

OT/RS 3815 Prophets: Foundation for Ministry in a Global Context
Spring 2007

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exploration of how the message of the biblical prophets integrates the theological traditions of the past with the distinct socio-cultural realities of their context. A study of various approaches to cultural analysis and how they inform the evolution of a model for "prophetic ministry" today. A field experience in Guatemala where student teams conduct an experientially based socio-cultural study of the Mayan community at La Parroquia in San Lucas, Toliman in order to practice building a prophetic ministerial plan that attends to this people and their context as well as to the sacral traditions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The course will employ a lecture/seminar format. Preparation /participation in class sessions is essential. *Weekly* reading assignments will average 75-100 pages of outside reading in addition to 5-15 chapters from biblical texts. In addition to weekly reading preparation, students will be asked (periodically and in advance) to offer an introduction or lead a brief discussion on the designated assignment or topic for seminar.

2. Weekly notes on the Heschel and notes on the biblical reading.

3. Three one page abstracts on Pennath's *Eighth Century Prophets*
pg 1-24 due Feb 26
pg 25-42 due Mar 5
pg 43-98 due Mar 12

Please read the chapter on ALand Accumulation in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah@ pg 99-188 while you are in San Lucas and write a reflection that addresses the question: *In what ways do the prophets' pronouncements on land serve as a basis for discussion about the issue of land in the village of San Lucas and for the people of Guatemala?*

4. Participation in one of three student teams, the individual focus of three teams being :
1) Economic Structures and the Organization of Resources,
2) Political Structures and the Organization of Power
3) Social Structures and the Organization of Relationships.

All students will participate in a three phased study of culture for ministry.

Phase One- (team based) Text-Based Research - preparation of orientation packet on the economic, political, or social situation of Guatemala. Due for class distribution prior to field experience.

Phase Two - Observation - (Functionalist Study) (team based and/or individual)conducted on site at San Lucas, Toliman -You will be provided with a field study notebook and directions for this exercise. Each student will do the assigned field work and complete their own packet. However, you are urged to work in twos or more on site. This should be completed your first three days in San Lucas. (Due April 2 handwritten notes in notebook provided)

Phase Three - Participation - (Thick Description) (individual)conducted on site at San Lucas, Toliman. This can be of your own design- activities students have participated in to learn about culture – clothes washing in the lake, working in coffee, roasting coffee early am, backyard mechanics, visit the sick with villagers, work in the market with one villager, work in the school, work in the potable water project, clinic work, go out to a finca with the drs., sports with kids, dig latrines, learn sandal making, learn to weave with a group of women, etc. The possibilities are endless here. The write-up of the TD is due May 7th.

4. Preparation and presentation of team reports as indicated on the syllabus schedule.

5. Final essay, "Ministerial Plan" (cf. list below) - Develops a model for one small program or aspect of ministry founded upon the sacral traditions of Christian faith in concert with the findings of the socio-cultural study from the field experience (More specific instructions on this assignment will be forth coming). Drawing upon the socio-cultural data you gathered at San Lucas, your options for submission of this Pastoral Plan can be drawn from but are not limited to the following suggestions:

- Design a prayer service that celebrates the work of women in San Lucas
- Develop a lesson on "Exodus Story" for 6-8th graders
- Develop a twice weekly spirituality program for men of the village
- Develop a one-day training for Sacramental Ministers to the Sick
- Design a religious education class (one evening) for adults on the Eucharist
- Facilitate and develop a music plan for a lenten liturgy for a teen musical group
- Plan a 4 hour- 1 day retreat for young adults (18-25) of the village
- Compose a house blessing ritual
- Prepare a one half hour reflection for day laborers working in coffee
- Develop a blessing/ritual for the coffee harvest

March 19 **I The Exploitation of the Powerless - Micah**
Prophet as Member of Community-
Micah 1-7
Texts: Heschel - 68-102/124-129;

II 3 Groups - Phase One presentation of material (packets for distribution)
Final preparation for Field Experience

March 21-Apr 1 ?? Field Study at La Parroquia, San Lucas,
Toliman in Guatemala Assignments in Guatemala:

- Read one selection from book list (TBA)
- Field Notes/Group Notes Journal (daily jottings)
- Bring Bible (light weight)
- Notes for your Thick Description
- Pennath=s chapter

April 2 Gather for Lunch, Pics and short Discussion on Pennath's reading. Hand in essay.

April 9 **Prophecy on the Eve of Destruction - Jeremiah**
Scriptures: Jeremiah 1-20
Texts: Heschel 103-139/130-177
Team #1 - Field Experience Report
"Economic Structures and the Organization of Resources"

April 16 **Prophecy and Exile - Ezekiel**
Scriptures: Ezekiel 1-24; 36-37
Team #2 Field Experience Report
"Political Structures and the Organization of Power"

April 23 **I. Revival of Prophecy - Deutero-Isaiah**
Scriptures: Isaiah 40-55
Texts: Heschel 145-158/184-201
Team #3 Field Experience Report
"Social Structures and the Organization of Relationships"

April 30 **Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (whole book)**
Class discussion of models in concert with
reports and leanings of our field experience.
Heschel, 195-220/249-284
Holland 170-191 "Linking Social Analysis and Theological
Reflection: The Place of Root Metaphors in Social and Religious
Experience"

May 7 **Class Discussion of "Thick Descriptions" and lunch!**

Because students are required to spend March 21-April 1 in Guatemala for the Field Study, the course will conclude on May 7 with final papers due as follows:

Assignments Due Dates:

*Field Notebook - April 2

*Thick Description of a Cultural Text (no more than 4 double-spaced pages)- May 4

*Ministerial Plan - due May 11

TEXTS

Bevans, MODELS OF CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY (req.)

Heschel, THE PROPHETS, VOL I (req.)

Pennath, Eighth Century Prophets – A Social Analysis (req)

Schreiter, CONSTRUCTING LOCAL THEOLOGY(req.)

OTRS 3815 Course Reader: PROPHETS: FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

FIELD EXPERIENCE -- La Parroquia, San Lucas Toliman

San Lucas Toliman is one of the lakeside villages situated on the shores of Lago de Atitlan. This beautiful setting situates us on a lake front, in the highlands (mild climate) surrounded by three imposing volcanoes. Set at the foot of Volcano Toliman, San Lucas is a coffee-growing town and a transport point on the route between the Interamerican highway and the Pacific Slope highway. It is one of the busier and more commercial of the villages of this region with market days on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The population here is made up (almost exclusively) of indigenous peoples. We will be living at La Parroquia, a mission established to serve this community.

The Field Experience provides a contextually based means whereby two of the three avenues for culture study (research, observation, and participation) can be explored.

Objective: to learn to begin to get at the key social, economic, and political identifying features, structural issues, casual links and long term character that together craft the culture of a particular human community as relevant for ministry.

Students will work in three teams during two phases of the study. However, team members will not necessarily work at the same sites in San Lucas. Hence, times will be scheduled for teams to meet during our stay in Guatemala. The final report/presentation will be made by the Team on the dates indicated on the syllabus.

First Order of Business: All students must have a current passport so that all airline tickets can be purchased the moment the price is right. Please get a xeroxed copy to me ASAP

On the matter of Spanish, members of our class, have been hired to help with spanish instruction for anyone desiring so for this semester. They will meet with each of you in regard to your Spanish preparation. While Spanish is not a requirement for this class, it is necessary and advantageous to be able to make some attempts at greetings and conversation as you get to know the people and the village. They will see to this goal with you.

All will have responsibilities in conjunction with the Field Experience as follows: