



St. Andrew's College

**BA329/BL227**

**Inner-biblical Interpretation/Isaiah**

Winter 2011

Day & time:

Thursday, 1:30-4:20 p.m.

Room: 326

Instructor: Christine Mitchell

Office hours: By appointment or by chance

Office: 229, St. Andrew's College Telephone: (306) 966-8985

E-mail: christine.mitchell@usask.ca

### Course Description:

An examination of the interrelationships between texts in the Hebrew Bible. Various theories and models will be studied, followed by an in-depth analysis of a particular biblical book (or part of a book) and its relationships to other biblical texts. Topic for 2010-2011: Interpretation and reinterpretation in Isaiah 56-66.

Prerequisites: BA 110, or equivalent; and either a 200-level course in Hebrew Scriptures or BL 150, or equivalent.

### Course Objectives:

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain "inner-biblical interpretation" and its related concepts.
2. Identify and interpret the connections between biblical texts.
3. Identify the major issues in the study of Isaiah 56-66.
4. Perform a detailed exegesis on a biblical text.

### Required Textbooks (available from Life Lines Bookroom: 306-374-5656):

A complete Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. I prefer the NRSV, but the RSV, the New JPS Tanakh, the NASB, and the NIV are all acceptable. Please check with me if you have another version you want to use. If you know biblical Hebrew, you may use the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, and work from the Hebrew text; LTS students taking this course for exegesis credit must work from the Hebrew text.

Carr, David. Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. Isaiah 56-66. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

Course pack: contains all other required readings.

### Further Readings:

I have placed several books and photocopies on reserve at the St. Andrew's Library. They are optional; feel free to browse them. They will be very useful for the exegesis assignment and seminar presentation, and therefore are on overnight reserve so that everyone can have access to these books.

### Activities:

You will be invited to participate in the following activities. These activities are designed to further your progress towards the course goals. Thus you will need to satisfactorily complete all activities in order for me to evaluate the final assignment.

- Attendance and participation in class. Class time will be spent in lectures, demonstrations, seminars, and discussions that will further your understanding of the course material and your skills in exegesis. **You will commit to missing no more than two classes during the semester.**
- Readings from the textbook and other sources that may occasionally be distributed. You will be invited to think about questions that will be discussed in the readings. **Periodically throughout the course you will be asked to submit an answer sheet** with: a) the answer to the question(s) I will pose, and b) one question or issue that you are still struggling with.
- Readings from the Bible. Since the textbook readings and class discussions will be focused around readings from the Bible, you will need to carefully read the biblical texts that are assigned.
- Book Analysis. Early in the semester, you will be asked to do an analysis of David Carr's book (details below). This will give you an opportunity to think about the how various texts of the Hebrew Bible came to be interrelated.
- Seminar. Later in the semester, you will be asked to give one or two seminar presentations on a specific topic (details below; number of seminars will depend on the size of the class). This will give you an opportunity to practice exegesis and to think about how a portion of Isaiah 56-66 is related to other biblical texts.
- Exegesis Assignment. At the end of the course you will be given the opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned in the course about Isaiah 56-66, and what you have learned about exegesis and inner-biblical interpretation. This assignment (details below) is the culmination of the course.

LTS "Exegesis" Requirement. LTS students who have enrolled in this course as fulfilling the Exegesis Requirement will be asked to work from the Hebrew text when preparing the Seminar and Exegesis Assignment. You will also translate from Hebrew into English Isaiah 59:1-63:6 (72 verses); you will be given preference for seminar topics in that body of text. We will meet for one hour every two weeks to review approximately 12 verses; we will schedule these meetings for a mutually-convenient time.

Note: **I only accept assignments submitted in hard copy.** You should also keep a hard copy for yourself in case of problems. You can hand in assignments in person, drop in my mailbox in the General Office, or mail to me at the College.

I am open to the final assignment being presented in a format other than a traditional written paper. If you wish to submit this assignment in a non-traditional form (art, music, website, etc.), please see me to make arrangements. You will be asked to submit a bibliography along with the assignment, and the assignment will need to demonstrate understanding and/or use of the ideas found in those works.

Students requiring accommodation for special needs should contact the instructor **and** register with the Disability Services for Students Office at the University of Saskatchewan (Room 60, Place Riel) as soon as possible. I will not grant accommodation without the appropriate form from the DSS.

### *Book Analysis*

The first assignment is an analysis of David Carr's Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature. In a paper of about 1200 words, you should answer the following questions:

1. What is the complete bibliographic citation for the book? Use any recognized bibliographic format.
2. What is the book about, and how is it organized? The answer should be about 250 words (or one double-spaced typed page).
3. What is Carr's main argument about how biblical texts were created? The answer should be about 50-100 words, or one paragraph.
4. What is Carr's main argument about how the biblical canon was created? The answer should be about 50-100 words, or one paragraph.
5. How does each of chapters 2-6 contribute to Carr's main argument about how biblical texts were created? You may choose to focus on one chapter or deal with any or all of the chapters. The answer should be about 200-250 words.
6. How do the arguments made in chapters 7-12 contribute to Carr's main argument about how biblical texts and the biblical canon were created. Use a separate paragraph for each chapter; each paragraph should be 75-100 words.
7. Did you find the book useful? Why or why not? The answer should be about 150 words, or two paragraphs.

I will provide feedback on your understanding of the book and its arguments, as well as upon your use of written language to communicate. The Book Analysis is **due February 17**.

### *Seminar Presentation*

This will be a half-hour presentation of your research, exegesis and interpretation of a portion of Isaiah 56-66, from the perspective of inner-biblical interpretation. These seminars will be ongoing throughout the course – the exact date of your presentation will be determined by the exegetical approach you choose. You should prepare a presentation, as well as a handout containing an annotated bibliography. You do not have to have your research and exegesis completed, but the presentation will give you a chance to try out your interpretations and to get advice and feedback from the class. We will assign topics in the first class. Depending on the size of the class, you may be asked to do one or two seminars. I will give you a feedback sheet at the end of the seminar, showing you what you did well, what you need to pay more attention to, and if you need to use additional research resources. As well, I will comment on your presentation skills. **Due date(s) as noted in the outline.**

## *Exegesis*

This will be an extended exegesis on the passage you have chosen and presented; thus it builds upon the work you have done for your seminar presentation. It will be approximately 15 pages long (3500-4000 words), and should be done according to the guidelines outlined in the “Guide to Exegesis”, but not bound to those guidelines. Since this is an advanced class, you will have the freedom to work on their own exegetical techniques. Your grade for the course will be based on your work in this assignment. You may e-mail me a draft of the assignment at least three days before the due date if you wish general comments about it. The Exegesis is **due April 29**.

LTS students taking this course for the Exegesis Requirement will prepare an annotated translation of the passage (half of the paper) and a briefer exegesis (the other half of the paper).

## Grading

The course grade will be the grade on the Exegesis Assignment; all other assignments, including attendance and questions on the readings, must be completed at a Satisfactory level in order to pass the course. Any student who does not achieve a Satisfactory level on any assignment other than the Exegesis must re-do the assignment until a Satisfactory level is achieved. Any student who does not achieve a Satisfactory level on the Exegesis assignment may choose whether to re-do the assignment or take the final grade that was achieved. Students who choose Pass/Fail grading will receive a Pass if all assignments are completed at a Satisfactory level.

I am interested in students learning about the Bible and about interpretation of the Bible. I assume that students are here because they want to learn, even though this is a required course for some students. I use as my basis for grading the University of Saskatchewan grading definitions, which have been adopted as the definitions within the STU. For those students who choose percentage grading, I have determined a numerical grade to correspond with each descriptor:

Descriptor	Criteria	% grade
Exceptional	A superior performance with consistent strong evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;</li> <li>• an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;</li> <li>• an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;</li> <li>• an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.</li> </ul>	95
Excellent	An excellent performance with strong evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;</li> <li>• an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;</li> <li>• a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;</li> <li>• an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.</li> </ul>	85

Good	A good performance with evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;</li> <li>• a good understanding of the relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;</li> <li>• some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;</li> <li>• a good ability to organize, to analyze and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner.</li> </ul>	75
Satisfactory	A generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;</li> <li>• a fair understanding of the relevant issues;</li> <li>• a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;</li> <li>• an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material;</li> <li>• a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.</li> </ul>	65
Minimal Pass	A barely acceptable performance with evidence of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a familiarity with the subject material;</li> <li>• some evidence that analytical skills have been developed;</li> <li>• some understanding of relevant issues;</li> <li>• some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;</li> <li>• attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner which are only partially successful.</li> </ul>	55
Failure	An unacceptable performance.	40

### Course Schedule:

Seminar topics are marked with \*\*

Course outline is subject to change as the course progresses

- Jan. 27      Introduction to the course; Research and exegesis  
Reading: Isaiah
- Feb. 3      Introduction to inner-biblical interpretation and basic principles and terminology  
Readings (all from the coursepack): Fishbane, “Inner-biblical Exegesis”; Eslinger, “Inner-biblical Exegesis and Inner-biblical Allusion”; Sommer, “Introduction,” and “Literary Theory and the Study of Inner-biblical Allusion and Exegesis”; Van Seters, “Creative Imitation in the Hebrew Bible.”
- Feb. 10      Intertextuality  
Readings (all from the coursepack): Bakhtin, “Heteroglossia in the Novel”; Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue and Novel”; Lotman, “The Text Within the Text”; Barthes, “Theory of the Text”; Riffaterre, “Compulsory Reader Response”; Riffaterre, “Intertextuality vs. Hypertextuality.”

- Feb. 17      Literate orality/Oral literacy  
 Introduction to Isaiah  
 Previous work on inner-biblical interpretation in Isaiah  
Readings: Carr, Writing on the Tablet of the Heart; Blenkinsopp, pp. 27-91.  
Reading from coursepack: Sommer, “Learned Tongue, Inspired Tongue.”  
**Book Analysis due**
- Feb. 24      Isaiah 56:1-12\*\*  
 Isaiah 57:1-13\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 129-166
- Mar. 3        Isaiah 57:14-21\*\*  
 Isaiah 58:1-14\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 166-183
- Mar. 10      Reading Week, no class
- Mar. 17      Isaiah 59:1-8\*\*  
 Isaiah 59:9-21\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 184-203
- Mar. 24      Isaiah 60:1-22\*\*  
 Isaiah 61:1-11\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 203-231
- Mar. 31      Isaiah 62:1-9\*\*  
 Isaiah 62:10-63:6\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 232-251
- Apr. 7        Isaiah 63:7-64:12\*\*  
 Isaiah 65:1-12\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 251-279
- Apr. 14      Isaiah 65:13-25\*\*  
 Isaiah 66:1-6\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 279-301
- Apr. 21      Isaiah 66:7-24\*\*  
Reading: Blenkinsopp, pp. 302-317  
 Wrap-up and review  
 Course evaluation
- Apr. 29      No class, but **Exegesis due.**