



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

Fall 2012

ISAIAH
OLDT 0614

MONDAYS, 8:30 – 11:20 AM

INSTRUCTOR: DR. REBECCA G. S. IDESTROM
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To access your course material, please go to <http://mytyndale.ca>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will give an overview of the message of Isaiah in light of the historical and literary setting of the book and the experience of Israel. Special emphasis will be placed on the call of the prophet, the messianic passages, the concept of the remnant, the servant songs, and the prophet's teaching on social justice. The message of the book will be studied with the goal to make the teachings of Isaiah applicable to the life of the church today.

Prerequisites:

Required: Biblical Interpretation (BIBL 0501)

Recommended: Old Testament Theology and History (OLDT 0511)

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this course, the student will learn the following:

A. Knowledge and Understanding

1. to be able to explain and interpret the content, message and theology of the book of Isaiah.
2. to identify the missional emphasis in the book of Isaiah.
3. to foster awareness of the interpretative issues and questions raised by scholars regarding the book of Isaiah.
4. to learn different approaches taken to interpret Isaiah
5. to be introduced to the history of interpretation of the book of Isaiah in Jewish and Christian writings.
6. to demonstrate how the message of Isaiah is still relevant to the Church today.

B. Discipline-specific Skills

1. to be able to analyze and exegete the biblical text of Isaiah.
2. to learn how to read biblical texts with perception and insight.
2. to assess and evaluate various approaches taken to the book of Isaiah.
3. to critically evaluate commentaries and articles written on Isaiah.
4. to seek practical ways in which the message of the book of Isaiah can be interpreted and applied to the Church today in our contemporary context.

C. Transferable Skills

1. to be able to use the available resources for doing biblical studies.
2. to foster the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing by participation in seminars.
3. to develop critical thinking skills to analyze, evaluate and synthesize a wealth of material.
4. to learn self-disciplined study habits and the ability to meet fixed deadlines as set out by the course outline.
5. to foster a desire for life-long learning in the study of Scripture.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Motyer, J. Alec. *The Prophecy of Isaiah*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
ISBN: 0-8308-1424-8.

Webb, Barry G. *The Message of Isaiah*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-8308-1240-7.

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Childs, Brevard S. [*Isaiah*](#). The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Goldingay, John. [*Isaiah*](#). New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001.

Oswalt, John N. [*The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*](#). New International Commentary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Oswalt John N. [*The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*](#). New International Commentary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The following written assignments and seminar discussion groups will help foster the skills of critical analysis and exegesis, the ability to evaluate various approaches and perspectives taken to Isaiah, and deepen the student's knowledge of the overall message of the book of Isaiah.

1. Inductive Study: Due date: October 15, 2012 (worth 40 % of the final grade). Do an inductive study on the whole book of Isaiah. See instructions below entitled 'Inductive Study Guidelines'.

2. Seminar Discussion Groups: Due dates: September 24, October 22, November 5, November 19, 2012. Altogether the four seminar group discussions are worth 20 % of the final course grade. During the course there will be assigned readings to prepare for the seminar discussion groups which will be in class. The students will be divided into small discussion groups where they will discuss an assigned topic and evaluate the readings. After having completed the discussion group, each student will evaluate the others in the group for how they did and submit the grade to the professor. Further instructions on doing the evaluation is given below. Please see the course outline below

for the specific reading assignments and schedule. Please read and make notes on the assigned readings from the required books and selected articles and come prepared to discuss the readings at the seminar group.

3. Research Paper: Due date: November 26, 2012 (worth 40 % of the final grade). Write a 12–15 pages double-spaced (3000–3750 words) research paper on a passage from Isaiah or any topic related to the book of Isaiah. The paper needs to include a bibliography with a minimum of ten academic sources. The bibliography needs to follow proper bibliographic citation. A list of suggested term paper topics will be given in class.

Please NOTE: Going over the allowable page limit by more than one page (or word count by 250 words) on the Inductive Study and the Research paper will result in a reduction in the grade.

Outline of the Seminar Discussions during the Course:

Monday, September 24, 2012

The Theology and Message of Isaiah

Read William Dumbrell, “The Purpose of the Book of Isaiah,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 36 (1985): 111–128; and the ‘Introductions’ of both required textbooks: Motyer, *Isaiah*, pp.13–34 and Webb, *Isaiah*, pp.19–40. According to the above authors, what main theological themes emerge in the book of Isaiah? Which theme stood out to you and why? Why do you think that Isaiah was preserved in the biblical canon? (worth 5 marks).

Monday, October 22, 2012

The Messiah and the Eschatological Hope of the Book of Isaiah

Read the two chapters by Daniel Schibler, “Messianism and Messianic Prophecy in Isaiah 1-12 and 28-33,” pp. 87-104, and Richard Schultz, “The King in the Book of Isaiah,” pp. 141-165 in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (eds. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G. J. Wenham; Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1995), pp. 87-104, 141-165. Then read Isaiah 2:2-4; 9:1-7; 11:1-16; 32:1-8. Come prepared to discuss the texts and readings in class. How is the Messiah depicted in these texts? What kind of eschatological hope does Israel look forward to? Try to read these texts without reading the New Testament’s view of the Messiah into them (worth 5 marks).

Monday, November 5, 2012

The Servant Songs of Isaiah

Look at the four Servant Songs, [Isaiah 42:1-9](#); [49:1-13](#); [50:4-11](#); [52:13-53:12](#) and compare them. How are the texts similar or different from each other? How is the servant depicted in these songs? Is there more than one servant? What is the servant’s role and mission. Read both the commentary of Motyer and Webb on these texts. Come ready to discuss the readings and these texts in class (worth 5 marks).

Optional reading: F. D. Lindsey, *The Servant Songs* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 35-145; H. Blocher, *Songs of the Servant* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1975), 1-79; G. P. Hugenberger, "The Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant Songs' of Isaiah: A Second Moses Figure," in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G. J. Wenham; Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1995), 105–139.

Monday, November 19, 2012

Required Reading and Group Discussion on the Textbooks by Webb and Motyer Although the students will have read and discussed certain sections of Barry Webb and Alec Motyer's commentaries in earlier seminars, the student is required to read *The Message of Isaiah* by Webb in its entirety and Motyer's commentary *The Prophecy of Isaiah* on any twenty chapters from Isaiah, and come prepared to discuss these in the seminar discussion group. Each student needs to inform the others in the group whether they have read Webb's commentary in its entirety and the twenty chapters from Isaiah in Motyer, and their response to this question should be reflected in the grade assigned. If they have not done so, then this should lead to a reduction in grade. The group should discuss some of the following questions: What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of each commentary and what have you learned that is new from either of them? How do the two commentaries compare to one another? How have Webb's commentary and Motyer's commentary shaped your understanding of the book of Isaiah? Was one of them more significant or helpful for you than the other? Explain why. Why is reading a commentary along with a biblical book a useful exercise in general? In your answers, support your evaluation by citing specific examples from each text (worth 5 marks).

The seminar discussion groups will be approximately 30-40 minutes long. The discussion group has five purposes:

- A. to challenge students to develop their critical, thinking skills.
- B. to enable students to improve their skills in developing and expressing theological arguments in a group context.
- C. to empower students to foster ability in leading fellow students in discussion.
- D. to have students take responsibility for their fellow students' education by mutually supporting one another.
- E. to encourage students to listen respectfully to views not their own.

Responsibilities of the student as group participant:

Having read the assigned readings, each student in the group should come prepared with some questions arising from their reading as well as some thoughtful reflections on the material. Some possible questions to ponder are: What struck you about the reading? What new and helpful insights did you find in the reading? Do you agree with the authors' views and arguments, why or why not? Having reflected on the readings and your own study of Isaiah, what are you learning about the specific topic in

discussion. Has your pre-understanding of the topic or biblical texts changed as a result? If so, in what ways have they changed? The student can come up with his or her own questions as well. Each student also needs to report to the group whether they have read all or only some of the assigned readings for that day. (Their answer needs to be taken into consideration when assigning a grade.)

After the discussion, each student will assign a participation grade for each member of the group and submit the grade to the teacher by emailing it to her or to her research assistant (grade from zero to five, with five being highest). Base the grade on the following criteria:

If the student's comments during the discussion reflected an informed reading of the assigned material, allocate a higher grade.

If the student has contributed their fair share (not too much, not too little), allocate a higher grade.

Consider a grade of 4.5-4.7 if the individual has excelled with respect to the above two criteria.

Consider giving a grade of 3.7-4 if the individual has contributed capably with respect to the above two criteria.

If the student has dominated discussion in inappropriate ways, reduce their grade.

If the student has not contributed or contributed only minimally, reduce their grade.

If a student has contributed but their contributions were not informed by a careful reading of the material, reduce their grade.

Has the discussion led to a better understanding of the topic and readings and to a critical interaction with it? If not, reduce the grade.

If the student has not completed all the readings, reduce their grade.

The average grade should be between 3.0-4.3. If the student has excelled, give a 4.7. If their contribution is outstanding, give a 5. If the student's contribution is less than adequate, give a grade of 2.5 or below.

All grades are confidential (you may give fraction grades: e.g., 3.7).

Inductive Study Guidelines:

The purpose of inductive studies is to draw you into intensive, direct study of the biblical texts to suggest a method of Bible study which can be used in any book. Inductive studies also provide background for detailed studies of individual passages and texts within the books which you examine. Avoid the use of annotated Bibles, commentaries and other reference works. However, you may use an atlas or Bible dictionary for place names or puzzling terms.

As a suggestion, first read the following sections in Oletta Wald's *The New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*. Pay particular attention to the chart on listing "Specific Things to Observe." On this chart, the point about "Repetition and Progression of Ideas" is important since the theme of a book is often related through repetition. This reading is optional. Then do the following:

Read quickly through the biblical book noting references to places, dates and people. What patterns (or even lack of patterns) emerge from your study? (A photocopy of the book can help you in the process, so that you can mark the things that strike you as particularly important or unusual. You might even want to mark things on the photocopy with different colour pencils.) Then read the book again (or several times) in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the book. (You may even want to listen to the book read aloud by listening to it on a CD.) Note differences in literary style, e.g. poetry, biographical material (if any), etc. Note changes in person, whether in first or third person, speeches by the prophet, the Lord or other persons, etc.

1. Chapter Titles: Prepare your own table of contents by giving short and distinctive captions or titles to each chapter. (Like newspaper headlines). Be creative!
2. Structure and Genre: What major divisions can you discern in the book? How is the book structured? Look for paragraphs which belong together and therefore suggest the structure of the work. What types of material do you find in the book (genre)?
3. Themes: What are the major themes or topics of the book? What sub-themes are found in the text? Pay particular attention to repetitions of literary motifs and language. Ask yourself why these texts were preserved? What is the message of the book? What are the author's most pressing concerns? What is the book's dominant tone? Any exceptions? Support your answers with specific Scripture references from the text.
4. Questions and Future Projects: What questions emerge from your study? Take note of particularly intriguing, challenging or enigmatic passages that you may want to investigate further at a later date. What projects or topics related to Isaiah would you like to explore in the future?
5. Application: Formulate one or more generalizations arising from your study. What theological insights can be gleaned from the book? In what ways can you practically appropriate these truths in your life and in the life of the Church? Give specific suggestions. What ideas for preaching and teaching in the Church emerge from your study?

What to hand in:

You may use maps, diagrams or charts in presenting the results of your study. However, twelve to fifteen pages double-spaced (3000–3750 words) of written analysis is also expected, including answers to the questions posed above. Please note that this study

should not be a detailed commentary on every chapter in the biblical book (then the study would be too long). Please summarize your results under different headings, like main themes, sub-themes, etc.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

Accuracy (a fair and accurate presentation of scholarly judgment on the issues) – Is what I say correct? Is it valid? Have I understood the topic or question?

Critical Analysis – Have I understood the main issues? Have I done sufficient research on the topic? Does my paper show critical reflection, interaction and dialogue with the biblical text and with authors writing on the subject?

Organization – Does my paper follow a clear outline? Does my paper have a thesis statement? Is there a clear progression and development of an idea or an argument in the paper? Does my argument have a meaningful order?

Clarity – Does what I say make sense? Will others clearly understand what I am seeking to express?

Good Grammar and Writing – Is my paper clean of spelling mistakes? Is the text punctuated correctly? Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar? Do I use inclusive language?

Well Documented (thorough) – Is my work complete? Does my bibliography reflect sufficient research. Have I fully and accurately documented where I have relied upon the work of others? Have I provided complete information about my research sources? Will others be able to locate these sources on the strength of my documentation?

2. Matters of Style

You should submit written work in a style consistent with either the model outlined in [The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies](#) (P. H. Alexander, et al, eds. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) or the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#). For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254.

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straight-forward style of academic prose (cf. the guidelines in Strunk and White, [Elements of Style](#)). Written work ought to betray clear organization, argument and coherent thought. The use of inclusive language is expected.

3. Plagiarism and Honesty

Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

In all work, you are obliged to pay careful attention to matters of intellectual property, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. Plagiarism, by definition, is the use of the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following: copying a sentence or part of a sentence from a book or article without using quotation marks and citing the source; rephrasing another person's words without giving credit for the idea that you have borrowed by citing the source; copying the work of someone else and handing it in as your own. It is assumed that each assignment required for this course will be written independently. Please note that plagiarism in any form on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission.

4. Title Page and Documentation

The title page for all written work ought to include the following:

The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name (if you have a Tyndale Campus mailbox, this must also appear on the title page).

Ensure that you have accurately and fully documented sources used in your paper (footnotes are preferred, endnotes or, in the case of a review, parenthetical references may be used). Documentation and notes should be consistent with the model provided in [The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies](#) (P. H. Alexander, et al, eds. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) or the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#).

5. Late Assignments

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on and before the corresponding due dates. Should this not occur, the following policy shall govern the evaluation of your work. For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one week late: 82 % A- becomes 77 % B+; two weeks late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy work load, other

assignments, professional or ministry obligations or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted prior to the due date.

All assignments must be handed in by the last day of exams. No assignments will be accepted after that date (Friday December 14, 2012), unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the Registrar and not to the professor.

6. Criteria for the Evaluation of Written Work

Your work will be evaluated on whether you answered the specific questions given and whether you followed the general guidelines for submitting written work. For example, the evaluation of your inductive study will be based on whether you followed the specific instructions for doing an inductive study.

7. Submission of Written Work

See the 'Guidelines on Written Work' above.

Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version). If a student wishes to submit written work by mail, they must be mailed directed to the Professor, c/o Tyndale Seminary. Alternatively, work may be given directly to the Professor at the beginning of class on the due date. If the student does not have a Tyndale Campus mailbox and wishes to have all written work returned to them, they must submit written work with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise assignments will be returned in the student's campus mailbox. Unclaimed assignments are destroyed after six months.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Inductive Study	40 %
Discussion Group Seminars	20 %
Research Paper	40 %
Total Grade	100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE AND CONTENT

Sept 10	General introduction
Sept 17	Historical background to the book
Sept 24	First Seminar Group Discussion in Class

Oct 1	The history of interpretation of the book Isaiah the prophet General structure and genre of the book Isaiah in the New Testament
Oct 8	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Monday
Oct 15	Exegetical study of selected texts from Isaiah 1–12 Inductive Study Due
Oct 22	Second Seminar Discussion Group in Class
Oct 29	Exegetical study of selected texts Isaiah 1–12 continued
Nov 5	Third Seminar Discussion Group in Class Exegetical study of selected texts from Isaiah 13–23
Nov 12	Exegetical study of selected texts from Isaiah 24–27
Nov 19	Fourth Seminar Discussion Group in Class Guest Lecturer
Nov 26	Exegetical Paper on Isaiah due Exegetical study of selected texts from Isaiah 40–66
Dec 3	Exegetical study of selected texts from Isaiah 40–66

Please note that there will be NO class on Monday, October 8, 2012.

V. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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2. Articles and Chapters

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For additional resources, a good starting point is the Biblical Studies website at <http://tyndale.ca/seminary/biblical-studies>.