Syllabus

Course Description:

An introduction to prophecy in Ancient Israel with a special focus on the biblical prophet Isaiah. Tradition suggests the School of Isaiah spans a period of 200 years which gives us an opportunity to explore the turbulent period of the fall of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah. We will examine the role of prophets and their efforts to make sense of why God would allow such events to happen to God’s chosen people. This also lays the groundwork for an exploration for what resources are available from the Isaiah stream of tradition to deal with wilderness experiences.

Textbooks:


Course Requirements:

1. Regular preparation to include four postings per week on Blackboard (20%).

2. Four Response Papers (20% each).

3. Students are expected to adhere to the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College Course Catalog.

Learning Objectives:

1. To write and speak knowledgeably about the Isaiah tradition within its historical context;

2. To gain an understanding of prophecy within its social and political context of ancient Israel;

3. To explore what the Isaiah tradition has to tell us about the cultural function of prophecy;

4. To evaluate how history and archaeology inform our understanding
of ancient cultures, particularly Palestine.

**Linfield Curriculum Objectives:**

For those seeking Ultimate Questions credit, students will learn and demonstrate growth among the following:

1. Articulating and evaluating core assumptions and paradigms through which knowledge is acquired and assessed.

2. Engaging ambiguity through a critical analysis of fundamental beliefs, cultural practices, and competing truth claims.

For those seeking Vital Past credit students will do the following:

1. Identify, analyze, and contextualize primary sources.

2. Identify and critique secondary, scholarly arguments about the past.

3. Develop and defend an analytical or interpretive argument about the past.

4. Recognize that differences separate people past and present, though all people share a common humanity.

5. Evaluate the reliability of evidence about the past.

**Taskstream** is Linfield’s ePortfolio system. Students must demonstrate meeting the learning objectives of each of the Linfield Curriculum Modes of Inquiry or designation by posting exemplars of their work. Exemplars can be uploaded directly to Taskstream from within a BlackBoard course.

Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations contact Cheri White, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), within the first two weeks of the semester to request accommodations. LSS is located in Walker 126 (503-883-2444). We also recommend students communicate with their faculty about their accommodations and any special needs of which an instructor should be aware.

**Identity Verification:** Students enrolled in Online and Continuing Education courses and programs at Linfield College are required to periodically verify their identity through Ucard. This ensures that students taking classes through Online and Continuing Education are the people doing the work. The authentication process will be required at the start of each term and then at random times during the term. Instructions will be provided. For identity verification, students will need a webcam enabled computer and a legal form of picture ID (such as a drivers license or a passport). If you have questions about or problems with the authentication process contact the OCE office at (503)
Reading Assignments

First Isaiah (Chapters 1-39)

The goal of our first unit is to reconstruct the social and political context in which Eighth-Century Isaiah faced: particularly his dealings with Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah as they dealt with the threat from the Assyrian Empire from the north. We will discuss the interpretation of oracles that make up chapters 1-39 and how they fit, or don’t fit, into that historical setting.

Week 1
Sep 06: Stromberg, “The Formation of First-Isaiah,” Chapter One
Sep 08: Study Bible, Isaiah 6

Week 2
Sep 11: Study Bible, Isaiah 7-8
Sep 13: Study Bible, Isaiah 9-11
Sep 15: Study Bible, Isaiah 1-5

Week 3
Sep 18: Study Bible, Isaiah 12-16
Sep 20: Study Bible, Isaiah 17-23
Sep 22: Study Bible, Isaiah 24-27

Week 4
Sep 25: Study Bible, Isaiah 28-33
Sep 27: Study Bible, Isaiah 36-39: Set Topics for Response Paper #1
Sep 29: Response Paper #1: Isaiah 1-39 Due Sunday midnight October 1

Second Isaiah (Chapters 40-55)

Unit two deals with the challenges a community faces when it collapses. What are the options available after an invasion from outside, deportation of the elite, destruction of the core holy sites and central administration centers? Judah was gone and the period of exile was at hand with no guarantee they would survive as a people. How does one find meaning in the depth of such desolation?
Week 5
Oct 02: Stromberg, “Second-Isaiah and the Book,” Chapter Two

Oct 04: Study Bible, Isaiah 34-35
Oct 06: Study Bible, Isaiah 40-41

Week 6
Oct 09: Study Bible, Isaiah 42-43
Oct 11: Study Bible, Isaiah 44-45
Oct 13: Study Bible, Isaiah 46-47

Week 7
Oct 16: Study Bible, Isaiah 48-49
Oct 18: Study Bible, Isaiah 50-51
Oct 20: Study Bible, Isaiah 52-53

Week 8
Oct 23: Study Bible, Isaiah 54-55
Oct 25: Set Topics for Response Paper #2
Oct 27: Response Paper #2: Isaiah 40-55 Due Sunday midnight October 29

Third Isaiah (Chapters 56-66)

Third Isaiah: Vision and Reality. In this unit we engage the topic of two communities reengaging after seventy years of evolving separately. The reengaging process will be a bit bumpy, as it were. Vision and reality will be rough around the edges as some class issues clash. Our task will be to try and sort out what some of those issues were in the post-exilic period.

Week 9

Nov 01: Study Bible, Isaiah 56-57
Nov 03: Study Bible, Isaiah 58-59

Week 10
Nov 06: Study Bible, Isaiah 60-61
Nov 08: Study Bible, Isaiah 62-63
Nov 10: Study Bible, Isaiah 64-65

Week 11
Nov 13: Study Bible, Isaiah 66

Nov 15: Set Topics for Response Paper #3 on Third Isaiah

Nov 17: Response Paper #3: Isaiah 56-66 Due Sunday midnight Nov 19

Week 12
Nov 20: Thanksgiving Break

Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break

Nov 24: Thanksgiving Break

Unit IV: Ways to Read Isaiah

Here you have an opportunity to explore a short topic and method that has caught your interest over the course of the term. It is not a full-blown research paper. It is Response Paper, this time, to Stromberg’s essays on method and grounded in your reading of the texts of First, Second, and Third Isaiah. You will need to pick a topic and method that is manageable in the time we have left in the term.

Week 13
Nov 27: Stromberg, “Literary Approaches to Isaiah,” Chapter Four

Nov 29: Stromberg, “Reading Isaiah Holistically,” Chapter Five

Dec 01: Stromberg, “Approaches to Isaiah’s Theology,” Chapter Six

Week 14
Dec 04: Stromberg, “Aspects of Isaiah’s Theology,” Chapter Seven

Dec 06: Select a Method and Topic

Dec 08: Select a Method and Topic

Week 15
Dec 11: Work on Paper

Dec 13: Work on Paper

Dec 15: Work on Paper

Final: Response Paper #4 Paper Due Midnight December 15
Discussion Worksheet

Date: ________________________________

Name: __________________________________________________________________________

Author of Reading__________________________________________________________________

Attach this title page to the papers you use to complete your discussion worksheet. Complete Phase I and Phase II BEFORE meeting with your group.

**PHASE 1: WHAT IS THE AUTHOR TRYING TO SAY? (BEFORE CLASS)**

1. **Definitions**: List key new terms and concepts in this reading. Define those you do not already know. Circle those that you feel need clarification or discussion.

2. **Thesis Position**: Express in the affirmative, in one sentence (no conjunctions, dependent clauses, prepositions, no internal punctuation) what you think a central thesis position for the reading is.

3. **Author's Defense**: What has the author offered as evidence which supports your choice of this thesis? At this stage, do not evaluate what you think of the thesis or the evidence offered. It is important simply to identify what you think the thesis and the evidence offered is.

**PHASE 2: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S POSITION? (BEFORE)**

4. **Take a Stand**: If everyone in the world believed the thesis position you have identified in #2, would the world be a better or worse place to live in? Why? Why not? Try not to sit on a fence.

5. **Critique the Author's Defense**: Go back over the list of evidence you identified in #3. Has the author overlooked relevant evidence to the discussion? Are there other possible conclusions one could draw from the evidence? Relate this discussion to the ongoing discussion of the course. What inter-connections do you see?

**PHASE 3: WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT THIS? (IN-CLASS)**

6. **Definitions**: Identify new words and make sure all in the group are clear as to the definitions. You do not need to discuss words everyone understands.

7. **Thesis Position**: Give everyone in the group an opportunity to present in one sentence what they think this reading's thesis is. That is your thesis #2. Discuss the various options until the group comes to a consensus. Add to your worksheet what the group has decided the thesis is (#7). This may or may not agree with your initial suggestion. I will want to see both in your worksheet.

8. **Author's evidence**: Give everyone in the group an opportunity to present what they see as the evidence the author offered for the thesis position. Discuss the various options until the group comes to a consensus. Don't give up your own voice unless you are convinced by arguments offered by others in the group.

9. **Group Stand**: Take a group stand with respect to the thesis and defense you have identified. If everyone in the world believed the thesis position identified, would the world be a better or worse place to live in? Why? Why not?
PHASE 4: EVALUATING THE DISCUSSION  (Do this the last ten minutes of group meeting.)

10. A. Overall Reactions:
   A lot  Some  None
   I learned   ___  ___  ___
   I participated   ___  ___  ___
   I enjoyed   ___  ___  ___

B. Group Completion of Steps:
   Good  OK  Bad
   6. Definitions   ___  ___  ___
   7. Thesis   ___  ___  ___
   8. Defense   ___  ___  ___
   9. Group Stand   ___  ___  ___

C. General Dynamics
   Warm, non-threatening group climate   ___  ___  ___
   Everyone participated   ___  ___  ___
   Leadership functions were distributed   ___  ___  ___
   Overall focus on resolving uncertainties and comparing insights   ___  ___  ___
   Evaluation is accepted as an integral part of the group process   ___  ___  ___

D. Roles: Check (x) your own. Circle those you observed in others.
   Positive Roles
   Initiating  Gatekeeping
   Asked for information  Timekeeping
   Gave Information  Encouraging Reaction
   Asked for Reactions  Tension Release
   Gave Reactions  Useful Pause
   Restated Point   _________
   Gave examples / Asked for _____________
   examples   _____________
   Asked for Summary   _____________
   Summarized Discussion   _____________
   Dysfunctional Roles
   Sidetrack to Own Area
   Interrupted Others
   Monopolized Discussion
   Put-down
   Irrelevant stories, etc.
   Apologizing
   Withdrawal
   Premature Evaluation
   Failure to Listen
   ________________
   ________________

E. Instructor Input: I would like to have the instructor comment on the following, relevant to the reading:

F. Parting Comments: Any thoughts you may have about the group process, the reading, the class, suggestions for improvement, etc.

This form is adopted from a handout at a workshop on the topic of process and content in learning led by Professor Craig Nelson of Indiana University. The form is modified from W. F. Hill, Learning Through Discussion (Sage Publication, 1969).