



## BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

### UNIT OUTLINE

#### GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY

UNIT TITLE	<b>JEREMIAH &amp; THE PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS</b>
UNIT CODES	A74033
UNIT STATUS	Elective
HOST FIELD	A/B
PREREQUISITE/S	A/B51014 / A/B73014 Studying the Scriptures I – Method & Hermeneutic
INCOMPATIBLES	A52033 is incompatible with A74033
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	<i>Postgraduate students</i> - 3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester, including 3 separate postgraduate colloquia each of 1 hour.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Even years – Semester 2
PREPARED BY	Revd Douglas Jones
UNIT COORDINATOR	Revd Douglas Jones
TEACHING STAFF	Revd Douglas Jones
DATE PREPARED	13 February 2004
DATE UPDATED	01 March 2007

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#### **Rationale**

This unit provides students with the opportunity to study prophetic activity, literature and message in the context of the scriptures and Israel's history through study of the biblical text and through engagement with scholarly literature. The unit provides all students with opportunities to engage with this biblical material through application of various methods and hermeneutical approaches. The unit fosters critical assessment of the relation of the prophetic message to the wider Old Testament traditions, particularly the relation of Jeremiah and the deuteronomic tradition.

Study of these biblical books has a significant place in the study of theology as it offers students an understanding of the interaction between religious traditions and geopolitical realities. Such a study highlights the ways in which crises or impending crises provide opportunity for members of a community to reflect upon its life, traditions and theology.

#### **Relation to Course**

This study of a significant part of the prophetic literature is important for developing a well informed understanding of a major and unique part of the scriptures and an appreciation of the phenomenon of prophets and prophetic activity. Such study is integral to the total theological enterprise as it examines ways in which God is understood to have dealt with the people of Israel in their historical context and the ways in which Israel responded to God and that context. It helps to develop competence in theological method and

hermeneutical approaches by providing a significant opportunity to reflect theologically upon Israel's life, theological discourses and contexts, an important aspect of theological education at the post-graduate level.

### **Aim**

This unit aims to present a thorough overview of the book of Jeremiah in its historical, literary and canonical contexts, to present a general overview of the books of the Pre-exilic Prophets, to examine the phenomenon of prophecy in Israel, and to critically assess major scholarly contributions to the study of prophecy and prophetic literature in general, and the book of Jeremiah in particular. It seeks to examine and assess ways in which scholars have sought to relate the prophetic message to historical, literary, canonical, and contemporary contexts.

### **Learning Outcomes**

On the successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the major scholarly contributions to the study of the phenomenon of prophecy in Israel and prophetic literature in the scriptures.
2. demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content, structure, and themes of the books of Jeremiah and the Pre-Exilic Prophets.
3. critically evaluate the contribution of scholars towards a better understanding of the historical, literary, and theological significance of the book of Jeremiah.
4. critically interpret selected passages from the books of Jeremiah and the Pre-Exilic Prophets in the light of their contexts (historical, literary, and canonical) using contemporary hermeneutical methods.
5. critically evaluate the relation of the book of Jeremiah to the wider Old Testament traditions, particularly the Deuteronomistic tradition.
6. critically assess the relevance of the themes and emphases of the books of Jeremiah and the Pre-Exilic Prophets for the contemporary context.
7. demonstrate advanced research and writing skills and the ability to identify resources for ongoing research into the books of Jeremiah and the Pre-Exilic Prophets.

### **Content**

Session 1	The Hebrew prophets Amos - overview
Session 2	Prophetic speech & prophetic literature Historical background The pre-exilic prophets and the Twelve
Session 3	A study of Amos 1-2 The doxologies in the book of Amos
Session 4	Hosea - overview The significance of the names of Hosea's children The book of Hosea from a feminist perspective
Session 5	Micah - overview An interpretation of Micah 5:2-5a An overview of Jeremiah studies
Session 6	The prophetic call Jeremiah and history A study of Jeremiah 1:4-10 and its links to the rest of the book
Session 7	The structure of Jeremiah Prophets and kings The enemy from the north – Yahweh's judgment and international politics
Session 8	Review of the video "Jeremiah" True and false prophets; political and ideological/theological conflict
Session 9	The "Confessions" of Jeremiah Prophetic drama in Jeremiah Jeremiah and Deuteronomy/the Deuteronomistic History
Session 10	The "Book of Consolation" – Jeremiah 30-34 Jeremiah 31:31-34 – the new covenant?

Session 11	Prophetic message and prophetic book – Jeremiah 36 Oracles against other nations – Jeremiah 46-51 <i>The Threat of Falsehood</i> – the theology of the book of Jeremiah? The “day of the Lord” in the Pre-Exilic Prophets
Session 12	Nahum - overview Habakkuk - overview Habakkuk 2:4 in the context of Habakkuk and Romans (1:17)
Session 13	Zephaniah Jeremiah and the Pre-Exilic Prophets – in “summary” and conclusion How now shall we interpret the prophetic literature?

### Organisation and Teaching Strategies

Teaching will be face-to-face. There will be set readings each week from the Lectures Notes and biblical text. The contact time will include lectures and seminars, group work and reporting.

The format for the weekly three hour sessions will generally be:

Most days the class will be as follows–

- Lecture and discussion of key issues. (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Seminar style discussion of set readings, with postgraduate students leading various sessions. (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Either lecture or work groups. (50 minutes)

Three colloquia for postgraduate students only will be held in Weeks 3, 7, 11. These will enable students to make brief presentations on their research topics, methods, resources, and progress. On those weeks the weekly session format will be:

- A lecture and discussion of key issues – all students (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Either lecture or work groups – all students (50 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Colloquium for postgraduate students (50 minutes).

### Assessment

7500 words are required for assessment purposes. Postgraduate students are encouraged to develop an assessment proposal that sets their own learning goals in the context of the Postgraduate Objectives listed above. A typical assessment proposal will include the following:

(i) **Either**

Two short essays (1250 words each) on set topics. (35%)

**Or**

Participation in web logging on two set topics. Total contributions per topic to be between 1000 and 1750 words. (35%)

Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4.

(ii) An exegetical study of a passage (3000 words). (40%)

Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

(iii) An essay on the student’s understanding of interpreting prophetic literature (2000 words). (25%)

Relates to Postgraduate Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

### Generic Attributes

- Advanced skills in research, including critical analysis and creative synthesis of material from primary and secondary sources (text and electronic).
- Advanced writing skills including relevance, coherence, clarity and conciseness.
- Established skills in integrating learning into personal theological framework.

## **Textbooks**

### **Required**

There is no required textbook. However, students are required to have a copy of the Bible in a modern translation such as the *New Revised Standard Version* or the *English Standard Version*.

### **Recommended**

One of the following commentaries on the book of Jeremiah:

#### **Either**

Brueggemann, Walter *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

#### **Or**

Clements, Ronald E. *Jeremiah (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching)* Atlanta: John Knox, 1988.

#### **Or**

McKeating, Henry *The Book of Jeremiah* Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1999.

#### **Or**

McConville, J. G. *Judgement and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah* Leicester/Winona Lake: Apollos/Eisenbrauns, 1993.

## **Academic and General Resource Requirements**

### **References - Books**

- Baker, David W. and Bill T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Bauer, Angela *Gender in the Book of Jeremiah: A Feminist-Literary Reading (Studies in Biblical Literature: Volume 5)* Berlin/New York: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Birch, Bruce C. Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Brueggemann, Walter *The Prophetic Imagination (Second Edition)* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.  
----- *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- Carroll, M. Daniel *Amos – The Prophet and His Oracles: Research on the Book of Amos* Louisville: WJK, 2002.
- Diamond, A. R. Pete, Kathleen M. O'Connor and Luis Stulman (eds.) *Troubling Jeremiah (JSOTSS 260)* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Floyd, Michael H. *Minor Prophets: Part 2 (The Forms of Old Testament Literature: Volume XXII)* Grand Rapids/Cambridge: 2000.
- Gitay, Y. (ed.) *Prophecy and Prophets: The Diversity of Contemporary Issues in Scholarship* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Gordon, R. P. (ed.) *The Place is too Small For Us: The Israelite Prophets in recent Scholarship* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995.
- Gowan, Donald E. *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel* Louisville: WJK, 1998.
- Grabbe, Lester L. (ed.) *Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology (JSOTSS 278)* Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1998.
- House, Paul R. *The Unity of the Twelve* Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1990.
- Jones, Barry Alan *The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Study in Text and Canon (SBLDS 149)* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Lundbom, Jack R. *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- McConville, J. Gordon *Exploring the Old Testament: Volume Four – A Guide to the Prophets* Downers Grove: IVP, 2002.
- Möller, Karl *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos (JSOTSS 372)* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003.
- Perdue, Leo G. *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Petersen, David L. *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* Louisville/London: WJK, 2002.
- Roberts, J. J. M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary (OTL)* Louisville: W/JK, 1991.
- Scott, James M. (ed.) *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, & Christian Conceptions* Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *A Biblical Theology of Exile* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

Stacey, W. D. *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* London: Epworth Press, 1990.

**References – Journal Articles**

Carroll, Robert P. “Surplus Meaning and the Conflict of Interpretations: A Decade of Jeremiah Studies (1984-95)” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*, Vol. 4, 1996, 115-159.

Conrad, Edgar J. “Heard But Not Seen: The Representation of ‘Books’ in the Old Testament” *JSOT*, Vol. 54, 1992, 45-59.

Floyd, Michael “Prophecy and Writing in Habakkuk 2, 1-5” *ZAW*, Vol. 105, 1993, 462-81.

Linville, James R., “On The Nature Of Rethinking Prophetic Literature: Stirring A Neglected Stew ( A Response to David L. Petersen)” *JHS*, Vol. 2.

Melugin, Roy F. “Amos in Recent Research” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*, Vol. 6, 1998, 65-101.

Sweeney, Marvin A. “Zephaniah: A Paradigm for the Study of the Prophetic Books” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*, Vol. 7, 1999, 119-145.

**References – Online and Other IT Resources**

*BibleWorks 5* Big Fork, Montana: Hermeneutika, 2001.

*The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* is available on-line at [www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/).

Biblical Studies on the Web. <http://www.bsw.org/>

Old Testament Gateway. <http://www.otgateway.com/>

Postgraduate students will be expected to identify, evaluate and use other relevant web-based sources of information.