

BRIERCREST

BLST 719 Latter Prophets: Jeremiah Fall 2020

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Course Dates: November 9-13, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the latter prophets which focuses on the book of Jeremiah and the hermeneutical skills necessary to interpret and apply this ancient text in contemporary ministry settings in light of its influence on New Testament writers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. describe the *historical* circumstances surrounding the composition of Jeremiah, and the range of its subsequent reception from antiquity to the present.
2. analyze the *theological* subtleties in this vast book and become acquainted with how such matters have been interpreted.
3. explain the *artistic* sophistication of the Jeremiah scroll, and the kinds of hermeneutical moves required to visualize its coherence.
4. apply the skills and signals involved in a "close-reading" of the text.
5. identify and initiate preliminary steps toward disseminating basic research to various audiences in the church, the academic world and other communities.

COURSE TEXTS

Louis Stulman, *Jeremiah*. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005. (400 pp.)

Keith Bodner, *After the Invasion: A Reading of Jeremiah 40-44*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. (179 pp.)

We should have a copy of the Bible – ideally two different reliable translations – on hand for each lecture.

Students are expected to refer Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <http://briercrest.ca/current/seminary/academics/important-documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

OUTLINE of PROPOSED TOPICS

Arguably the most acute crisis in the history of Israel was the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem that resulted in the destruction of the city and temple, and the exile of the population. Emerging from this crisis is the long scroll of Jeremiah, a complicated biblical book that provides a window on these events from the perspective of a participant and inside-observer of the crisis. Jeremiah himself is a compelling and multidimensional figure, surrounded by a colorful and memorable cast of characters. Jeremiah's interpretation of God's involvement in the buildup to the Babylonian invasion results in a unique prophetic achievement.

In this course we will study the life and message of this unique seventh century BCE prophet of God. His call to prophecy and his message to the nation on sin and salvation are examined in their historical setting with a view to the light they throw upon the contemporary questions and spiritual journey of the people of God in the twenty first century and our understanding of the new covenant.

Despite the objections of some modern scholars to the seeming randomness of many events and images in the book, this course will assume that the book of Jeremiah unfolds a creative prophetic and poetic vision. Interspersed with prose narratives, the combination of poetry and story relentlessly drives the reader to a new kind of experience of invasion and the trauma of exile.

- Overview of the Major Prophets
- Principal events in the timeline of Ancient Israel
- The book of Jeremiah and the Call of the Prophet (chapter 1)
- Rejecting the Spring of Living Water (chapters 2-6)
- Dismantling a High Place of Hypocrisy (chapters 7-10)
- Conspiracy Theories and a Challenge (chapters 11-15)
- Jars of Clay and Vessels of Honor (chapters 16-20)
- Wayward Leaders and a Righteous Branch (chapters 21-24)
- Fresh Characters and Degrees of Confrontation (chapter 25-28)
- Letters to Exile and New Covenant Expectations (chapters 29-33)
- Scrolls, Jails, and Cistern Escapes (chapters 34-38)
- Beginning of the End and a Journey to Egypt (chapters 39-44)
- Oracles to the Nations (chapters 45-51)
- Invasion and Hope (chapter 52)

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignment:

1. Write a three page single-spaced report on our course textbook *Jeremiah*, and a three page single-spaced report on our other textbook (*After the Invasion*) due prior to the start of our course on

Monday morning (**November 9th**). Each report should summarize the content of the respective volume and provide an overview of what the student has learned (**10%**). Please email to the professor (kbodner@briercrest.ca) as a WORD attachment.

Mid-Course Assignment:

2. End of course reflection: on Friday (**November 13th**) there will be an “end of course reflection,” assignment, providing an opportunity to respond to six questions from our class discussions (**20%**).

Post-Course Assignments:

3. Creative Responses: *The Workshop* (**40%**). Over the course of our week together we will work through a series of interactive questions (for example, “After reading Jeremiah 1, what expectations does the reader have for the next 51 chapters of the book?”; “Discuss the significance of the *battle* that is described Jeremiah 4, and its effect on the reader.”). The student will provide a written response of approximately 300 words for each question, and the entire workshop should be emailed to the professor as a WORD file not later than **January 8th, 2021**.

4. Research and Reflection essay: (**30%**). This is a standard 2000 word paper, single-spaced in Chicago format to be emailed to the professor as a WORD file no later than **January 8th, 2021**. The topic can relate to any of our discussion items, or a particular text or issue in the book of Jeremiah, or possibilities for the application of this prophetic literature in the contemporary journey of faith.

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:
<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

Attendance Policy

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Course Schedules

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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