

Rel. 690  
Carolyn J. Sharp

Fall 2002  
Mondays 4:00-6:00 p.m.

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office hours by appointment

## **TRADITION AND IDEOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH**

The course will probe a variety of complex interpretive issues in the composition, redaction, and theopolitics of the Book of Jeremiah. We will attend to synchronic questions of literary artistry and diachronic issues evident in the *Fortschreibung* of earlier Jeremianic material within the book. We will explore the call of Jeremiah and the role of the prophet generally, particularly as that has been constructed over against paradigmatic Biblical intercessors and false prophets. We will inquire after the theological functions of judgment-oriented paraenesis, oracles against foreign nations, prophetic laments, and oracles of promise in Jeremiah. We will reflect on the self-conscious dynamic interplay between orality and “writtenness” in the text’s representation of the transmission of and resistance to Jeremiah’s prophesying. And we will consider the text’s virulent socio-political polemics and possibilities for the contextualization of those ideologies in the history of sixth-century Judah and in the rhetorical world constructed by the text.

### **Evaluative Measures**

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

- 1) a 20- to 25-page term paper on an interpretive issue in the Book of Jeremiah, the topic to be designed by the student in consultation with me (60% of the grade);
- 2) regular class presentations on secondary literature, including one book report to be both presented orally and written up in 1,000–1,200 words (20% 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; and preparation of a 350- to 450-word abstract for the term paper, to be shared with classmates in the last class session (December 9).

All written work must be submitted by the last day of the semester (December 20). Any paper received after December 20 will likely receive no feedback from me other than its grade.

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 a written 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 endnotes. 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 November 20. Considering feedback about a paper's strengths and weaknesses may enable the student to improve logic and argumentation, refine written expression, and otherwise strengthen the paper before it receives a grade.

## **Required Books**

The following books will be used heavily in this class. Additional required reading is available in a photocopied course packet that may be purchased at TYCO, located at 262 Elm Street downtown. There will also be required reading from resources put on Divinity Reserve. The required books and TYCO packet will be on Reserve in the Divinity Library, should you prefer to consult them there rather than purchase them. In addition, the course packet will be available on-line, listed under Rel. 690 at <http://classes.yale.edu>.

Carroll, Robert P. *Jeremiah*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

Stulman, Louis. *Order Amid Chaos: Jeremiah as Symbolic Tapestry*. Biblical Seminar 57. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

## ----- 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 material you are presenting? 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 9**            **Introduction; purposes of the course**

**September 16**        **Jeremiah 1**

introductory issues; the commissioning of Jeremiah

Be prepared to discuss:

- Carroll, *Jeremiah*, pp. 33-111
- Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, pp. 1-95 (on Reserve)
- McKane, *Jeremiah I*, pp. xv-xcix and II, pp. cxxxiii-clxxiv (on Reserve)
- Carroll, "Arguing About Jeremiah" (course packet)
- Olyan, "To Uproot and to Pull Down, to Build and to Plant": Jer 1:10 and Its Earliest Interpreters" (course packet)

**September 23**        **Jeremiah 2-6**

introductory issues continued; theories of an *Urrolle*

Be prepared to discuss:

- Carroll, *Jeremiah*, pp. 113-205
- Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, pp. 1-10 (on Reserve)
- Sweeney, "Structure and Redaction in Jeremiah 2-6" (in *Troubling Jeremiah*, on Reserve)
- Carroll, "Surplus Meaning and the Conflict of Interpretations" (course packet)