

The Twelve Prophets

Professor	Daniel R. Driver, PhD	Course	Version 2.0.2
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Email	ddriver@astheology.ns.ca	When	9:00–11:30 AM
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Hours	Tuesdays, 2:00–4:00 PM	Website	astheology.ns.ca

1 Course Description

From the Academic Calendar: Ben Sira writes of “the bones of the Twelve Prophets,” asking that they may “send forth new life from where they lie, for they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope” (Sirach 49:10). It is a tantalizingly early reference to the association of Twelve Prophets brought together in the Hebrew Bible’s last book of Prophets, a collection later known as The Book of the Twelve. It is also a pregnant anticipation of the manifold ways in which the words of these prophets have spoken far beyond their original circumstances.

To better understand the origins and impact of The Book of the Twelve, this course will look at its redactional history and editorial shaping, its final canonical forms, and its effects as biblical prophecy. It will introduce current issues in scholarly debate about The Twelve while also exploring ways that The Twelve meet the ancient expectation that they can “send forth new life” amidst the people of God. In broad terms, the course offers an encounter with several individual texts embedded in a wider biblical tradition, and an opportunity to see how together “the goodly fellowship of the Prophets” witnesses to long-term works of providence as judgment and mercy converge in “the great and terrible Day of the Lord” (Malachi 4:5). *Prerequisite:* BF 1001.

2 Required Texts & Materials

The following texts are required. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase their own copies. [Links to help you order the correct editions](#) are on the professor's website.

- [Two Sides] Ehud Ben Zvi and James D. Nogalski. *Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting the Book of the Twelve / the Twelve Prophetic Books*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009.
- [Seitz] Christopher R. Seitz. *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- [Jerome] Jerome; Thomas P. Scheck, trans. *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets, Vol. 1 (Ancient Christian Texts)*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.
- [Theodoret] Theodoret; Robert C. Hill, trans. *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006.

If you do not have access to a good study Bible, I recommend either the NRSV (Michael Coogan, ed.) or the NJPS (Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds.), both published by Oxford University Press.

3 Supplementary Texts

The following titles may be referenced as supplementary texts. They are not required. Other supplementary materials may be provided through the course website.

- [1] Elias Bickerman. *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Koheleth, Esther*. New York: Schocken Books, 1967.
- [2] Hill, Robert C. *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch*. Bible in Ancient Christianity 5. Leiden: Brill, 2005. Link: [AST eBook](#).
- [3] Jerome; Thomas P. Scheck, ed. *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets, Vol. 2 (Ancient Christian Texts)*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017.
- [4] James D. Nogalski. *The Book of the Twelve (2 Volumes)*. Smyth & Helwys Bible commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011. AST Reserve: BS 1560 N64/N635 2011
- [5] James D. Nogalski. *The Book of the Twelve and Beyond: Collected Essays of James D. Nogalski*. Atlanta: SBL, 2017. Link: [AST eBook](#)
- [6] James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, eds. *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*. SBL Symposium Series. Atlanta: SBL, 2000.
- [7] Paul L. Redditt and Aaron Schart, eds. *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.
- [8] Marvin A. Sweeney. *The Twelve Prophets (2 Volumes)*. Berit Olam commentary. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000. AST Reserve: BS 1560 S94 2000, Vols 1 & 2
- [9] James W. Watts and Paul R. House, eds. *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D.W. Watts*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996.

4 Course Outline

We will adhere to the schedule in [Table 1](#) as closely as possible, though the professor reserves the right to adjust it to suit the needs of the class.

§. Seminar Text (Commentaries follow suit)	Date
1. None: Introductions, overview of The XII	9 Jan.
2. The entire Book of the XII, from Hosea to Malachi	16 Jan.
3. Jonah 1–2	23 Jan.
4. Jonah 3–4	30 Jan.
☞ Review Essay 1: Due by the end of Week Four	2 Feb.
5. Micah 1–4	6 Feb.
6. Micah 5–7	13 Feb.
~. No Class: Reading Week	20 Feb.
7. Nahum 1–2	27 Feb.
8. None: Attend Grad Projects in lieu of regular class	6 Mar.
☞ Review Essay 2: Due by the end of Week Eight	9 Mar.
9. Nahum 3	13 Mar.
10. Habakkuk 1–2	20 Mar.
11. Habakkuk 3	27 Mar.
☞ Final Paper: Due by the end of Week Eleven	30 Mar.
12. The entire Book of the XII, from Hosea to Malachi	3 Apr.

Table 1: Schedule of Readings

See the AST website for a list of other [important dates](#).

5 Evaluation

5.1 Grade Structure for HB 3114

1. Weekly **seminar discussions** will facilitate close work with text and interpretation in select books from The XII. Students should come to class fully prepared to discuss the assigned material, which will ordinarily include one to three chapters of primary material per week, plus commentary on those chapters. Commentary includes [[Jerome](#)] and [[Theodore](#)] at a minimum, but will ideally be extended to other ancient and modern readers. The quality of participation will be assessed across the semester.
2. A **first review essay**, on [[Two Sides](#)], will be due at the end of the fourth week of class (Friday, 2 February 2018). It should be 2,500 words long, plus or minus 10%. The first third of the essay should be a summary of the work, while the remaining two thirds should be devoted to critical engagement and evaluation.
3. A **second review essay**, on [[Seitz](#)], will be due at the end of the eighth week of class (Friday, 9 March 2018). It should be 2,500 words long, plus or minus 10%. The first third of the essay should be a summary of the work, while the remaining two thirds should be devoted to critical engagement and evaluation.
4. A comprehensive **final paper** will give students an opportunity to explore one aspect of the Book of the XII, or a short passage from a prophetic book within The XII, in

detail. The paper must have a thesis that involves original exposition of and theological reflection on a biblical text. It is due at the end of the eleventh week of class (Friday, 30 March 2018). It should be 3,500 words long, plus or minus 10% (the total count includes footnotes but not the final bibliography).

The breakdown for the semester’s total work is shown in [Table 2](#).

Weekly Seminars	25%
Review Essay 1	20%
Review Essay 2	20%
Final Paper	35%

Table 2: Distribution of Grades

AST’s [Academic Calendar](#) provides guidelines and detailed criteria for academic assessment. Marks are assigned by letter grade (see [Table 3](#)) using these benchmarks. Note that, at AST, a grade of “C” is deemed “Unsatisfactory.”

A+	94–100	Exceptional
A	87–93	Outstanding
A–	80–86	Excellent
B+	77–79	Good
B	73–76	Acceptable
B–	70–72	Marginally Acceptable
C	60–69	Unsatisfactory
F	0–59	Failure
FP	0	Failure due to Plagiarism

Table 3: Outline of Grades at AST

6 Other Course Policy

Late work will not be accepted, except in genuinely extenuating circumstances. Students must submit something before the deadline if they wish to receive credit. Unless I state otherwise, written assignments are to be uploaded by 11:59 PM on the date indicated.

Essay submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced, and formatted as PDFs. They should be free from error. In this course they should follow either *The SBL Handbook of Style* (refer to the online [Student Supplement](#)), or *The Chicago Manual of Style*, per AST’s policy for major papers. As a reminder, AST also upholds an Inclusive Language Policy.

[Plagiarism](#), if [detected](#), will result in failure of the course.

Students should request permission to record a class or lecture. If permission is granted, or if recordings are provided (as in the case of an online course), I stipulate that all recordings be for personal use only. They may not be shared or distributed.

If you have abilities or disabilities that require modifications to the assessment process or other aspects of this course, please advise the course instructor as soon as possible.

Finally, I encourage the conscientious use of laptops, tablets, and other technology in my classes. In classroom settings, realize that, as [cognitive psychologists have demonstrated](#), “laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers.” Do your part to foster an environment of open dialogue by honouring the presence of your classmates. In online settings, consider both the physical environment in which you choose to

work and the virtual environment that you help create through your participation in various forums. Let your engagement in this course be marked by rigour and charity alike.