



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

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OTL634W — The Minor Prophets Module  
Fall 2011

## ***Essential Information***

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *Handbook for Inclusive Language*

## ***Instructor Information***

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Office Hours: By appointment

## ***Catalog Description***

A study of the historical periods, the characters, and the messages of the twelve Minor Prophets, with special attention to the nature and concerns of the prophetic movement in ancient Israel and Judah (recommended prior course work: BIB550 or equivalent)

## ***Course Narrative & Rationale***

The echoes of messages such as the Spirit's coming upon all people so that sons and daughters prophesy (Joel), justice flowing like a stream and righteousness like mighty waters (Amos), the divine expectation of doing justice, seeking mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah), the righteous who are living by faithfulness (Habakkuk), and the tithes being gathered into the storehouse (Malachi) certainly have influenced the thought and message of God's people throughout the generations. Undoubtedly, these messages do not reflect a sense of *minor* by any means. Nevertheless, the *minor prophets* have too often been relegated to a position of

inferiority among the prophets, the biblical canon, and the life and message of the people of God. It is the assumption of this exegesis class that a close and theological reading of the collection of writings found in *The Twelve* will be formative for the development of the Christian minister. Through close exegetical readings of texts, dialogue of the theological significance of those texts, and a greater appreciation of the canonical arrangement of *The Twelve*, this course seeks to invite the student into a life-time of engagement with the collection of writings frequently referred to as the minor prophets. Through a consideration of the texts individually and collectively, the theological world of *The Twelve* will challenge all persons engaged in these texts to re-examine and to imagine how the messages of diverse prophets come together to speak into subsequent generations who experience “pre-exilic power and wealth,” “exilic crisis,” and “post-exilic reformulation of identity.”

## ***Degree Objectives***

This course addresses the following NTS Degree Program Objectives:

- MDiv  
Objective 2. “Articulation of the knowledge of God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (See course outcomes )  
Objective 5. “The cultivation of gifts for minister into competent skills and practices in worship and preaching, teaching and discipleship, care and counseling, evangelism and missions, administration and servant-leadership. (See course outcome )
- MACE  
Objective 1. “Appropriate and enhance the student’s ecclesial understanding of the Word of God, the heritage of the faith, the doctrines of the church, and the fellowship of believers, sufficient to enable him or her to deepen a personal commitment to God and the Church and to inform a passionate, vital, and redemptive ministry. (see course outcomes )
- MAICS.  
Objective 2. “Graduates will demonstrate the integration of theological convictions and cultural sensitivity in order to foster individual and social transformation. (see course outcome )
- MA(TS)  
General Academic Track.  
Objective 1. “Students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships. (see course outcome )  
Research Track.  
Objective 1. “Students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the major theological disciplines and their interrelationships. (see course outcome )  
Objective 2. “Students will develop skill in academic research and writing as a basis for further graduate studies. (This objective is addressed only as the student chooses to write a research paper; see course outcome )

## ***Course Outcomes***

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the basic content and dominant concerns/themes of the books of the twelve minor prophets (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10)
2. Articulate the historical (political, economic, religious) context that underlies each of the books of the twelve minor prophets (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10)
3. Articulate the theological world reflected in and shaped by each of the books of the twelve minor prophets (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10)
4. Describe the significance of the canonical shape of the Book of the Twelve (Assignments 1, 5, 7, 9)
5. Articulate the significance of each of the minor prophets and the Book of the Twelve in the life and ministry of the Church and in contemporary society (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10)
6. Demonstrate the ability to employ a passage from a minor prophet in a local church or para-church setting (Assignments 4, 6, 8)

## ***Church of the Nazarene COSAC Competencies***

- CN1: Ability to identify the literary structure and the main story line of the Old Testament (specifically the twelve minor prophets) [Assignments 1, 3, 5, 7, 9]
- CN2: Ability to identify the books of the Old Testament by genre (specifically the genres reflected within the twelve minor prophets) [Assignments 1, 3, 5, 7, 9]
- CN3: Ability to identify the basic thrust of each major section (specifically The Twelve) of the Old Testament [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10]
- CN5: Ability to describe the historical context of the major sections of the Old Testament (specifically the historical context of each of the twelve minor prophets) [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10]
- CN6: Ability to chronologically order the main events and persons of the Old Testament (specifically in relationship to the minor prophets) [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7]
- CN7: Ability to describe the major theological concepts of the Old Testament (specifically as reflected in the minor prophets) [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]
- CN20: Ability to reflect theologically on life and ministry [Assignments 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10]
- CP1: Ability to communicate publicly through multiple methods (oral, written, media, etc.) with clarity and creativity for the sake of fostering meaning [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]
- CP2: Ability to write clearly and in a grammatically correct manner in the modes of discourse used in the ministry [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10]
- CP3: Ability to speak coherently and cogently in the modes of discourse appropriate for the various ministry contexts [Assignments 1, 6, 8]
- CP10: Ability to synthesize, analyze, reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving and live with ambiguity [Assignments 1, 2, 3, 9, 10]

## ***Required Texts & Course Materials***

Achtemeier, Elizabeth Rice. Preaching from the Minor Prophets. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.

Gowan, Donald E. Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of Israel. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Jones, Barry Alan. The Formation of the Book of the Twelve: A Study in Text and Canon. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995.

Seitz, Christopher R. Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets. Nashville: Baker Academic, 2007.

**Select One:** Either (1) Two volumes of the Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries series (O'Brien and Simundson), OR (2) One volume of NIB:

- Keck, Leander E. The New Interpreter's Bible: The Twelve Prophets, v. 7. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- O'Brien, Julia M. Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Simundson, Daniel J. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

## ***Recommended Texts & Course Materials***

While the student may select either the Abingdon commentary or NIB commentary, if at all possible, the student should consult both series.

The student should have access to at least two appropriate theological introductions to the Old Testament if possible (particularly sections pertaining to the minor prophets). These might include:

Anderson, Bernhard. Understanding the Old Testament, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

Birch, Bruce C., et. al., A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Brueggemann, Walter. An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.

Fretheim, Terence E. God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Hanson, Paul D. The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1986.

## **Course Outline**

See Course Calendar below for the full module. The outline for the week of class sessions is as follows:

- I. Introduction to the Minor Prophets
  - a. The Phenomenon of Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the ANE
  - b. The Minor Prophets Within Their Larger Canonical Context
    - i. *Torah* and *Nebi'im*
    - ii. The Deuteronomic Voice Within the *Nebi'im*
    - iii. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve
  - c. The Minor Prophets within the Broad Historical Context of Ancient Israel and Judah
    - i. Pre-Exile
    - ii. Exile
    - iii. Post-Exile
    - iv. Death and Resurrection?
  
- II. Historical, Exegetical, and Theological Analysis of the Minor Prophets
  - a. Hosea 1-3
  - b. Joel
  - c. Amos
  - d. Obadiah
  - e. Jonah
  - f. Micah
  - g. Nahum
  - h. Habakkuk
  - i. Zephaniah
  - j. Haggai
  - k. Zechariah
  - l. Malachi
  
- III. The Theological World of the Minor Prophets
  - a. Covenant and Fidelity
  - b. Infidelity and Judgment
  - c. Worship and Justice
  - d. Restoration and Hope

- e. Temple and King
  - f. Death and Resurrection?
- IV. The Minor Prophets and the Practice of Christian Ministry in the Twenty-first Century
- a. The Message of the Minor Prophets in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
  - b. Preaching the Minor Prophets

## ***Course Assignments & Requirements***

### Pre-Module Assignments

1. **Reading and Synthesis Papers of the Minor Prophets.** The first four weeks of the class are designed so that the student will engage with the biblical text of the Minor Prophets. In these opening weeks the student will read each of the minor prophets a minimum of three times. The first reading will be a cursory reading in order to gain the overall structure, content, and theological vision of the text. The second and third readings will focus upon specific concerns, arguments, historical allusions, and of the text. At the end of the fourth week, the student will develop a two-page (approximately 500 words; however, as part of the document is a structural outline, the words may be less than 500) document for *each* of the twelve Minor Prophets. In each document, the student will include the following (thus a total of 24 pages; see note above concerning words):
  - a. A brief outline (created by the student and not borrowed from another source) of the book;
  - b. A brief statement of the primary genre of the text and secondary genres found within the text and the manner in which genre affects the function of the text;
  - c. A personal assessment (again created by the student and not researched from other sources) of the historical situation (social, economic, political, and religious) reflected *within the text itself*;
  - d. A description of the essential content of the book (major concerns raised by the prophet, issues raised, messages of judgment vs. messages of restoration, etc.);
  - e. An articulation of the theology reflected *within* the text and the theological vision *shaped by* the text.

The twelve 2-page documents may be submitted as one document. The completed work is due at the beginning of the fifth week of the class (Monday, October 10) by 4:00 p.m. CDT It should be uploaded as an MS Word file through Moodle. The student will submit the essay via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for "Biblical Reading" (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**).

In the final two weeks prior to the module, the student should read the Minor Prophets at least once more alongside the reading of Gowan and the selected commentary (see

below).

2. **The “Death and Resurrection of Israel” Reading and Essay.** In the fourth and fifth weeks of the class, the student will read Gowan’s Theology of the Prophetic Books. Although the text includes material on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the student should read the complete text. Upon completion of the reading, the student will submit a 1000-1250 word essay in which the student discusses the nature of the “Death and Resurrection of Israel” in the Minor Prophets. The student will submit the essay via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for “Gowan Essay” (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**). The essay must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 4:00 p.m. CST on Sunday, October 16, at 4:00 p.m. CDT.

The essay should deal with at least the following questions:

- a. What does Gowan mean “death and resurrection of Israel”? In your critical estimation, is this concept appropriate?
  - b. How does Gowan relate this concept to the Old Testament prophets? In your critical estimation, is this relationship to the prophets appropriate?
  - c. How specifically do the Minor Prophets relate to the concept of the “death and resurrection of Israel”?
  - d. What does the concept of the “death and resurrection of Israel” in the Minor Prophets speak into the life of the church today?
3. **Commentary Work and Insight Reflections.** Upon completion of the first three readings of the Minor Prophets (by the end of the third week), the student will begin to read through the selected commentary (either NIB or Abingdon Commentaries). The student should complete the commentary reading in Hosea, Joel, and Amos prior to the module. Throughout the reading of the commentary, the student will make a minimum of 20 insights gained from the commentary *for each set of four Minor Prophets* (see below). Of the 20 insights, at least four must be from each prophet. The insights should not be standard commentary reflections (i.e., what any other commentator might say), but comments by the commentator that are particularly unique and insightful for the interpretation of the prophet or of a specific text. The student will submit the commentary insight reflections on Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah at the end of the sixth week (Sunday, October 23, at 4:00 p.m. CDT). The student will submit the commentary insight reflections on Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk at the end of the ninth week (Sunday, November 13, at 4:00 p.m. CST). The student will submit the commentary insight reflections on Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi at the end of the twelfth week (Sunday, December 4, at 4:00 p.m. CST). The student will submit the insights via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for “Insights” (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**).

4. **Reading of Achtemeier Text.** In the final week prior to the module class sessions, the student will read Achtemeier's Preaching from the Minor Prophets and will begin to prepare a 500-750 word position paper that s/he will present the following week of class sessions (see Assignment 6 below).

#### Module Assignments

5. **Commentary Work and Insight Reflections.** Obviously, much of the week of the module will be filled with class sessions. However, the student should continue to read through the selected commentary in Jonah-Habakkuk. See instructions in Assignment 3.
6. **"Preaching From the Minor Prophets" Reading, Position Paper, and Presentation.** By the Thursday afternoon class session, the student should have completed a 500-750 word position paper on Achtemeier's Preaching from the Minor Prophets. While the student will likely bring a hard copy to class, the paper should be submitted through Moodle by noon CDT on Thursday, October 27. The student will submit the essay via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for "Position Paper" (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**).

#### Post-Module Assignments

7. **Commentary Work and Insight Reflections.** During the first two weeks following the module, the student will complete the selected commentary in Jonah-Habakkuk and in weeks 10-12, the student will complete the selected commentary Zephaniah-Malachi). See Assignment 3 above for the due dates of the *Insight* submissions.
8. **Preaching/Teaching Experience from the Minor Prophets.** Following the module sessions, the student will teach or preach from a passage of the Minor Prophets (Hosea-Malachi). The setting must be a live, authentic gathering either of a local- or para-church situation. The student will make a DVD recording of the sermon and download it to the instructor (if recording is impossible, the student should make arrangements with the instructor for an ecclesial leader with formal biblical-theological training to attend and to provide assessment). The student may carry out this assignment anytime between the week following the in-class sessions up through the end of the thirteenth week. The DVD or download must be submitted to the instructor by Sunday, December 11, at 4:00 p.m. CST.
9. **"The Twelve Canonically Considered" Readings and Essay.** During the second through fifth weeks following the in-class sessions, the student will read of Jones' The Formation of the Book of the Twelve and Seitz' Prophecy and Hermeneutics. At the beginning of the sixth week following the in-class sessions, the student will submit a 1250-1500 word essay "The Twelve Canonically Considered" in which the student will develop and expound upon a thesis concerning the canonical function of block of material referred to as *The Twelve* (i.e., the Minor Prophets). The thesis should emerge out of the student's reading of Jones and Seitz. At a minimum, the essay should address the following:

- Student’s thesis statement concerning the canonical significance of the block of material called *The Twelve* in the overall biblical canon and in the life of the church;
- Development of that thesis statement to include:
  - Significance of the present arrangement of *The Twelve*;
  - Significance of considering *The Twelve* in its totality and not simply as 12 distinct writings;
  - Hermeneutical significance of the Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) for contemporary biblical study.
- Conclusion regarding the significance of *The Twelve* in their present canonical placement and arrangement for the life of the church.

The student will submit the essay via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for “The Twelve Essay” (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**. The essay must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 4:00 p.m. CST on Monday, December 6.

10. **Comprehensive Essay Exercise.** On Sunday, December 4, the student will receive via Moodle a question/s for a comprehensive essay. The student will begin work on the comprehensive essay (3000-4000 words) and will have just over two weeks to complete the work. The essay will be related to the theological interpretation of the Minor Prophets based upon class sessions and readings as well as the implication of the Minor Prophets for Christian ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The student will submit the essay via Moodle within the Assignments topic area. Under Assignments, click the link for “Comprehensive Essay” (proceed to click the **Browse** button, select the file, click **Open**, and click **Upload this File**. The essay must be uploaded as an MS Word file by 4:00 p.m. CST on Wednesday, December 14.

## ***Distribution of Student Learning Hours***

	pre-module hours	module hours	post-module hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions		35	
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0		0
Reading	25	12	15
Writing	15	5	20
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	10	0	13
Exams & Quizzes	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>48</b>

## ***Method for Submitting Assignments***

The student should submit all written assignments in Moodle following the directions in the Course Assignments and Requirements section above. The sermon/Bible study should be downloaded and sent directly to the instructor's e-mail or downloaded to social media such as YouTube or the instructor's Facebook.

## ***Form and Style Expectations***

All formal work, including citations, etc., should follow the Turabian style. For appropriate abbreviations and other forms in biblical studies, the student should consult the [SBL Handbook of Style](#).

## ***Inclusive Language***

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

## ***Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams***

All assignments must be submitted on time. Late assignments will be reduced by a letter grade for the first week and two letter grades for the second week. No assignment will be received after two weeks following the due date. If a student is experiencing an emergency, s/he should consult with the instructor immediately.

## ***Course Grading***

Each assignment will be graded on a scale of 100; however, the final grade will be calculated according to the following weighting:

Biblical Text Reading Reflection @ 2% each	24%
Gowan Reading and Essay	10%
Achtemeier Reading and	10%
Commentary Reading and Insights	10%
Preaching/Teaching Assignment	15%
Minor Prophets and Canon Essay	11%
Comprehensive Essay	10%
Attendance and Participation	10%

## ***Documented Learning Disabilities***

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and

activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

## ***Class Attendance***

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of the student's education. If the student must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, s/he must contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

During the module class sessions, the student is expected to be present at and to participate in all meeting times (attendance will be taken regularly). Only absences established in the guidelines of the NTS catalog will be counted as excused. For each hour of unexcused absence, the final grade will be reduced by 2%. The student who is absent 8 or more hours during the module or is absent four or more weeks during the pre- and post-module work will fail the course.

As daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits, students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

## ***Course Calendar***

Date	Week	Assignment
9/12-18	1 Pre-Module Begins	Introduction to the course and Syllabus. The student should begin first (cursory reading) of three readings of Minor Prophets (see Requirements)
9/19-25	2	The student should continue with the second (more in-depth reading) of three readings of the Minor Prophets (see Requirements).
9/26-10/2	3	The student should continue with the second and begin the third (more in-depth readings) of three readings of the Minor Prophets (see Requirements).
10/3-9	4	The student should complete the third (more in-depth reading) of three readings of the Minor Prophets (see Requirements) and submit the document (comprised of 12 "mini-documents") to the instructor by . The student should begin to read the Gowan text (see Requirements). The student should also begin the commentary reading of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah and should begin to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements).
10/10-	5	The student should complete the reading of the Gowan text and

16		submit the essay "Death and Resurrection of Israel in the Minor Prophets" to the instructor by Sunday, October 16, at 4:00 p.m. CDT. The student should continue the commentary reading of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah and should continue to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements).
10/17-23	6	The student should complete the commentary reading of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah and should complete the first set of 25 <i>Insights</i> and submit them to the instructor by . The student should read the Achtemeier text and begin to develop a position paper that will be presented at the end of the face-to-face module sessions.
10/24-28	7 Module Face to Face Begins	See course outline for day-by-day class sessions. During the week, the student should begin the commentary reading of Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk and should begin to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements). The student should complete and be prepared to present her/his position paper out of the Achtemeier reading by the Thursday afternoon class session.
10/31-11/6	8 Post-Module Begins	The student should continue the commentary reading of Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk and should continue to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements). The student should begin to develop a teaching/preaching session and have presented the session by the end of the 13 <sup>th</sup> week of class.
11/7-13	9	The student should complete the commentary reading of Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk and should complete the second set of 25 <i>Insights</i> and submit them to the instructor by . The student should read the Jones textbook.
11/14-20	10	The student should begin the commentary reading of Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi and should begin to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements). The student should read the Seitz textbook.
11/21-27	11	The student should continue the commentary reading of Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi and should continue to record <i>Insights</i> during the reading (see Requirements). The student should have completed the Jones and Seitz textbooks and begin to develop the essay "Minor Prophets Canonically Considered."
11/28-12/4	12	The student should complete the commentary reading of Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi and should complete the final set of 25 <i>Insights</i> and submit them to the instructor by . The student should continue writing the essay "Minor Prophets Canonically Considered." On Sunday, December 4, the student will receive the essay question/s for the comprehensive essay.
12/5-11	13	The student should submit the essay "Minor Prophets Canonically Considered" to the instructor via Moodle by Monday, December 6,

		at 4:00 p.m. Preaching/teaching DVD or download to be submitted to the instructor by Sunday, December 11, at 4:00 p.m. CST. The student should be working on the comprehensive essay. Course evaluations will be distributed during the week from the Dean's Office.
12/12-18	14	The student should submit the comprehensive essay by Wednesday, December 14, at 4:00 p.m. CST, via Moodle.