SYLLABUS FOR B.A.R. DEGREE
OT421—Old Testament Interpretation: Isaiah
B.M.A. Theological Seminary  Spring Semester 2015
Professor--Dr. Greg W. Parsons

I. Course Description
This is an historical and interpretative study of Isaiah. Emphasis is placed on the literary structure (outline), suggested purpose and the historical context to interpret individual passages.

II. Objectives
1) To identify the literary structure (natural basic outline) of the Book of Isaiah and to suggest a purpose statement for the book in order to assist each student:
   (a) to acquire an over-all view of Isaiah;
   (b) to begin to master the subject matter of Isaiah (namely, knowledge of the contents of each chapter or natural division).

2) To help the student to learn a proper method of interpreting individual passages in the text of Isaiah in light of two important contexts: the historical-cultural background and the overall structure and purpose of the book.

3) To emphasize the proper hermeneutical approach to Isaiah—namely, understanding the text in light of both historical/cultural and Biblical contexts.
   a) To formulate and learn some hermeneutical guidelines for Isaiah to promote accurate interpretation of each passage.
   b) To apply these guidelines in Bible study and exposition.

4) To guide the student in teaching or preaching from Isaiah with emphasis on making valid applications to life situations in the 21st century.
   a) To seek to derive timeless principles from the Book of Isaiah (true to the original context and yet relevant to our modern society).
   b) To try to determine some homiletical guidelines to encourage maximum communication of God's truths.

III. Requirements
A. Reading

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1This syllabus is tentative and may be revised by the professor as needed.
2Contact information for Dr. Greg W. Parsons: E-mail: greg.parsons@bmats.edu phone: 903-586-2501, ext. 212; Home phone: 903-586-3504.
Smith (vol 1: 1-39 (~net of 320 pages); and vol2:40-66 (~net of 365 pages) as well as reading the biblical text (see class schedule below).

Recommended works include: 1) J. Alec Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary and 2) John N. Oswalt, Isaiah, NIVAC. and 3) Bryan E. Beyer, Encountering the Book of Isaiah. (See also works with an asterisk in bibliography). Reading “reports” on special reading slips will be filled out and turned in weekly. Late reports will suffer a grade penalty.

**B. Term paper and report**

Each B.A.R. student is responsible for a term paper of about 9 to 12 typewritten pages, consisting of an exegetical summary of some passage in Isaiah followed by an expository sermon or lesson. An oral report of about 25 to 30 minutes emphasizing the exposition of the text and its valid application will be presented (normally on the day the Bible passage is scheduled for class discussion). The paper should exhibit a proper balance between doctrine (being true to the historical/cultural background and the literary context of Isaiah and previous OT writings) and practical exhortation (being validated in light of the rest of the Old Testament and of the New Testament). The student must consult with the instructor before proceeding with a sermon passage.

The paper should include at least the following aspects: (1) The student must summarize the passage and trace the argument (i.e., the flow of thought) in light of the whole Book of Isaiah and its historical/cultural context. Be certain to utilize the three textbooks as well as at least two or three other commentaries throughout the paper. (2) There ought to be an exegetical or expository outline (summarizing in complete sentences the exact thought of the Bible text) with a brief commentary on each verse which expresses your research into the text. (3) The sermonic portion of the paper should bring out the biblical teaching and timeless principles which find valid application for today. It is very important to consider later Old Testament evidence as well as New Testament quotations or allusions in discerning timeless principles. The student should show how the doctrine (or theology) of the text may impact our modern society. However, do not force an application if there is not a valid one.

**Notes:** Be sure to observe the following rules: (a) To follow the suggested guidelines for interpreting Old Testament prophecy and any specific application to Isaiah; (b) To discuss (in the last part of the paper) how the doctrine (or theology) of the text impacts our modern society; (c) To document your research by Turabian style (including footnotes) with a bibliography at the end.

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*See Ross, Creation and Blessing (especially pp. 42-44) for the concept and examples of an exegetical outline.

*Also see Ross, *ibid.*, especially pp. 46-48 for the concept of an expository outline and timeless principles. Furthermore consult Walter Kaiser’s *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) especially chapter 7 for tips on seeking to glean timeless principles from the text.

*Be sure to give credit to sources you use in coming up with an exegetical and/or expository outlines. It is best to rework what others have done (or start out on your own & consult others to polish up your efforts) rather than copying someone verbatim. However it is still necessary to document the source(s) you utilized or revised.*
A detailed outline of the paper should be distributed to each class member (and to the professor) at the time of the presentation. Furthermore a complete copy of the entire paper must also be given to the professor at the same time (namely before the oral report).

**Note:** A sample draft (preliminary resumé) of the term paper is due on Feb. 12 (approximately 3 to 4 pages) including tentative bibliography, a preliminary exegetical and/or expository outline and a beginning page of sample brief commentary (including with sample footnotes).

C. Exams

Two exams will be given during the semester as recorded on the class schedule below. Emphasis is normally placed on knowledge of the literary structure (outline) as presented in class and other items discussed in the lectures--including any handouts. However the precise nature of these major tests will be explained later.

D. **Grading guidelines for BAR students**

Exams approximately 20 to 22.5% each; term papers--20% each (plus 1% for each oral report); daily grade 13% (including 10% for weekly reading as documented on reading slips and 3% for class participation and attendance). Possible "pop" quizzes over daily reading (perhaps 5%).
IV. Class Schedule (2015) -- B.A.R.

Jan 22  Course syllabus (brief review). Introduction to Isaiah (an overview of the nature, structure, historical background, date & authorship). Brief hermeneutical guidelines for Hebrew prophecy and Isaiah. Study of Isaiah chap. 1. Assignment: read all of Isaiah preferably at one sitting (or at least chaps. 1-39 at one time and then 40-66) in a modern translation such as the NIV, NASB, HCSB, ESV or NKJV. Read Wolf, 11-69, 73-76; +at least half of Smith vol 1: 22-49a, 55-91, 93-117.

Jan 29  Study of Isaiah chaps. 2-6. Assignment: Read specific assigned text of Isaiah. Then read Wolf, 77-88; +at least half of Smith, 119-199.

Feb. 5  Study of Isaiah 7-11. Assignment: Read assigned text of Isaiah +Wolf, 89-106a; 257-61, 291-293, 296-297a; +at least half of Smith, 200-279a. For extra credit: read Beyer, Encountering Isaiah 73-78.


19  Study of Isaiah chaps. 15-23. Assignment: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 116-135; + at least half of Smith, 327-404.

Feb 26  Study of Isaiah chaps. 24-31. Assignment: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 137-159, 290-91; + at least half of Smith, 405-536.

March 5  Study of Isaiah chaps. 32-37. Brief review for exam. Assignment: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 160-177; + at least half of Smith, 537-634.

March 12  NO CLASS. Spring Break #1

March 19  MID-TERM EXAM


April 2  Study of Isaiah chaps. 43-48. Assignment: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 194-204; + at least half of Smith, 190-334a.
April 9  Study of Isaiah 49:1--52:12. **Assignment**: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 205-14; +at least half of Smith, 335-428.


April 23  **NO CLASS**  Spring break #2; BMAA meeting

30  Study of Isaiah chaps. 56-61. **Assignment**: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 223-240, 277-82, 294-299; +at least half of Smith, 515-643

May  7  Study of Isaiah chaps. 62-66. Brief review for exam. **Assignment**: read the specific text of Isaiah. Read Wolf, 240b-254, 300-306; +at least half of Smith, 644-754.

May 14  **FINAL EXAM**

VI. Selected Bibliography

**Introduction or Special studies**


**Commentaries**


