

INTRODUCTION TO OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS

Spring semester 2009

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This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exegesis is a discipline within the field of biblical studies based on skills learned in introductory Hebrew and introduction to the study of Scripture. The exegetical process begins by *establishing the biblical text* to be interpreted. To this end we review the history of the transmission of the Hebrew text, taking note of important manuscripts and translations. In the study of a particular text, we take into account the variant readings recorded in the Critical Apparatus of the Biblia Hebraica. Next, we will make attempts at *placing the text*, paying attention to the possible history and context of its composition and interpretation, and to the literary frame in which we find it. Finally and most important, we will be *reading the text*. In order to read we translate, pay attention to word-choice, types of sentences and other features of the literary structure of a given text. To do this work responsibly, we will review salient grammatical points and vocabulary as necessary. Establishing, placing and reading will lead to productive interpretation.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course students should be able to decide the Hebrew text they are reading with the help of the notes in the Critical Apparatus. They should be able to give an overview of the possible schools or traditions of writing to which the text may be assigned within Ancient Israel's history, and of the literary framework within which the text is found. They should be able to translate a textual unit, determine its literary form and provide an analysis of this form. They should recognize key-words and concepts and connect these with insights into the articulation of the subject(s) of a text unit. They should be capable of making a brief theological interpretative comment that provides a foundation for further interpretative work on the passage. Above all, there should be a degree of comfort and familiarity with the Hebrew language that makes ongoing engagement with the Hebrew text attractive and possible beyond the limits of the Seminary context.

METHOD

To achieve our objectives we will study a selection of text units from the Books of Samuel. These books have interesting compositional theories attached to them, and have a rich history in versions and translations. In addition, the texts in Samuel, although mainly narrative, contain a variety of representative forms of biblical literature, as poetry, prophecy and parable. We will spend in-class time on presentations from the instructor as well as on translation and interpretation.

Sections of basic grammar that have not been addressed in Introduction to Biblical Hebrew may be addressed from time to time.

POLICY ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In speech and in written assignments, it is the policy of the school to avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. Do not use male pronouns (such as “men”) to refer to a group that includes females as well. Consult the Academic Support Center for additional guidance if necessary. See: http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

INTERNET AND CELLPHONES

The use of laptop computers during class is allowed by permission only. Cell phones are to be turned off.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students are expected to be prepared for class and follow assignments.

REHEARSING VOCABULARY is key to facility in translating and reading and **IS A STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY**. Testing of vocabulary will take place on an as needed basis orally in class. Class participation will consist of translating and discussing assigned Hebrew texts and readings from the secondary literature. Students are expected to keep organized notes. Two short papers (two pages each) to show understanding of the notes in the Critical Apparatus will be required homework.

Further written assignments will consist of two exegesis papers, the first due on March 31, with a final paper due on May 15. The first paper will be 8-10 pages, the second 12-14 pages. Guidelines for the writing of the papers will be handed out separately.

The course grade will be based on evaluation of class participation (responsible presence, homework (both written and oral) 50% (class preparation: 20%, vocabulary 10%, CA papers 20%) and the two exegetical papers, 50% (20 % for the first paper, 30% for the second paper).

RESOURCES:

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (Leiden, Boston, Cologne: Brill, 2001)

The Harper Collins Study Bible - New Revised Standard Version

William Scott. *A Simplified Guide to BHS* (Berkeley: Bibal, 2007 or latest edition)

Antony F. Campbell. S.J. *1 Samuel* (The Forms of Old Testament Literature V.II) (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans: 2003)

George M. Landes *Building your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary - Learning Words by Frequency and Cognate* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

Recommended:

***The Jewish Study Bible* – Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)**

Resources for particular texts to be studied will be put on reserve in the library.

Texts to be translated and exegeted [when the text consists of a portion of a chapter, the entire chapter will be read, but only the designated passage will be studied in Hebrew.]:

1 Samuel 1

COURSE OUTLINE

Before class begins on Feb.8, prepare a written translation of Genesis 9: 8-17. Have this with you when class begins. This exercise is not for handing in but be ready to use in class and to parse sentences, analyze verbforms and know the meaning of words. In addition, read through pp.1-22 of the Simplified Guide to BHS and the introduction to Making Wise

[n.b. Assignments are generally for an entire week
Vocabulary tests take no more than 30 minutes of class-time]

Thursday February 8: Introduction to the course and the syllabus: What is exegesis? Lesson 33: Hif'il synopsis

Preparation for Feb.13 and 15: Würthwein pp.1-44.

Making Wise pp. 3-34 and 81-108 [You may read pp.35-80 for your enlightenment but much of this information should be known to you from Scripture I]

Biblical text: Gen.9: 1-13: Translate and study the notes in the Critical Apparatus with the help of your tools. Memorize vocabulary of the assigned biblical passage.

Be prepared as far as possible to explain the notes in the Critical Apparatus (CA), using the BHS, the Simplified Guide and the English Key beginning on p. 58 of the Simplified Guide.

Study the Strong Verb chart; re-memorize the verb stems (binyanim) Read through lessons 34 and 35 in the grammar.

Feb.13: Grammar lessons 34 and 35: verbs that lose more than one consonant; continuation of Infinitive Construct.

Introduction to Genesis

Work in pairs on translations of Genesis 9:1-17.

Preparation Feb.15

Simplified Guide, pp. 1-34. Read through grammar lesson 46.

Feb.15: Grammar lesson 46: Nif'al stem. Intro to Genesis continued.

Work in pairs on critical notes to Genesis 9: 1-17

Preparation for Feb.20 and 22:

Würthwein pp. 105-132

Making Wise, pp. 149-202

Landes vocab. pp.47-52

Begin translating Exodus 20:1-17.

Feb.20: Class presentation: *What is Text Criticism?*

N.B.! At ten a.m. the entire class in both groups meets in Hundley Hall for instruction with Angela Morris on responsible use of the Internet for research on the Bible.

For Feb.22 emphasize memorizing vocabulary of Genesis 9 and Landes pp. 47-52.

Feb.22:

Short vocab test. Presentation on distinguishing between versions. The importance of the Septuagint.

Preparation for Feb.27 and March 1:

Have all of Exodus 20: 1-17 ready for translation in class.

Prepare a two-page paper on the notes in the CA for Exodus 20: 5-17 (following the guidelines). *Paper to be handed in on Tuesday Feb.27.*

Begin contemplating text choice for mid-term paper.

Vocab. Landes 159-163

Feb.27: Hand in short paper. Presentation: The story and the law.
Read and translate Exodus 20:1-17.

March 1: Continuation of Feb.27.

Preparation for March 6 and 8: Landes vocab pp. 52-59 and vocab of texts translated so far.

Handout on Exodus 20.

Making Wise, pp.203-230

Make final decision on text choice for mid-term.

March 6: Short Vocabulary test. Discussion of short papers. Begin looking at Hebrew text of Deut.6: 4-15.

March 8: Continuation of March 6.

Preparation for March 13 and 15: Translate all of Deut.6:4-15. Begin working on mid-term paper. Landes vocab.

Landes pp.129-136 (words occurring over 100x only)

March 13: Deuteronomy 6:4-15. The place and context of Deuteronomy.

March 15: Finish work on Deuteronomy 6. Contemplation of the Torah.

Research and Study week: Concentrate on writing mid-term paper and memorizing vocab. Study grammar on weak points.

Prepare translation of Joshua 24:19-28.

March 27: Mid-term paper due. Translation and critical discussion of Joshua 24

March 29: Joshua 24 continued.

Preparation for April 10 and 12

THERE WILL BE NO EXEGESIS CLASS IN THE WEEK OF APRIL 2 ON ACCOUNT OF AN OBLIGATORY ABSENCE OF YOUR TEACHER. USE THIS TIME TO WORK ON VOCAB, GRAMMAR, AND PREPARATION FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK. BEGIN DECISION ON TEXT FOR FINAL PAPER.

Making Wise: pp.231-262. Translation of 1 Samuel 8:10-18
Landes vocab, everything learned so far and pp.163-167

April 10: 1 Samuel 8:10-18. Context and style of First and Second Samuel.

April 12: Short vocab.test. 1 Samuel 8 concluded.

Preparation for April 17 and 19:

Translate 2 Kings 22:14-20. Choose a key word in the text for more elaborate questions or discussion.

Keep studying vocab.

April 17: 2 Kings 22: 14-20. The context and redaction of the books Kings. The importance of key words.

April 19: Finish translating and discussion of 2 Kings 22

Preparation for April 24:

THERE WILL BE NO CLASS ON APRIL 26 DUE TO ABSENCE OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR.

Translate Isaiah 11: 1-9. Prepare short two-page paper on critical notes to this text, following guidelines.
Handout on prophets and Isaiah.

April 24: Translation and discussion of Isaiah 11:1-9.

NO CLASS ON APRIL 26 MAKE YOUR FINAL DECISION ON TEXT FOR FINAL PAPER. BEGIN RESEARCH FOR THE PAPER.

Preparation for May 1:

Study all vocab learned in Landes and from biblical passages learned so far. There will be a final comprehensive vocab text on May 1.

Translate Isaiah 40:1-11.

**May 1: Short comprehensive vocab test. Context, theme and style of Second Isaiah.
Translation and discussion of Isaiah 40: 1-11.**

May 3: Isaiah 40:1-11 continued.

Preparation for May 8 and 10

Handout on the Psalms. Translate Psalm 137. Continue working on final paper.

May 8: Presentation on style and theme of the Psalter. Psalm 137.

May 10: Last class. Finish Psalm 137.

FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON MAY 18.