Arguably the most acute crisis in the history of Israel was the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem that resulted in the destruction of the city and temple, and the exile of the population. Emerging from this crisis is the long scroll of Jeremiah, a complicated biblical book that provides a window on these events the perspective of a participant and inside-observer of the crisis. Jeremiah himself is a compelling and multidimensional figure, surrounded by a colorful and memorable cast of characters. Jeremiah’s interpretation of God’s involvement in the buildup to the Babylonian invasion results in a unique prophetic achievement. Despite the objections of some modern scholars to the seeming randomness of many events and images in the book, this course will assume that the book of Jeremiah unfolds a creative prophetic and poetic vision. Interspersed with prose narratives, the combination of poetry and story relentlessly drive the reader to a new kind experience of invasion and the trauma of exile. Regardless of a student’s background or vocational goals, this course affirms the value of studying this ancient text, learning to open new doors of perception, and acquiring fresh skills for research and writing with a host of potential applications.
II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To approach this biblical book with an understanding of the historical circumstances surrounding its composition, and the range of its subsequent reception from antiquity to the present.
2. To cultivate an awareness of the theological subtleties in this vast book, and become acquainted with how such matters have been interpreted.
3. To facilitate an appreciation of the artistic sophistication of the scroll, and the kinds of hermeneutical moves required to visualize its coherence.
4. To undertake a careful study of this biblical book, and become acquainted with the skills and signals involved in a "close-reading" of the text.
5. To take preliminary steps toward disseminating some basic research to various audiences in the academic world and other communities.

III. COURSE TEXTS

Louis Stulman, Jeremiah (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005).
We should also bring a copy of the Bible - preferably two different reliable translations - for each lecture.

IV. ASSESSMENTS

1. Research Paper (further details to be provided) – 60%, due no later than June 11, with absolutely no extensions. This will be a 5 page, single-spaced paper (on a topic that the student and instructor agree), utilizing at least 5 secondary sources (e.g., academic books, monographs, commentaries, or scholarly journal articles).
2. Final Exam (Friday afternoon) – 40%

V. SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READING

Part 1 - Introduction, background, and inductive overview of chapters 1-5
Part 2 - Poetry, prose, and historical realities in chapters 6-20
Part 3 - Characters, conflicts and theological themes in chapters 21-39
Part 4 - Reading for the plot and the invasion of Jerusalem in chapters 40-51
Part 5 - Conclusions
VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Clements, Ronald E.  Jeremiah (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1988).


Fretheim, Terence E.  Jeremiah (Macon: Smith & Helwys, 2001).


Thompson, J. A.  The Book of Jeremiah (NICOT; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1980).