



Course Syllabus - **DRAFT**

KNB 3232HS - Bible in Context: Amos

Knox College, Toronto School of Theology, Winter 2021

COVID-19 Notice: *In the event of a public health or other event requiring physical distancing, this course may shift to a remote delivery method. In such a circumstance, the course outcomes and requirements will remain unchanged, but some accommodations may be made in the areas of content delivery and the manner of assessment. If you have questions about what remote delivery might mean for you, please feel free to contact the course instructor, the Knox College registrar, or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8m3ccr>.*

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Brian P. Irwin, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture
Office Location: Chapel Wing, Upper Level, Knox College
Telephone: (416) 978-2789
E-mail: brian.irwin@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Online, by appointment
Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Identification

Course Number: KNB3232HS
Course Format: This course is offered remotely using Zoom
Course Name: Bible in Context: Amos
Course Location: This course is offered remotely using Zoom
Class Times: Mondays, 11:00am–1:00pm
Prerequisites: *KNB1006 – Reading the Old Testament* or equivalent, plus any 2000-level Bible course

A. Course Description and Student Learning Goals

This course uses the book of Amos as a means of introducing the covenantal values that lay behind Israel's approach to social justice. Students will be required to visit and report on a Church-related ministry with a social justice orientation. Through this exercise and classroom activities, students will reflect on the Church's call to social justice and the way in which this can be realised in the lives of individuals and congregations. If possible, a street orientation will be scheduled to take place on one evening toward the end of the semester. Additional emphasis will be placed on the content and shape of the book of Amos and the task of interpreting it as Scripture of the Church.

The Learning Goals listed below relate to the following areas:

- a) Understanding of Area Content (**UAC**)
- b) General Academic Skills (**GAS**)
- c) Ministerial and Public Leadership (**MPL**)
- d) Personal and Spiritual Formation (**PSF**)

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate a knowledge of the content and message of Amos (**UAC**)

- 2) situate the book and its message within the context of Israelite prophecy and social history (UAC)
- 3) identify one's own social location, starting assumptions, and interpretative principles in reading Old Testament texts (UAC, GAS, PSF)
- 4) identify interpretative issues related to reading Amos in the contemporary era (GAS, MPL)
- 5) exercise the exegetical interpretative skills necessary for interpreting and applying the book of Amos effectively and faithfully for today (GAC, MPL)
- 6) articulate a philosophy of social action that is rooted in covenant faithfulness (MPL, PSF)
- 7) demonstrate the research and writing skills necessary for graduate-level Old Testament study (GAS)
- 8) demonstrate ethical behaviour, taking responsibility for the expectations of course and showing respect and willingness to listen in the learning atmosphere including class discussions and small groups (MPL, PSF)

B. Course Resources

Required Texts

Required texts are available at University of Toronto Bookstore online (<https://uoftbookstore.com/textbooks/>) or at the St. George campus location.

- A modern translation of the Bible (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV11, NIV, NJPS, NET, or NASB). The NET Bible offers extensive textual notes and is available for use online or as a free download from www.bible.org. The NJPS (Tanakh) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible by the best in Jewish Biblical scholarship. As such, it provides a helpful complement to any of the standard Christian translations.
- Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Originally published 1948. New York, NY: Scribner, 2003. *Students must finish reading this book in time for the class discussion to be held Session 6.*
- Paul, Greg. *God in the Alley: Being and Seeing Jesus in a Broken World*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2004.
- Smith, Gary V. *Hosea, Amos, Micah*. NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Recommended Texts

- Badke, William. *Beyond the Answer Sheet: Academic Success for International Students*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003.
This valuable work explains how the approach to education in North America differs from that common in many other countries. Includes helpful advice on academic expectations, studying, research, writing, avoiding plagiarism, and dealing with professors. This work is highly recommended for all ESL and International students.
- Collins, Billie Jean, Bob Buller, and John F. Kutsko, eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014.
An academic style guide based generally on Turabian and used by the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Includes extensive lists of abbreviations related to biblical studies. A recommended purchase for those who plan to continue to do advanced work in biblical studies.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, ed. John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 9th ed. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
This paperback volume has much in common with the larger *Chicago Manual of Style*, which may be consulted for items that Turabian omits. A recommended purchase for students entering a degree programme.

Course Website

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. For help with Quercus, visit: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/support>. Students who continue to experience difficulty after consulting online support should contact Knox's head librarian, Joan Pries (joan.pries@utoronto.ca), for further help.

The professor's personal website can be found at: <https://knox.utoronto.ca/dr-brian-irwin/>

C. Evaluation

The class consists of a single two-hour session each week plus one evening fieldtrip. On some occasions, a portion of class may be devoted to work in small groups. Small group discussions will be based on assigned readings or an exercise given by the Instructor. Grading follows the TST grade scale found below in, "H. Toronto School of Theology Grading Scale and Standards." Other assignments are outlined below.

Students are expected to read through the book of Amos at least three times during the semester and to cover faithfully the other assigned readings.

The final grade for this course will be based on evaluation in five areas:

- 1) **Annotated Bibliography (10%).** Students shall submit an annotated bibliography of resources (e.g., commentaries, monographs, articles) to be used in their Final Assignment (exegesis paper or one of the passages chosen for their small group study). An excellent annotated bibliography will include general descriptive comments about each source along with some evaluative comments about audience, perspective etc. as well as critical comments about the author's argument as it relates to your passage. All entries should follow the format given in Turabian or the "Citing Sources in Academic Writing" handout. (An introduction to writing annotated bibliographies may be found at: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography/>. Your paper should be submitted in electronic form via the course Quercus page. **Due session 4.**
- 2) **Book Report & Discussion Questions (15%).** Students may choose between *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *God in the Alley* and shall submit a one-page summary of the book, followed by a second page stating how the book made you think differently about yourself, the world, or your ministry. If the book did *not* make you think differently in any of these areas, try to articulate why this was the case. The student should also prepare six to twelve discussion questions that might allow this book to be used to introduce the issue of social justice in a congregational context. This assignment is to represent your own assessment and thinking. *Use of secondary sources including web-based book reviews is not permitted.* Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, ability to interact with the text, and ability to follow assignment instructions. (If English is a second language for you, you may wish to supplement your reading by listening to the audiobook version of, *Cry, the Beloved Country.*) Your paper should be submitted in electronic form via the course Quercus page. Unless alternate arrangements have been made, this assignment is automatically submitted to Turnitin.com. **Due session 7.**
- 3) **Ministry Visit and Class Presentation (25%).** Students shall visit and report back to class on a local church-related ministry that is engaged in some aspect of social justice. In addition to general impressions, the student report should include a description of the theological/philosophical motivation for the ministry, its aims, the challenges it faces, and how members of the church might participate in the work. Evaluation will be based on participation, presentation, and effort at integration into the life of the church. Students are free to visit an organisation of their choosing or may select one from a list provided by the instructor. Given class size and time constraints, *presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes.* If you need guidance on making an oral presentation, then you may wish to consult the following resource: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/oral-presentations>.
- 4) **Final Assignment (Exegesis Paper or Small Group Studies)(40%).** Students may choose from *either* of the following assignments:

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(i) write a 12–15 page exegesis paper on a passage from Amos to be *chosen in consultation with the instructor*. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, literary awareness and understanding of the text, effective use of secondary sources, and ability to follow assignment instructions,

or

(ii) prepare a series of four small-group Bible studies on selected passages from Amos. Passages for study should include Amos 7:10–17; 9:11–15 and two others chosen in consultation with the instructor. Each study should engage participants in the world of the text and lead them to responsible application in the world of the present. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, and ability to follow assignment instructions. A completed Assignment Checklist (see Syllabus Supplement) must accompany your final paper. Your paper should be submitted in electronic form via the course Quercus page.

Unless alternate arrangements have been made, this assignment is automatically submitted to Turnitin.com. **Due session 12.**

- 5) **Class Participation and Street Orientation (10%).** This element of the course grade will take into account factors such as readings completed, attendance, participation in class. This portion of the grade includes participation in the evening street orientation conducted outside of class through *Bridges for Youth*. By the final class meeting, students shall be required to submit a statement via the course Quercus page indicating what portion of the required readings they have completed. E.g., "I, STUDENT NAME, attest that I have completed XX% of the required course readings." **Due session 12.**

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Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. The penalty for late work is 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week). This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty advisor or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = "standing deferred") beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Use of Turnitin.com. Written assignments submitted via Quercus may be automatically submitted to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. This process means that student work will thereafter be included in the Turnitin.com reference database, where it will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. Students who have *principled objections* to the use of this service should see the course instructor during the *first two weeks of the course* to arrange an alternative assessment process. Typically, this will involve submitting drafts of the assignment at regular intervals throughout the semester. The Turnitin.com service is now integrated into Quercus so that no separate registration is required.

D. Course Policies & Information

Policies for courses are contained in the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the Knox Student Handbook. See further, the Syllabus Supplement available from the class Quercus page. In particular, please note the following:

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism Policy. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to the Knox Director of Academic Programmes. For details, see the *TST Basic Degree Handbook* and the *Graduate program Handbooks* (linked from <https://tinyurl.com/y47hv9ne>) and the *University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://tinyurl.com/y7vrsrhu>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (<https://tinyurl.com/ydbcge4q>).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at <http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. For help with your UTORid and password or other technological issues the following options are available: email help.desk@utoronto.ca; phone 416-978-HELP; or visit the Help Desk at the Information Commons at Robarts Library.

Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. Forwarding your utoronto email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address. Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Attendance: Students should be aware that Knox College policy states that 80% attendance at a lecture course is required for credit.

Use of Technology in Class. Laptops and other computing devices may be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes only. The use of the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a specific class activity. Students wishing to text message, search for images, fact check etc. should do so during the break or outside of class.

Much of the learning that goes on in the classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between the instructor and the student and between students. Parties outside of that learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. For this and other reasons, permission to record lectures in audio format is granted for use by registered students only. Video recording is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. *Recordings and notes of class lectures may not be electronically reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.*

E. Weekly Schedule of Classes, Readings & Assignments

Session 1 Jan. 11 COURSE INTRODUCTION ♦ THE WORLD OF AMOS ♦ SOCIAL WORLD OF THE PROPHETS

Session 2 Jan. 18 WHO REALLY CARES? ♦ WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE? ♦ SOCIAL JUSTICE & COVENANT OBLIGATION ♦ AMOS 1:1-2 ♦ STRUCTURE & OVERVIEW OF AMOS



Required Reading:

- Syllabus
- Citing Sources handout
- *How Not to Plagiarize* (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>)
- *Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Guide* (<https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism>)
- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Session 3 Jan. 25 ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS (1:3-2:3) ♦ DATING & COMPOSITION ♦ PRINCIPLES OF LAW & ETHICS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul
- Irwin, Brian P. "Social Justice." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, 719–34. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

Session 4 Feb. 1 ORACLES AGAINST JUDAH & ISRAEL (2:4-2:16) ♦ AMOS' OCCUPATION



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul



Due: Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Session 5 Feb. 8 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 1 (3:1-15)



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Feb. 15 TST READING WEEK ☉ NO CLASS MEETING

Session 6 Feb. 22 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 2 (4:1-13) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 1



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul
- Irwin, Brian P. "Amos 4:1 and the Cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria: A Reappraisal." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (April 2012): 231-46.

Session 7 Mar. 1 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 3 (5:1-17) ♦ CLASS DISCUSSION ON, *CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY*



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul



Due: Come to class having read, *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton. Students should be prepared to engage the discussion the questions distributed in class.

Due: Book Report (15%)

Session 8 Mar. 8 WOE ORACLES (5:18-6:14) ♦ HOW TO KILL PASSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith

Session 9 Mar. 15 JUDGEMENT VISIONS 1-3 (7:1-9) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 2



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith

Session 10 Mar. 22 AMAZIAH INCIDENT (7:10-17) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 3



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith

Session 11 Mar. 29 JUDGEMENT VISION 4 (8:1-9:10) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 4



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from Smith

Session 12 Apr. 5 DAY OF RESTORATION (9:11-15)



Due: Final Paper (40%), Statement of Readings Completed

F. Discussion Questions for, *Cry the Beloved Country*

Adapted from, ReadingGroupGuides.com, (http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/cry_beloved_country1.asp)

1. How does the story resemble the biblical parable of the prodigal son? What is the significance of Kumalo's son being named Absalom? Where else does the Bible inform the story?
2. What theological concepts or themes are present in the story and how are they communicated?
3. How in the book does Kumalo experience the absence of God; how does he experience the presence of God?
4. Imagine that you are living in South Africa in 1948. Which character in the book would you be most likely to resemble?
5. Shortly before his death, Arthur Jarvis wrote: "The truth is that our civilization is not Christian; it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate anxiety, of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions." What, if anything, does this statement have to say to Canadian society?
6. What, if anything, does this book have to teach the church?

G. Select Bibliography for Interest and Future Reference

1. Social Justice

Alger, B. "The Theology and Social Ethics of Amos." *Scripture* 17 (1965): 109-116.

Bailey, J. G. "Amos, Preacher of Social Reform." *The Bible Today* 19 (1981): 306-313.

Baker, David L. *Tight Fists or Open Hands?: Wealth and Poverty in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009.

An excellent and detailed study that examines Old Testament teaching on various aspects of justice and economics in light of ancient Near Eastern law codes, drawing attention to the uniqueness of the Biblical approach.

Boyles, Deron, Tony Carusi, and Dennis Attick. "Historical and Critical Interpretations of Social Justice." Chap. 4 In *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, edited by William Ayers, Therese Quinn and David Stovall. New York, NY; London: Routledge, 2009.

Brooks, Arthur C. *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth About Compassionate Conservatism: America's Charity Divide--Who Gives, Who Doesn't, and Why It Matters*. New York, NY: Basic, 2006.

In the most careful and comprehensive study of charity to date, an expert in economics and public policy looks at demographics and discovers that when it comes to charitable donations and volunteerism, committed religious people (of any faith) give far more than do secular Americans.

D'Souza, Joseph. *Dalit Freedom Now and Forever: The Epic Struggle for Dalit Emancipation*. Greenwood Village, CO: Dalit Freedom Network, 2004.

Donahue, John R. *What does the Lord Require?: A Bibliographical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice*. Series IV--Study Aids on Jesuit Topics, 23. Revised ed. Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.

Epstein, Leon. *Social Justice in the Ancient East and the People of the Bible*. London: SCM; Trinity, 1986.

Escobar, Donoso S. "Social Justice in the Book of Amos." *Review and Expositor* 92 (1995): 169-174.

Frey, Christofer. "The Impact of the Biblical Idea of Justice on Present Discussions of Social Justice." In *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and their Influence*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 137., edited by Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman, 90-104. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

Hayek, Friedrich A. *Law, Legislation and Liberty, Volume 2: The Mirage of Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976. (<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/10766791>)

Hill, Alec. "Let Justice Flow like a River: International Business and the Book of Amos." *Cruix* 37, no. 2 (2001): 2-12.

Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

The true story of King Leopold of Belgium, who in the late 19th century established a privately-held colony in the Congo River basin and enslaved much of the population. All the while promoting himself as a humanitarian, the king secretly enforced policies that led to the death of millions of Congolese through disease and abuse.

Jackson, Ben. "The Conceptual History of Social Justice." *Political Studies Review* 3 (2005): 356–73.

Malchow, Bruce V. "Social Justice in the Wisdom Literature." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 12 (1982): 120-124.

Malchow, Bruce V. *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.

A concise and accessible survey of Israel's social concern, which sees it as rising from the broader culture of the ancient Near East. The author discusses the social setting of Israel's concern for justice and examines this interest through each of the main genres of Old Testament literature. Inclusion of endnotes and a bibliography make it a good point of entry to the topic.

Nardoni, Enrique. *Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

The author begins by situating the idea of justice in the cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and proceeds to examine justice as it relates in Israel to the Exodus event, covenantal law, the monarchy, and prophetic, wisdom, and apocalyptic traditions. Approximately half of the book deals with justice in the New Testament writings. Endmatter includes various indices, plus a brief glossary of frequently-used ancient terms related to justice.

Novak, Michael, Paul Adams, and Elizabeth Shaw. *Social Justice Isn't What You Think It Is*. New York, N.Y.: Encounter Books, 2015.

Rosen, Christine. *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*. Oxford: Oxford, 2004.

This thorough and engaging study tells the story of how in the early 20th century, promoters of eugenics found common cause with members of the Social Gospel Movement and how this "progressive" alliance lobbied governments to enact forced sterilization and other restrictive measures throughout North America.

Weinfeld, Moshe. *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. 2nd ed. Jerusalem; Philadelphia, PA: Magnes; Fortress, 2000.

A literary study of the terms "justice" and "righteousness" in the Hebrew Bible and how they figure in the role of the Davidic and Eschatological Kings. The author also examines concepts such as freedom, jubilee and the Sabbatical year in Israel and the ancient Near East.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Fully revised, updated and integrated ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.

2. Amos

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. *Minor Prophets I*. New International Biblical Commentary - Old Testament Series, 17. Peabody, MA; Carlisle, Cumbria: Hendrickson; Paternoster, 1996.

This series is based on the NIV and is directed toward a general audience. This volume covers Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. Achtemeier is a widely regarded scholar and preacher and so this work is characterised by a clear explanation of the text and sound theological insight. Notes at the end of each section discuss textual and critical matters. An excellent, concise commentary on the minor prophets.

Andersen, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman. *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, 24A. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989.

At close to one thousand pages, this volume represents a major contribution to the study of Amos. Close to 200 pages are taken up with introduction and bibliography alone. The authors approach the Masoretic Text of Amos with a text-critical conservatism, preferring to live with difficulties in the text rather than resort to frequent emendation. Interpretatively, they focus on the final form of the text. Regarding the final form of the

book, Anderson and Freedman attribute a significant role to either Amos himself, or to an editor well attuned to the thought of the prophet.

Auld, A. Graeme. *Amos*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986.

Birch, Bruce C. *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*. Westminster Biblical Companion. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1997.

This series is directed toward a general audience. Concise introductions to individual books typically deal with the character of the prophet and the historical context and message of the book. Comments on the text proceed section by section and offer a basic explanation of each passage with occasional theological comment. Birch prefers to focus on the final form of the text rather than on hypothetical reconstructions isolating the "original words" of the prophet. Very occasionally refers to Hebrew in transliteration. No use of footnotes or references to secondary literature.

Carroll R., M. Daniel. *Amos—The Prophet and His Oracles*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2002.

Despite the title, this work is not an exegetical treatment of Amos' oracles. Rather, the author presents a valuable survey of past research into the book as well as an overview of current research. Particularly helpful is the section dealing with, "Reading Amos from the Margins". Most of the book contains an extensive annotated bibliography on Amos research.

Craigie, Peter C. *Twelve Prophets. Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah*. Daily Study Bible (Old Testament). Vol. 1. 2 vols. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1984.

The series, and this volume in particular, is geared toward a general audience. Introductory material is brief and typically deals with the setting and message of the book as well as the character of the prophet. Explanatory footnotes and references to secondary literature are absent. The commentary proper proceeds section by section through each book explaining the text and highlighting prominent themes. Craigie's comments are characteristically well founded. Theological comment is intermittent and generally subdued. At two and a half pages, the introduction to the Twelve Prophets is short, even for a work of this size.

Doorly, William J. *Amos, Prophet of Justice: Understanding the Book of Amos*. New York, NY; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1989.

This short book focuses on the issue of authorship and is written at a popular level. Doorly argues for three stages of composition and editing in the book. The first stage is the work of the 8th-century prophet of Tekoa and the second a late seventh-century Jerusalem scribe who tempered the stern message of Amos with an encouragement to turn to Yahweh for salvation. A final contributor was an exilic figure who included a closing and hopeful oracle of salvation. The author briefly addresses the issue of how multiple authorship affects interpretation and proclamation and concludes by offering a list of ten themes for preaching. Endnotes are minimal as are the suggestions for further reading.

Harper, William Rainey. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905.

Harper's comments include a general explanation of the text, often with reference to the history of interpretation. The bulk of the commentary is devoted to a close examination of textual and other critical problems. Introductory material discusses the precursors to written prophecy, the poetry and language of Amos, and the state of the text. As is the case with other volumes in this series, little interest is shown in matters of theology. Generally dated, but still valuable for its textual comments.

Hasel, Gerhard F. *Understanding the Book of Amos: Basic Issues in Current Interpretations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991.

An accessible and succinct treatment of major interpretative issues arising out of the study of the book of Amos. Many of these revolve around the character of the prophet himself (e.g., Amos' profession, national origin, and intellectual background). Other topics include the use of hymnic doxologies in the book, composition, and the prophet's social criticism. Includes a select bibliography.

Hayes, John H. *Amos, the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1988.

Hubbard, David A. *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 22b. Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989.

An excellent, concise treatment of the text that includes interaction with relevant secondary sources. Few textual notes. Theological comments are minimal but well-founded.

Irwin, Brian P. "Social Justice." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, 719–34. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.

Jeremias, Jörg. *Amos: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library, ed. Douglas W. Stott. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.

Learned treatment of the text that makes full use of European scholarship. Sees much in the book that is exilic or post-exilic and related to Judah. Modest attention to textual issues. Little emphasis on theological reflection.

King, Philip J. *Amos, Hosea, Micah: An Archaeological Commentary*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1988.

This volume does not include exegesis, so is not a commentary in the strict sense. King examines the general archaeological context for the eighth-century prophets and deals with items in Amos, Hosea, and Micah related to topics such as historical geography, architecture, warfare, the cult, agriculture, etc. End matter includes a glossary, bibliography, general index, and scripture index.

Mays, James L. *Amos: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1969.

Good basic explication of the text. Sparse textual notes and little in the way of theological reflection. The introduction deals with a variety of topics including the character of the prophet and the overall message of the book. Mays attributes most of the sayings and autobiographical narratives to the prophet. Certain of the oracles to the nations and the concluding oracle of salvation are seen as originating in the exilic period.

McComiskey, Thomas Edward. "Amos." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank E. Gaebel. Vol. 7, 267–331. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985.

Motyer, J. Alec. *The Day of the Lion: The Message of Amos*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974.

As the series title suggests, the primary interest of this volume is to present the relevance of Amos for the church today. The result is a work that covers Amos section by section, investigating overall themes and offering relevant application. Motyer's comments are theological without being simplistic or devotional. The introduction deals with the setting of Amos' ministry and the essence of his message. No interest in historical-critical issues.

Mowvley, Harry. *The Books of Amos and Hosea*. Epworth Commentaries. London: Epworth, 1991.

Based on the text of the Revised English Bible, this commentary is aimed at a general audience. The introduction examines the historical setting of the books and omits discussion of historical-critical issues. Specific topics of interest are dealt with in occasional, inset excurses. The author provides a basic and accessible explanation of the text and attempts to distinguish between the meaning of the prophetic words for those who first heard them and of the text for those who preserved it. The task of contemporary application is left to the reader.

Paul, S. M. *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991.

Examines lexical and literary issues in great detail and is well aware of ancient Near Eastern mythic and historical background. The author exercises reserve with regard to redactional issues and shows excellent text-critical judgement. Emphasises unity of the book and attributes the vast majority of it to the prophet himself. Excellent bibliography. General absence of theological reflection.

Rilett Wood, Joyce. *Amos in Song and Book Culture*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 337. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Rosenbaum, Stanley N. *Amos of Israel: A New Interpretation*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989.

In this study on the identity of the prophet Amos, the author departs from the widely held view that regards Amos as a Judaeon of humble origins to argue that he was a well-educated individual with a prominent place in the administration of the northern monarchy. This understanding is based on various lines of linguistic evidence as well as the prophet's ability to move freely throughout the kingdom of Israel.

Smith, Billy K., and Frank S. Page. *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*. New American Commentary, 19B. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Smith writes on Amos. Good concise treatment of the text with reference to other recent English-language commentaries. Minimal references and textual notes. Theological reflection is sparse and superficial.

Smith, Gary V. *Amos*. Mentor Commentaries. Revised and enlarged ed. Fearn: Christian Focus, 1998.

A superb evangelical treatment of Amos characterised by attention to structure, form and textual issues. Consistently observant and theologically insightful. Makes effective use of a wide range of English and German secondary literature.

Smith, Gary V. *Hosea, Amos, Micah*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Smith has written extensively elsewhere on Amos and is thoroughly aware of historical, critical, and interpretative issues related to the book. In this volume, he offers a well-informed assessment of the meaning that the text had for the original audience. In the mediating "Bridging Contexts" section, he attempts to isolate themes and principles conveyed by the text. These principles are developed in the "Contemporary Significance" section where an effort is made to sketch out possible avenues of application in the life of the Church. A good, basic commentary that provides an explanation of the text as well as guidance for preaching.

Smith, George Adam. *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, commonly called the Minor*. George Adam Smith's Works on the Prophets. Revised ed. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Amos, Hosea, and Micah. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1928.

Smith was a Scottish Presbyterian minister and scholar who lived for a time in Palestine. Consequently, his writing exhibits a colour that comes from an intimate acquaintance with the land. As was the case with most of Smith's work, this commentary is intended for a general audience. Even so, it is fully aware of critical issues related to Amos, Hosea, and Micah. The commentary is full of theological comment and insight. Critical, textual, and background issues are discussed in concise footnotes. Although dated, it is still worthwhile for its theological and devotional content.

Staton Jr., Cecil P., ed. *Interpreting Amos for Preaching and Teaching*. Kerygma and Church. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1995.

Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary, 31. Waco, TX: Word, 1987.

A judicious and thorough treatment of the text with full attention to form and textual issues. A modest degree of theological reflection appears in the Explanation section. Excellent bibliography.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Joel and Amos*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1977.

H. Toronto School of Theology Grading Scale and Standards

The following chart presents the standard used for assessment in this course. It is included in the interests of transparency and to assist students in self-appraisal. If you wish to discuss an assignment to be submitted or a grade that has been received, please feel free to make an appointment with the instructor.

Letter Grade	Numerical Value	GPA	Grasp of Subject Matter	Explanation
“A” range: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge base.				
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	
“B” range: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.