

INTRODUCTION TO OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS

Spring semester 2015

Instructor: Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exegesis is a discipline in the field of biblical studies based on skills learned in introductory Hebrew and introduction to the study of Scripture. The exegetical process begins with the task of translating and considering the meaning and implications of important words in the unit. We look at the structure of the unit, the types of sentences and other features, as key vocabulary, word choice and so on. (In Introductory exegesis, the units are established for the student; the task of establishing a unit belongs to a more advanced stage of exegetical study.) We review the testimony of ancient versions and translations guided by the selections made by the editors of the Hebrew Bible in the Critical Apparatus. A more in-depth study of a particular word, key to the passage, helps our engagement with the text. If at all possible, we make an attempt at placing the text, reviewing the possible history and context of its composition and interpretation, and the literary frame in which we find it. Translating, reading and placing the text will lay a solid foundation for a more informed and theologically responsible interpretation.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course students should be comfortable translating and reviewing a Hebrew passage applying text and historical criticism, leading to a meaningful interpretation of the text. Above all we aim for commitment to and enthusiasm for the biblical language which is able to provide us with a solid basis for understanding the text of Sacred Scripture.

METHOD

The primary tool to achieve our objectives is the workbook entitled "A HEBREW SAMPLER – An Exegetical Workbook," a resource your teacher is in the process of constructing. We will also review a significant portion of Hebrew grammar in the Hebrew Primer and additional resources posted on CAMS. Our aim is to address a good deal of biblical material and in the process become more comfortable with the exegetical process as well as increasing our degree of comfort with the Hebrew language.

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. We do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. We 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://lpts.libguides.com/c.php?g=144546&p=946064>.

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**. Class participation will consist of translating and discussing assigned Hebrew texts and readings from the secondary literature. Students are expected to keep organized notes.

Due dates for short papers are spread throughout the semester with guidelines for each assignment posted.

Grading scale:

Class attendance and participation:	400 (including written homework)
First paper:	60
Second paper :	90
Third paper:	130
Fourth paper:	150
Fifth paper:	170

Total:	1000
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Criteria for points assigned to papers will be listed in the guidelines for each paper.

Late papers will receive a reduction of five points per day after the due date. A paper may not be more than three days overdue.

Attendance at all class meetings is a basic requirement. Three absences reduce the class attendance grade by 100 points, with each additional absence reducing that grade by 50 points. Habitual tardiness in class attendance will affect the participation grade. In case of unavoidable conflict, notify the instructor as soon as possible. Participation in class includes pertinent and productive questions, as well as insights and observations relevant to the subject and readings.

1000-950=A 949-900=A- 899-850=B+ 849-800= B 799-750=B- 749-700=C+ 699-650=C 649-600=C- 599-550=D Less than 550 = F

RESOURCES:

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

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

Clines, David J.A. ed. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew.* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009)

English Bibles: The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)

The Jewish Study Bible

Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos. *A Hebrew Sampler – An Exegetical Workbook.* Posted on CAMS

Ernst Würthwein. *The Text of the Old Testament* – Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

Recommended:

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

