

Rel. 653
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T, Th 9-10:20 a.m.

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DANGEROUS HOLINESS: THEOLOGY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

This course will explore theological themes in the book of Ezekiel through a close reading of the text and engagement with a variety of historical-critical and literary approaches to the material. Sustained attention will be paid to the following aspects of this unique prophetic book: the sophisticated and daring use of metaphor; the construction of the prophetic persona; the reinterpretation of Exodus and Temple/Zion traditions; the vivid narrative elaboration of such key thematic polarities as holiness and defilement, honor and shame, and the presence and absence of God; and the apocalyptic character of the restoration passages in the book.

Evaluative Measures

Each student's course grade will be based on the following:

- 1) one exegetical paper (8-10 pages) on an Ezekiel passage of the student's choice (30% of the grade);
- 2) one paper (10-12 pages) treating an exegetical or other interpretive problem in the book of Ezekiel, this essay to include thorough critical evaluation of at least two scholarly positions on the interpretive issue at hand (50% of the grade);
- 3) regular class participation (20% of the grade). The category of class participation includes conscientious preparation of Biblical and secondary material for class; engagement in class discussions; leading of class discussion on assigned secondary reading occasionally during the semester; and preparation of a 350- to 450-word abstract for each paper, to be shared with classmates.

All written work must be submitted by the last day of the semester (December 21). Any paper received after December 21 but by December 28 will be marked down 1/3 of a grade. Any paper received after December 28 will be marked down 2/3 of a grade and may not receive written feedback from me.

All written work submitted by you must be your own. If you cite, paraphrase, or in any other way rely on ideas, distinctive phrases, or argumentation from another source, that source must be properly acknowledged. For more information, consult the appendix on plagiarism at the end of this syllabus.

Papers are to be typewritten in a 12-point font, double-spaced, paginated, with margins between 1" and 1 1/4" on all sides. If the paper has notes, they should be footnotes (i.e., located at the bottom of the relevant page) rather than end-notes. Block quotations and footnotes should be single-spaced. A separate bibliography is not necessary if full initial citations of works are provided in the notes. If you are unsure as to proper footnote style, consult *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson, 1999), available in the Divinity Library, or another accepted authority such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

I am pleased to provide written comments on drafts of papers that are given to me by a specified date ahead of the due date. Considering feedback about a paper's strengths and weaknesses enables the student to improve logic and argumentation, refine written expression, and otherwise strengthen the paper before it receives a grade. Students are also welcome to submit a rewritten version of one of their papers, in which case the grade for the paper will be the grade earned by the rewrite.

Required Books

The following books will be used heavily in this class. Additional required reading is available in a photocopied course packet to be purchased at TYCO, located at 262 Elm Street downtown. The TYCO packet and books will be on Reserve in the Divinity Library, should you prefer to consult them there rather than purchase them.

Block, Daniel I. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Block, Daniel I. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Odell, Margaret S. and John T. Strong, eds. *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*. SBL Symposium Series 9. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

The below will be on Reserve as well and would repay frequent consultation:

Greenberg, Moshe. *Ezekiel 1-20*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1983.

Greenberg, Moshe. *Ezekiel 21-37*. Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 1*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Zimmerli, Walther. *Ezekiel 2*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.

You may find helpful the following book on Reserve, which offers suggestions for conceiving, organizing, writing, and rewriting papers for seminary classes:

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2000.

Schedule of Class Sessions and Readings

Readings are to be completed before the meeting of the class session under which they are listed.

When leading discussion, each student leader should be prepared to engage the following or similar questions with classmates:

- * What are the strengths of the arguments made in the article? What is compelling or imaginative or original about the piece?
- * On which points is the argument weakest, methodologically or conceptually?
- * How is this piece useful (or not) for helping us to read and understand the Biblical text?

September 6

Introduction; purposes of the course. Brief history of attempts to understand the Book of Ezekiel critically and confessionally.

September 11 Ezekiel 1-3

Be prepared to discuss:

Block 1, pp. 1-60 and 77-162