

## **OT 4001 Hebrew Reading**

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Fall 2019

Tues & Thurs 9:00 – 9:50 AM

Schlegel Hall 120

### **Prerequisites**

Elements of Biblical Hebrew

### **Instructor Contact**

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Schlegel 304

Office Hours: email for appointment

### **Course Description**

In this course, students who already have a basic foundation in biblical Hebrew will work through translating passages from the primeval history (Genesis 1 – 11) in order to refine their skills in translation and vocalization of the Hebrew text. In the course of our translation exercises, students will develop their own philosophy of translation reflecting their unique interests and values.

### **Learning Goals**

By completing this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate competence in basic biblical Hebrew vocabulary.
2. Practice identifying Hebrew roots and stems.
3. Be able to recite approximately 10 verses of Hebrew poetry.
4. Develop a critical awareness of the interpretive decisions involved in translation as well as their own role in such decision making.

### **Required Books**

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS)

A Lexicon from among the choices below, or another approved by instructor:

- *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon* (BDB)
- *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT)

- Holladay, William. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)

Hackett, Jo Ann. *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (Hackett)

Landes, George M. *Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary* (Landes)

## **Grading**

Participation 10%

Vocabulary Quizzes 10%

Psalm Memorization 20%

Translations 30%

Final Presentation 30%

## Assignments

### Translations

Every Tuesday, students will come to class with their translation of an assigned passage from Genesis 1 – 11. The first translation assignment is listed in the course schedule; however, we will decide how much to translate for subsequent assignments based upon our progress in class. During our time in class on Tuesday and Thursday, we will review our translations together. Students **will not** be asked to submit a hard copy of their translations to the professor. Instead, students will earn credit for showing the hard copy that they have brought to class. During class, additional assessment of the translation will be based upon the following areas:

- vocalization of the Hebrew text
- identification of Hebrew roots
- parsing of verbal stems and conjugations
- explaining one's rationale for translation decisions

Since students know that these are the areas of assessment ahead of time, each student should practice becoming comfortable with these elements of biblical Hebrew as they arise in the course of working on and reviewing homework.

Keep in mind that the explanations that any student provides for translations during class will help all students prepare for the final presentation. Toward that end, it would be in each student's best interest to document the translation decisions that they find most interesting as we progress through the semester.

### Quizzes

There will be 10 quizzes based upon vocabulary words listed in Landes. Every quiz will be administered on **Thursday** during class and graded during class. The first quiz will be on **September 12** and the final quiz will be on **November 21**. When studying for vocabulary quizzes, keep in mind that students will only be responsible for **words that occur 100+**

**times.** That means that the words students will be responsible for will be marked in slightly different ways in the three sections of Landes:

- Vocab sections 1 – 15: the bold Hebrew roots AND cognates marked as occurring 100+ times
- Vocab sections 53 – 57: NOT the Hebrew roots; only the cognates marked as occurring 100+ times
- Vocab sections 72 – 78: the numbered words AND cognates marked as occurring 100+ times

### **Psalm Memorization**

On December 3, students will meet with the professor individually to recite Psalm 121 from memory. Over the course of the semester, students will be responsible for setting their own schedule for memorizing Psalm 121 in Hebrew. A helpful resource in this regard can be found at the following URL: <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/mp3/t26c1.mp3>. This link comes from a website (<https://www.torahclass.com/audio-bible-in-hebrew>) that students are encouraged to use frequently as they practice vocalizing the Hebrew text being translated.

### **Final Presentations**

Every translation includes a litany of interpretive decisions being made (hopefully) consciously and (more often) unconsciously. In this class, students are asked to think critically about those decisions and to come up with a final project that demonstrates their conscientious translation philosophies with regards to the issues of interpretation that students deem most interesting, urgent, productive, misunderstood, etc.

While this is a group assignment, there is also a substantial individual responsibility expected for each student. In preparing for this project, students will work together to develop a list of translation issues worth exploring. Based on the shared list, students will **each** select 2 – 5 issues to explore (selecting less issues entails more extensive discussion of the issue selected). Students will prepare presentations that will lead the class to understand

each issue in more depth. Each student is allotted approximately 10 minutes, but students can also collate their time if sharing discussion of a single issue.

For every issue discussed, the student **must** address the questions listed below, but students have the liberty to dedicate more time to any one question over another:

- What is the interpretive issue?
- What are some options that have been taken in different translations? Are there options that you find appealing that you don't see in any translations?
- What issues of grammar make each option preferable and not preferable?
- What issues outside of grammar make each option preferable and not preferable?
- Why do you interpret this word, phrase, name, verse, etc. the way that you do?

Students are encouraged to be creative with the medium and content of their presentations.

## Course Schedule

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Hebrew Translation</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	9/5			Introduction
2	9/10	Gen 1:1 – 1:8		
3	9/12		<b>Quiz 1: vocab 1 – 2, 53</b>  (9, 11, 11)	
4	9/17			
5	9/19		<b>Quiz 2: vocab 3 – 4, 72</b>  (9, 13, 20)	
6	9/24			
7	9/26		<b>Quiz 3: vocab 5 – 6, 54</b>  (14, 10, 9)	
8	10/1			
9	10/3		<b>Quiz 4: vocab 7 – 8, 73</b>  (13, 12, 18)	
10	10/8			

11	10/10		<b>Quiz 5: vocab 9 – 10, 55</b> (10, 12, 10)	
12	10/22			
13	10/24		<b>Quiz 6: vocab 11 – 12, 74</b> (11, 16, 12)	
14	10/29			
15	10/31		<b>Quiz 7: vocab 13 – 14, 56</b> (15, 11, 11)	
16	11/5			
17	11/7		<b>Quiz 8: vocab 15, 57, 75</b> (12, 9, 18)	
18	11/12			
19	11/14		<b>Quiz 9: vocab 76 – 77</b> (11, 14)	
20	11/19			
21	11/21		<b>Quiz 10: vocab 78</b> (16)	



22	11/26	NO CLASS		
23	12/3		<b>Psalm 121 Recitation</b>	
24	12/5		<b>Final Presentations</b>	

## **Course Policies**

### **Inclusive and Expansive Language**

Whether you are aware of this fact or not, Louisville Seminary emphasizes the use of inclusive and expansive language with regards to people in our written and oral communications. This intentionality of language should be representative of the span of humanity with respect to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, as well as physical and intellectual capacities. With gender, for example, "humankind" is an inclusive alternative to the androcentric term "mankind." For many of us, this type of writing, speaking, and thinking may be new or different and we encourage you to continue to work with it as one aspect of proclaiming the truth of the gospel for all people.

In this course, we will also discuss God with this intentionality of language in mind. While it is clear that the Bible often uses masculine forms to refer to God, the Christian faith has always taught that God is beyond male and female. In keeping with the Christian conviction that God is neither male nor female and the attempt to remain intentional with our language, you are encouraged to either avoid gendered pronouns when referring to God or use pronouns that intentionally reflect the metaphors, theology, or claims you are making. Part of this expectation is that members of this community will be intentional with what we say rather than complicit in perpetuating biases (especially those we do not agree with) based upon our ignorance or lack of effort. To help us remain intentional with our language, the instructor may encourage students, on occasion, to remain cognizant of the language that we use.

Direct quotations and translations from the biblical text need not be altered to conform with this policy; but, you may conscientiously alter these as well if you so choose.

### **Attendance**

Prompt attendance is mandatory. Excessive tardiness (in time or frequency) constitutes an absence. Two unexcused absences negate your grading contract. If absences become a problem, students must meet with the instructor regarding the possibility of passing this class.

Excused absences are rarely possible with the consent of the instructor. However, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor ahead of time via email, and you will be required to submit work above and beyond what is required for your peers in order to make up for the absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to submit their own work—or their own group’s work in the cases where we have group assignments. The use of any ideas or words from an outside source must be acknowledged by an appropriate citation of the author and source. Failure to follow these guidelines constitutes plagiarism and may result in failure of this course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff at the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Policy on Late Work**

All assignments must be turned in on time. Students may be offered grace with regards to one late assignment during the course of the term. A second late assignment will drop your grade on that assignment by half a grade. A third late assignment will not be accepted for credit.

## **Bibliography**

- Arnold, Bill T., and John H. Choi. *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *A Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
- Hackett, Jo Ann. *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010.
- Holladay, William L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by M. E. J. Richardson. Study Edition. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Scott, William R. *A Simplified Guide to BHS: Critical Apparatus, Masora, Accents, Unusual Letters and Other Markings*. 4th ed. Berkeley, CA: Bibal Press, 1987.
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraus, 1990.
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 5th corrected edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.