

**Old Testament Interpretation**  
**Spring Course (second half)**  
**John J. Collins**

**Course Goals**

1. To become familiar with the contents of the Old Testament.
2. To learn exegetical method
3. To appreciate the historical context of the biblical writings
4. To reflect on the relevance of these writings for the modern world.

**Requirements**

Grades will be based on

1. A mid-term exam on xxx.
2. An exegesis paper of 8-10 pages due on xxx.
3. A final exam in the normal exam period.
4. Participation in section discussions.

Attendance at the lectures is required.

NOTE:

All written work must be your own. If you borrow ideas or distinctive phrases from a written source, that source must be properly acknowledged. Assistance is available if you need help with writing and research skills.

**SCHEDULE**

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|--------|---|
| Jan 10 | What is Prophecy? 1 Kings 18-22.<br>Collins, chapter 14. Blenkinsopp, 1-64.   |
| Jan 12 | Elijah and Elisha.<br>Mays and Achtemeier, <u>Interpreting the Prophets</u> , 1-40. (Wilson, Wolff and Tucker).           |
| Jan 14 | Amos:<br>Collins, Chapter 15, part 1. Blenkinsopp, 65-81.   |
| Jan 17 | Martin Luther King day  |
| Jan 19 | Hosea<br>Collins, Chapter 15, part 2; Blenkinsopp, 82-90.   |
| Jan 21 | Isaiah 1-39.<br>Collins, Chapter 16. Blenkinsopp, 97-110; Roberts in Mays and Achtemeier.                                 |
| Jan 24 | Jeremiah<br>Collins, chapter 17. Blenkinsopp, 129-147; Mays and Achtemeier, 100-142.<br>(Crenshaw, Brueggeman, Holladay). |
| Jan 26 | Jeremiah continued  |
| Jan 28 | Section: evaluating the prophets<br>Clines, "Metacommenting Amos."  |

- Jan 31 Ezekiel  
Collins, Chapter 18; Blenkinsopp, 148-180; Mays and Achtemeier, 157-199  
(Wilson, Fishbane, Newsom).
- Feb 2 Ezekiel  
Mays and Achtemeier, 200-236 (Lemke, Greenberg).
- Feb 4 Section: feminist critiques of prophecy.  
Weems, in Tyco packet.

### **Reading Week**

- Feb 14 Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55).  
Collins, Chapter 19 part 1; Blenkinsopp, 181-93.
- Feb 16 Haggai and Zechariah 1-8  
Collins, Chapter 20 part 1; Blenkinsopp, 194-211.
- Feb 18 Section: Sociological criticism of the prophets:  
Chaney and Gottwald in Tyco packet.
- Feb 21 Isaiah 24-27; 56-66.  
Collins, Chapter 19, part 2; Blenkinsopp, 212-221;  
Clements in Mays and Achtemeier.
- Feb 23 Jonah, The Book of the Twelve.  
Collins, 534-6; 420-23; Blenkinsopp, 222-239.  
Petersen in Tyco packet.
- Feb 25 Section: Prep. For mid-term.

### **Feb 28 Mid-term**

- March 2 Ezra-Nehemiah; Malachi.  
Collins, Chapter 21.
- March 4 Section: the canonical approach.  
Childs in Mays and Achtemeier, 41-49;

### **Spring Recess**

- March 21 Chronicles  
Collins, Chapter 22, Klein in Tyco packet
- March 23 Psalms  
Collins, Chapter 23; Limburg in Tyco packet
- March 25 Good Friday. No class.
- March 28 Psalms continued
- March 30 Proverbs  
Collins, Chapter 24; Crenshaw, Chapter 3.
- April 1 Section: Natural theology.  
Collins, "The Biblical Precedent for Natural Theology."
- April 4 Job  
Collins, Chapter 25, part 1. Crenshaw, Chapter 4.

- April 6 Qoheleth  
Collins, Chapter 25, part 2. Crenshaw, Chapter 5
- April 8 Section: Hebrew Poetry.  
Petersen and Richards.  
**Exegesis Paper due**
- April 11 The Diaspora Novel: Esther, Daniel 1-6.  
Collins, Chapter 26; Chapter 27 part 1.
- April 13 The Maccabees and Daniel  
Collins, Chapter 27 part 2; Collins in Mays and Achtemeier.
- April 15 Section: Preaching the Old Testament  
Brueggemann in Tyco packet;  
Sample from New Interpreter's Bible
- April 18 Daniel and apocalypticism  
Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," in Tyco packet.
- April 20 Ben Sira  
Collins, Chapter 28, part 1. Crenshaw, chapter 6.
- April 22 Wisdom of Solomon  
Collins, Chapter 28, part 2. Crenshaw, chapter 7.
- April 25 Concluding Lecture.  
Collins, "Before the Canon," in Tyco packet.
- April 26 Final section.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books should be available in the bookstore:

- J. J. Collins, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Fortress, 2004)
- J. Blenkinsopp, A History of Prophecy in Israel (Westminster John Knox, 1996)
- J. Crenshaw, Old Testament Wisdom. An Introduction (Westminster John Knox, 1981)
- J. L. Mays and P. J. Achtemeier, Interpreting the Prophets (Fortress, 1987)
- D. Petersen and K. H. Richards, Interpreting Hebrew Poetry (Fortress Guides).

The course reader contains the following:

1. D. J. A. Clines, "Metacommentating Amos," in idem, Interested Parties. The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible (JSOTSup 205; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 76-93.
2. Renita Weems, "Gomer: Victim of Violence or Victim of Metaphor?" Semeia 47(1989) 87-104.

3. M. L. Chaney, "Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Economy Critiqued by the Eighth-Century Prophets," in N. K. Gottwald and R. A. Horsley, The Bible and Liberation (Orbis, 1993) 250-63.
4. N. K. Gottwald, "Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55: An Egeltonian Reading," *ibid.*, 329-342.
5. D. Petersen, "The Book of the Twelve," in *idem*, The Prophetic Literature. An Introduction (Westminster John Knox, 2002) 167-214.
6. R. Klein, "Chronicles, Book of 1-2," Anchor Bible Dictionary 1.992-1002.
7. J. Limburg, "Psalms, Book of" Anchor Bible Dictionary 5.522-536.
8. J. J. Collins, "The Biblical Precedent for Natural Theology," *JAAR* 15/1 (1977) Supplement, B:35-67.
9. W. Brueggemann, "Preaching as Reimagination," Cadences of Home, 24-37.
10. J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Literature," in L. Perdue, ed., The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible (Blackwell, 2001) 432-47.
11. J. J. Collins, "Before the Canon: Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism," in J. L. Mays, D. L. Petersen and K. H. Richards, ed., Old Testament Interpretation (Tucker Festschrift) (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995).225-41.