose the font style; but it should be an easy-to-read standard type (similar to Times New Roman). Each essay should have its own title page.

A. Each student must write a review of Heschel’s book:

   The ability to read a book critically and evaluate its thesis is an important skill for students and persons in positions of ministry. For this assignment you are asked to write a 4-5 page review of the first eleven chapters of the book, *The Prophets*, by Abraham Heschel. Your review should cover the following issues:
   - Identify and discuss the author’s purpose for writing the book and his primary thesis. In other words, why has the author written this book? What has he attempted to demonstrate?
   - Indicate how the author has attempted to establish his thesis. What evidence, examples, and arguments has he provided?
   - Evaluate the book. How well has the author developed his thesis, argued his position? Are his evidence and examples appropriate and convincing? Why or why not? Has the purpose of the book been achieved?
   - How does Heschel’s understanding of the personality and role of the prophets align with your own perspective gained from this course, including class presentations and discussion and your reading of LaSor?
   - Apply this book to the Christian life. How relevant is this book to our understanding and use of Scripture? How has this book affected your own Christian life?

B. Choose two of the following essay questions and write an essay for each. Your essays should be at least three pages in length (double-spaced), but not more than four pages.

   - [Question 1]
   - [Question 2]
1. Write an essay on the prophets and social justice. How did the prophets address the problems in Israelite society? On whom did they place the responsibility for these social ills? What solutions did the prophets offer to the people of Israel? Discuss specific prophets and prophetic passages. In what ways can we apply these insights to 21st century America?

2. Write an essay on the concept of future hope in the prophets. Discussing specific prophets and prophetic passages, survey the prophets’ view of the future including their views of a coming Messiah. How should the Church of the 21st century utilize such passages?

3. Write an essay on the concept of call in the prophets. Focusing especially on Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (although others can be included), describe their call to prophetic ministry. How are they similar yet different? What does their call tell us about God and his relationship to his people? How are these call narratives relevant for Christians today?

The final exam essays are due no later than the start of the next class in sequence following the conclusion of this course.
DEVOTIONS

These brief devotions are intended to prepare each class with a spirit of worship. Study and worship, however, are not separate components as if one were intellectual and the other spiritual. When we research and analyze God’s Word—its ancient background and the nuances of its message—we are indeed participating in worship. Each devotional thought relates in some way to the topic assigned for that week. You may want to prayerfully think about these devotions and bring some of your reflections to the class.

DEVOTION FOR CLASS SESSION 1:

“The children loved Shaddai. And Shaddai loved the children. He knew each one by name, and he knew everything about them. He knew Lucy’s love of birds. He knew Roland’s fear of darkness. He knew Daphne was friendly and Spencer was shy. He knew Paladin was curious. When one of them called his name, he dropped whatever he was doing and turned. His giant heart had a hundred strings – each held by a different child. And Shaddai loved each one the same.

That’s why he built the wall.”

_Because I Love You_, Max Lucado

In the children’s bestseller, _Because I Love You_, Max Lucado tells the story of a wise man named Shaddai who built a village for his children. In this village, the children are safe, secure, and full of joy. We learn that Shaddai built a wall around this village because the dark forest that surrounded the village was no place for his children. The dark forest is cruel and dangerous. Shaddai knew that, beyond this boundary, the well-being of his children would be at risk.

Like the children in Shaddai’s village, we all need boundaries in our lives. Boundaries are precautionary. They are not impassable, but they will improve our chances of making the most responsible choices. Should we ever encounter a situation in our lives when we must choose between right and wrong, boundaries remind us which decisions are safe and healthy and which decisions are unsafe and dangerous. It is wise for us to spend time considering what boundaries we ought to establish to ensure our own well-being and the well-being of those around us. Take time to consider what boundaries you must set for yourself at home or in the workplace.
DEVOTION FOR CLASS SESSION 2:

STONE TELLING

How do we tell if a window is open?
Just throw a stone at it.
Does it make a noise?
It doesn’t?
Well, it was open.
Now let’s try another...
CRASH!
It wasn’t!

Where the Sidewalk Ends, Shel Silverstein

Wouldn’t it be nice if the difference between a right action and a wrong action was always black and white? More often than not though, decisions about which actions are right and which are wrong are clouded in grey. That is why we have people around us to help us make better decisions. We often rely on the help of a supporting cast when making difficult decisions. Certainly, it is important that we have people in our lives from whom we can solicit sound advice and wisdom. Sometimes, though, whether a person is a trustworthy advisor or a questionable consultant is not always black and white either. In this world, choices come with consequences and consequence affect lives. We ought to be more attentive to, cautious about, and prayerfully considerate of whom we confide in, seek guidance from, and trust for help. Perhaps, when we do this, we will have less broken windows in our lives.

DEVOTION FOR CLASS SESSION 3:

At this third lie, his nose became longer than ever, so long that he could not even turn around. If he turned to the right, he knocked it against the bed or into the windowpanes; if he turned to the left, he struck the walls or the door; if he raised it a bit, he almost put the Fairy's eyes out.

The Fairy sat looking at him and laughing.

“Why do you laugh?” the Marionette asked her, worried now at the sight of his growing nose.

“I am laughing at your lies.”

“How do you know I am lying?”

“Lies, my boy, are known in a moment. There are two kinds of lies, lies with short legs and lies with long noses. Yours, just now, happen to have long noses.”

Pinocchio, Carlo Collodi
One of the oldest and ever present moral dilemmas; tell the truth or stretch the truth (at least, that is how many of us soften the term “dishonesty”). For over a hundred years, children have been learning of the irresponsible Pinocchio and his growing nose. For thousands of years though, human beings have struggled with speaking the truth and nothing but the truth. Whether they are bold face or little and white, lies call into question our moral and ethical integrity. As leaders (and as human beings), good and responsible judgment about which actions are right and which are wrong begins with a conscious commitment to being intentional about letting honesty and truthfulness serve as the starting blocks for every decision. To commit to moral and ethical integrity is to acknowledge that short legs and long noses are unacceptable. Who are we kidding anyway? Lying is known in a moment.

DEVOTION FOR CLASS SESSION 4:

On and on you will hike.  
And I know you’ll hike far  
and face up to your problems  
whatever they are.  
You’ll get mixed up, of course,  
as you already know.  
You’ll get mixed up  
with many strange birds as you go.  
So be sure when you step.  
Step with care and great tact  
and remember that Life’s  
a Great Balancing Act.  
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.  
And never mix up your right foot with your left.

Oh, the Places You’ll Go! Dr. Seuss

A reality of life is that sometimes we make the wrong decision. No matter how hard you try, you may not always choose what is right. Sometimes we do not step with care and great tact, and we end up stepping on people’s toes. Our right feet get mixed up with our left and we end up face flat on the ground wondering how we lost our balance. Moral and ethical dexterity is not something that we learn overnight. We learn it through life’s experiences, we learn it from those around us, we learn it over time, and sometimes we learn it the hard way. When we lose our balance, step on someone’s toes, and make a poor decision, our integrity then becomes a matter of what we do next.

You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself  
any direction you choose.
You’re on your own. And you know what you know. 
And YOU are the guy who’ll decide where to go.

DEVOTION FOR CLASS SESSION 5:

God says to me with kind of a smile,
“Hey how would you like to be God awhile 
And steer the world?”
“Okay,” says I, “I’ll give it a try. 
Where do I set? 
How much do I get? 
What time is lunch? 
When can I quit?”
“Gimme back that wheel,” says God, 
“I don’t think you’re quite ready yet.”

A Light in the Attic, Shel Silverstein

No matter how prepared we think we may be to manage our own lives and to handle life’s most difficult challenges, we are never as equipped as we are when we surrender power and control to God. Our intentions may be pure and our motives may be genuine, but without the help of God we will struggle to steer our lives in the right direction. Thankfully, we are never alone in our effort to make choices. God is with us. Sometimes, though, we get in the way of the only One who truly knows what is right and what is wrong. White knuckled and overconfident, we grip the wheel tightly imagining that we are ready for a solo flight. In truth, there is too much at stake to assume that we alone are capable of steering our way through life. Before we can become leaders who are devoted to the pursuit of moral and ethical integrity, we must first acknowledge that we, in and of ourselves, are incapable of such a pursuit. With God as our guide though, we can successfully navigate a world in which the difference between right and wrong is often confusing and ambiguous. You, God, know the way. Direct our paths.