

**St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary
Boynton Beach, Florida**

I. COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE:

BIB 610E PROPHETS (SPRING 2012)

II. INSTRUCTOR:

Name: Dr. Emilio G. Chávez

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E-mail: emiliochavez@yahoo.com

Website: <http://bible-explainer.com>; this site contains many biblical and non-biblical materials as well as other useful references prepared by the professor

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am to 11:30am, or by appointment

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the phenomenon of prophecy in Israel. It explores its origins and surveys some early “non-writing” prophets, and the classical prophets who have left us books which bear their names. These prophets are set in their historical contexts, which include social, political and economic factors; their books and sayings are studied with modern literary techniques, including exegesis of selected texts. The overall aim is to uncover the theological message of the prophets (including their teaching on social justice) and to arrive at an understanding of the development of prophecy into eschatology and apocalyptic (including messianism). **Prerequisite: BIB 501.**

IV. STUDENT GOALS:

The student will become familiar with the phenomenon of prophecy in general and specifically in Israel; with the precursors of the “writing prophets;” and with the prophetic books and their place in the biblical canons. He or she will be able to situate the prophets historically and socio-economically, and explain their theological significance in the context of world events, leading, for Christians, to the eschatological ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

V. COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. To know the main contents of each of the books of the Prophets;
2. To situate each prophet within his specific historical circumstances;
3. To understand the significance and importance of the Prophets, especially for Christianity.

VI. TEXT AND REQUIRED MATERIALS

You should always bring a good Bible to class, such as *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha. Third Edition* (Michael D. Coogan, ed.; Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), or *The Jewish Study Bible* (Adele Berlin – Marc Zvi Brettler, eds.; Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), or newer editions of these Bibles, but a variety of Bibles are welcome in order to allow comparison of translations.

You should already own the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (R.E. Brown – J.A. Fitzmyer - R.E. Murphy, eds.; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990); abbrev. “NJBC,” for good and convenient consultation.

Required:

Emilio G. Chávez, class notes, to be handed out; abbrev.: “Chávez;” also available in a prior Spanish edition.

James D. Newsome, Jr., *The Hebrew Prophets* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984). abbrev.: “Newsome.”

VII. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

This course will consist of lectures, class discussion, group discussion, student presentations, brief written assignments, quizzes (pre-announced, pop or take-home) and other activities as deemed opportune and as time permits. **The assignments indicated below (INCLUDING ANY HANDOUTS and/or written assignments, unless otherwise stated) are to be completed and/or handed in before the corresponding class.** You might want to take advantage of weeks with lighter assignments (or when you have more time) to better keep up with your work. An optional term paper (5-10 pages) may be handed in by the student as extra credit. It is due April 30, 2012. The topic must be decided upon and approved by March 30, 2012. See section IX below on the requirements for the term paper.

The first numbers below refer to the weeks in the course.

1. Jan. 11 and 13: Introduction to the course. Review of syllabus and course requirements. The origins of biblical prophecy.

Assignment: Chávez, 1-13.

2. Jan. 16, 18 and 20: Noteworthy “non-writing” prophets.

Assignment: Newsome, 1-15.

3. Jan. 23, 25 and 27: Amos and Hosea

Assignment: [Amos] Chávez, 13-16; Newsome, 16-29.

[Hosea] Chávez, 16-19; Newsome, 30-43.

4. Jan. 30, Feb. 1 and 3: Isaiah of Jerusalem

Assignment: [Isaiah of Jerusalem] Chávez, 20-24; Newsome, 58-78.

5. Feb. 6, 8 and 10: Micah; three seventh-century prophets

Assignment: [Micah] Chávez, 25-26; Newsome, 44-57.

[Three seventh-century prophets] Chávez, 26-30; Newsome, 79-100

6. Feb. 13 and 15: Seventh-century prophets, continued as necessary; Jeremiah

Assignment: Chávez, 30-40, plus Appendix (Parallel Passages Jer/Deut); Newsome, 101-123

7. Feb. 20, 22 and 24: Jeremiah, continued

8. Feb. 27, 29 and Mar. 2: Ezekiel

Assignment: Chávez, 40-49; Newsome, 124-138

9. MARCH 9: MIDTERM EXAM (COVERS THROUGH EZEKIEL)

10. Mar. 12 and 14: Second Isaiah (Isa 40-55 and other parts of Isa)

Assignment: Chávez, 49-57; Newsome, 139-156

11. Mar. 19, 21 and 23: Second Isaiah, continued.

12. Mar. 26, 28 and 30: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8

Assignment: Chávez, 57-64; Newsome, 157-169

13. Apr. 13: Third Isaiah (Isa 56-66), the “Isaian apocalypse” (Isa 24-27)

Assignment: Chávez, 64-71; Newsome, 170-179

14. Apr. 16, 18 and 20: Obadiah, Joel, Malachi and Jonah

Assignment: Chávez, 71-79; Newsome, 180-200

15. Apr. 23, 25 and 27: Second and Third Zechariah (Zech 9-11; 12-14)

Assignment: [Dt-, Tr-Zech] Chávez, 79-84; Newsome, 201-205

The optional term papers are due April 30, 2012.

16. Apr. 30, May 2 and 4: Daniel

Assignment: [Daniel] Chávez, 84-91; Newsome 214-224 (optional, 206-213)

VIII. GRADING CRITERIA:

1. Classroom activities, such as quizzes, the brief written assignments and other possible exercises, as well as class and group discussions and student presentations, count for 50% of the final grade.

2. The midterm exam will count for 20% of the final grade. It will consist of up to three questions on important aspects of the material covered up to that point, to be answered in essay form. The Bible may be consulted. Prior reading of any handouts and of the required readings is essential. Supplemental readings help. The student will be graded on clarity of thought, extent of knowledge of the material being examined, insights, and effectiveness of expression. Please write neatly and legibly.

3. The final exam will count for 30% of the final grade and will consist of up to five questions on the whole course. Otherwise, the same observations made for the midterm exam apply to the final exam, although obviously evident progress will be expected.

IX. DESCRIPTION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

1. As the semester progresses, the student may consider writing a 5-10 page term paper as extra credit, to the extent merited by the quality of the term paper (up to 20% of the final grade). **The topic must be decided upon and approved by the professor by March 30, 2012.** For this purpose, the student should be giving thought during the early part of the semester to a topic which is of special interest or concern to him or her. When a particular topic has been decided on, the student should consult with the professor for approval of the topic and pointers on how to go about preparing the work. **The last day for handing in all papers is April 30, 2012.**

2. The paper must be on an approved topic regarding this course, and must employ the exegetical methods which have been learned in Biblical studies. **IT IS NOT IN THE FIRST PLACE A REFLECTION PAPER DEALING WITH SPIRITUALITY OR PASTORAL APPROACHES.** This can be included in the term paper *after* the student has demonstrated an understanding of the course topic or text in question in accordance with contemporary biblical methodology. **IN CASE OF DOUBT, PLEASE HAVE ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION WITH THE PROFESSOR.**

3. The paper should be in the Chicago Manual style and follow the gender-inclusive language directives set forth in the seminary's catalog, "Policies About

Written Work.” Footnotes or endnotes may be used; be careful to give the citations accurately and in the required style format. Carefully review the attached Grading Rubric in order to prepare and write your paper in the required way, so as not to have your grade suffer. Proof reading should be careful; spelling mistakes indicate neglect and lack of care.

4. Grading will be based on how well the student dealt with the topic, including what kind of research materials were consulted, how carefully they were utilized, how thoughtfully the paper was organized and written and the apparent effort made by the student to really reflect on and evaluate the points and conclusions he or she is making. Additionally, typing, spelling and grammar count, as well as adherence to the seminary’s policies regarding written assignments (see “Policies About Written Work” in the catalog).

Pursuant to the above-stated seminary policies, 10% of the grade may be affected by spelling, and another 10% by grammar and style. Papers *must not* be handed in past the last deadline (they may be rejected). Students are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and prepare and write the paper in a timely fashion (avoiding last minute rushes), and to turn them in early. Be quite mindful of the plagiarism prohibition.

X. EXPECTATIONS:

1. Students are expected to always come to class on time, Bible and other needed materials on hand, and to have carefully read the assignment. Class attentiveness and diligent note-taking as appropriate are very important for meeting the course objectives and getting a good grade. Students are expected and strongly encouraged to consult with each other and with the professor on the content, style and dynamics of the class lectures and discussion. Preparation in groups is not only a good teamwork exercise, but a great aid in pooling together intellectual, spiritual and labor resources for maximum performance in this course.

2. The student is expected to be an active participant in class or group discussions.

3. Students are expected and encouraged to develop an interest in the course materials, and to confer with the professor as often as desired in order to fully appropriate what the course has to offer.

4. The professor encourages the students’ comments and suggestions on how he is conducting the course, in order to improve same. Sincerity and thoughtfulness are appreciated. Needless to say, plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty are reproachable and may be severely punished.

XI. SUPPLEMENTAL READING LIST:

J.M. Abrego de Lacy, *Los libros proféticos. Tercera edición* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1999).

Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel. Revised and Enlarged* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983, 1996).

Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament. The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville – London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism. The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

William J. Doorly, *Isaiah of Jerusalem. An Introduction* (New York – Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992).

_____, *Prophet of Justice. Understanding the Book of Amos* (New York – Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989).

_____, *Prophet of Love. Understanding the Book of Hosea* (New York – Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991).

Pierre Grelot, *El libro de Daniel. Tercera edición edición* (Trad. española del original francés; Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1993, 1999).

Klaus Koch, *The Prophets. Vol. I: The Assyrian Period. Vol. II: The Babylonian and Persian Periods* (ET of German original; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983-84).

The Oxford Bible Commentary (J. Barton – J. Muddiman, eds.; Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

The Oxford History of the Biblical World (Michael D. Coogan, ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature. An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press: 2002).

Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament. An Introduction* (ET of original 1983 German by John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

Werner H. Schmidt, *Old Testament Introduction. Second edition* (ET of 1995 fifth German edition by Matthew J. O’Connell – David J. Reimer; New York - Berlin - Louisville: de Gruyter - Westminster John Knox, 1999).

José Luis Sicre, *Profetismo en Israel. El profeta. Los profetas. El mensaje* (Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 2000⁵).

Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).