COURSE DESCRIPTION

In addition to reviewing matters introduced in Biblical Hebrew I and II, this course is designed to give you a basic knowledge of an exegetical process for interpreting the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. It includes how to use and read the basic Hebrew text, BHS (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) and BHQ (Biblia Hebraica Quinta), with the knowledge of textual criticism; how to do word/lexical studies, analyze syntax and a whole discourse with appropriate tools and resources. Students will learn to apply these skills on the set text (either the book of Jonah or the book of Ruth) and/or various selected Hebrew narratives and psalms. At the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to evaluate different Bible translations, technical commentaries and work on biblical studies involving Biblical Hebrew. Through these primary skills, the student will be guided on how to exegete the texts and explore possibilities of interpretations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge Outcomes:

1. Know how to use the reference tools needed to do Hebrew exegesis
2. Know how to use BHS and BHQ
3. Explain how to do textual criticism with a given Hebrew text
4. Analyze syntax with a given Hebrew text
5. Know how to use Hebrew grammar books
6. Know how to make use of concordances, lexicons, and dictionaries for Hebrew exegesis and do a lexical study on a given Hebrew word
7. Apply exegetical guidelines to exegete a given Hebrew text
8. Recognize how syntax, textual criticism and traditions can affect the interpretation of texts
9. Analyze and evaluate different Bible translations and technical commentaries

Attitude Outcomes:

1. Develop an appreciation for the long history and tradition of the transmission of texts
2. Be confident in using appropriate tools for specific needs to interpreting texts
3. Be confident in reading and exegeting Biblical Hebrew texts
4. Inculcate respect for the meticulous scholarship to interpret a text

LIST OF TOPICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Contents and Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Introduction to the Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible | Introducing the tasks of exegesis, which are not merely able to read Biblical Hebrew but includes all the rest of the topics that this course encompasses. A brief excerpt of these topics will be introduced.  
*Key concepts*: exegesis, interpretation, and imagination |
| 2. Hebrew Grammar and Syntax | Introduces the key grammar books needed for exegesis and how Biblical Hebrew grammar and syntax are studied and composed. Learn why and how to use the grammar books as tools for exegesis and when to refer and cite as sources for exegesis.  
*Key concepts*: grammar and syntax |
This topic will be divided into the 3 components, in relevance to today’s tools available. It will begin with collecting evidence in (A) and (B) and concludes with principles of selecting a reading in (C).

Key concepts: Textual criticism

(A) The Masoretic Text in BHS and BHQ

The historical development of reception and recension of a biblical manuscript. The Masoretes and their tasks of preserving the Hebrew Bible. Understanding and interpreting the Masoretic Text from BHS and BHQ.

Key concepts: Textual reception and recension; Masoretes and their tasks; variant readings; transmissional errors

(B) The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)

Introducing the study of the biblical manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Learn to appreciate the variant readings the DSS offer.

Key concepts: Dead Sea Scrolls, manuscripts; fragments; reconstruction

(C) Selecting a Reading

The task of evaluating evidence and the principles that govern the selection.

Key concepts: Urtext, internal and external evidence; emendation

4. How to Do a Word Study

The purposes and the debate for and against word study. Learn how to use the lexicons and theological word dictionaries available.

Key concepts: Semantic range, scope, lexicography

5. Exegesis and the Historical Context

The importance of exegesis and its historical context. Learn the tools we resort to exegete the historical context.

Key concepts: Historicity, biblical history, context and background

6. Literary Criticism

The tasks of literary criticism.

Key concepts: Genre, style, structure, identifying connectives and words, literary integrity, disunity, and contexts; doublets; tensions; layers

7. Appreciating Commentaries

There are many commentaries available, but each commentary is written for a purpose. Learn how to select commentaries that are reliable and suitable for academic purposes; and or for other specific purposes.

8. The Other Methods of Exegesis

A brief outline of the other methods not explicitly covered in this course. See the textbook by Steck.

Key concepts: Redaction, form-critical, tradition historical

9. The Exegesis Process

Putting all the above topics into the exegetical task and evaluating the outcomes.

**COURSE COMPONENTS**

The course consists of lectures and mostly instructing the students how to use key resources for the task of exegesis. There will also be class discussion, independent reading, and research activities. The time allocation (on average per week) of the learning activities is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Lecture</th>
<th>Class Discussion</th>
<th>Excursion/ Web-based Report</th>
<th>Reading and Research</th>
<th>Written Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Out of Class</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Out of Class</td>
<td>In class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5-2 hrs</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 hr</td>
<td>0 hr</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M: Mandatory activity in the course    O: Optional activity
### ASSESSMENT SCHEME (INCLUDING REQUIREMENTS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Nature and Weightage</th>
<th>Purpose and Rationale</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Textual Criticism on the set text</strong> (18%)</td>
<td>As textual criticism is the groundwork to all exegesis, this exercise is foundational. The student will interpret the apparatus for BHS since not all the biblical books have been completed in English translation in BHQ. The student should also appreciate what is available as textual critical notes from BHS and BHQ. Student must exercise the act of decision making and give justification for every variant reading accounted for in the collation of evidence.</td>
<td>1. Student can describe the layout of the Masoretic text. 2. Student can explain how the BHS scholars account for the various manuscripts and why the MT or scholars prefer certain readings. 3. Student can read and interpret the apparatuses of BHS and BHQ. 4. Student completes the task of textual criticism when making justifications for each textual critical notation, and select a reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Compare and comment on the textual critical notes on BHS and BHQ for a chapter of the set text only. (3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Evaluate and give reasons why you select the reading for each textual critical note listed in BHQ for the set text. (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Submission date: 12 Nov</strong></td>
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</table>

| **2. Lexical Study on a Word in the set text** (20%) * | | |
| (a) Select a word to study and churn out a list of the word occurring in the Hebrew Bible. | 1. Student receives a guided learning experience on how to use all the available resources: concordances, lexicons, dictionaries and theological dictionaries for this task. 2. Student selects scope and defines limitations to discern meanings in texts. 3. Student creates meaningful boundaries on the semantic range of the word – a similar task lexicographers attempt. 4. Student evaluates the significance of the word as it occurs in the set text to bear any theological relevance to the story or other occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. 5. Student compares and evaluates their own outcomes to those found in theological dictionaries. Student learns to analyze both the potency and limitations of word studies. To what extent can a word study be meaningful? | 1. Student grasps the steps to search for words in lexicons and dictionaries available (because not all of these resources are presented and structured in the same format). 2. Student recognizes what is a semantic range, and also how word usage in different texts might affect range of meanings. 3. Student appreciates the significance of scope and selection of texts. 4. Student realizes the task of textual criticism as primary to lexical studies. 5. Student engages the use of the Biblical Hebrew grammar books to help with deriving meanings for occurrences. 6. Student performs critical analysis and reflection on the steps undertaken to complete the task. 7. Student evaluates not only their own work, but also the outcomes of the entries in theological dictionaries and lexicons. |
| (b) Read through all the occurrences and perform preliminary task of interpreting general meanings from these occurrences (3%) | | |
| (c) Put these occurrences into meaningful categories – define and specify these categories (10%) | | |
| (d) Consider what the significance of the word occurring in the set text, in relation to the categories in (c). How does it impact the immediate verse or passage on the whole? (3%) | | |
| (e) Evaluate your interpretations with recommended source by your instructor (4%) | | |
| **Submission date: 3 Dec** | | |

| **3. Exegetical Methods on the set text** (45%) * | Steck’s steps of exegesis begin from a concise analysis and observation, initiated from a personal reflection of the text. It encourages imagination in interpretation, before integrating scientific measures to substantiate and evaluate interpretations. Student’s imagination is therefore not confined and curbed at the start but encouraged to be harnessed through scientific means. | 1. Student records a thorough analysis of a text by observing how a text is presented (according to Steck’s series of questions). 2. Student develops critical observation of structures and inconsistencies in a text. 3. Student considers their hermeneutical horizon in interpreting a text. 4. The student imagines possibilities through a text. |
| Part A: Preliminary Interpretation (10%) | | |
| Follow the format by Steck in Chapter One, p.7. (answer in point form accordingly and must not exceed 800 words). | | |
| **Submission date: 17 Sept** | | |
**Part B: Submit a report on “Determining the Historical Context” (15%)**

By following Steck’s procedure, student learns to ask critical questions concerning the historical context of a text.

1. Student discerns between the history presented in the text and the history when the text is composed.
2. Student considers the ancient Near Eastern background as quintessential to studying the Hebrew Bible.

**Submission date: 8 Dec**

**Part C: Literary Criticism (20%)**

Perform Literary Criticism on the set text according to the guidelines from Steck Chapter 1, pp. 8–12 (i.e., do Part I: Imagination from Text Observations); Chapter 4, p. 58. This assignment should be about 5–7 pages long including the outline or structure on the book/portions of the set text. Do NOT exceed 10 pages for this assignment.

1. Student follows Steck’s guided procedure for this task. Student observes for structure, identifying connectives and words, literary integrity, disunity, and contexts; doublets; tensions; layers; etc.
2. Student incorporates Biblical Hebrew grammar principles and considers structures in literary composition of a text.

**Submission date: 22 Dec**

**4. A Report on Commentaries (10%)**

* Write a report within 800–1000 words comparing and commenting (either positive or critical) on at least 2 commentaries you have utilized in the course of studying the set text. These comments should be based on the exegetical principles you have learned in this course. Consider the academic value, thoroughness and validity of interpretations. Remember to give reasons and examples to support your statements.

1. Student recognizes not all commentaries were written for the same purposes and the value of each are different.
2. Student incorporates all the knowledge and skills they have acquired through this course to make this report.

**Submission date: 22 Dec**

**5. Reading Log and Class Participation (7%)**

(a.) Completion of all reading assignments allocated through the diligent completion of the Reading Log.

1. This course covers a few technical topics, and primary reading materials are necessary to grasp the intention of each task.
2. A positive learning attitude is expected to develop as we go through the steps in achieving each learning outcome.

(b.) Active positive engagement in class during the hands-on learning experience of using the resources is expected.

1. Student covers the necessary knowledge to grasp each learning activity.
2. Student can account the steps and purposes on how each task can be completed.

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* Assignments 2, 3 and 4 must be uploaded to VeriGuide and then submitted to the designated assignment folder in Blackboard together with the signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement. Late submission is subject to mark penalty.
GRADE DESCRIPTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. Demonstrates precision and accuracy throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Substantial performance overall and fulfils most learning outcomes with above average competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>High performance generally, with average performance on some areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Good performance on some learning outcomes and less satisfactory on others, resulting in overall a good performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance overall, shows an average grasp in most of the learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance overall, shows an average grasp in some of the learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance overall, shows an average grasp in a few of the learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>Barely satisfactory performance overall, shows less than average in some of the learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Barely satisfactory performance overall, shows less than average in almost all the learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. In the case of group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents. For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide. The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submission. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one’s own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

BHQ  Biblia Hebraica quinta editione cum apparatu critico novis curis elborato. Edited by A. Schenker. Stuttgart, 2004-. [CC BS715 2004]
BHQ 18: Megilloth
BHQ 13: Twelve Prophets


COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | 10/9 | Introduction to Hebrew Bible Exegesis (Bring S)  
*Key concepts:* Exegesis, interpretation and imagination  
Assignment 3(Part A) – Steck ch.1 (p. 7) on the set text |
| 2     | 17/9 | Hebrew Grammar and Syntax I  
Revision of Hebrew Grammar  
*Key concepts:* Morphology and syntax |
| 3     | 24/9 | Hebrew Grammar and Syntax II  
How to Use Biblical Hebrew Grammar Books as Tools for Exegesis.  
Appreciating Syntax and How Rules Are made. When Should a Grammar Book be Consulted?  
Reading of Ps. 23:1–6 and Prov. 2 (or other non-narrative texts). |
|       | 1/10 | (No Class. Public Holiday.) |
| 4     | 8/10 | Textual Criticism: The Masoretic Text in BHS and BHQ I  
Bring BHS, BHQ, and Wegner; and previous translations on the set text  
*Key concepts:* Transmission of texts; Masoretes; BHS and BHQ Textual Apparatus; Masoretic notations; transmisional errors  
Area covered: Introduction to Transmission of Texts; Wegner chs.1–3 |
| 5     | 15/10| Textual Criticism: The Masoretic Text in BHS and BHQ II  
Introduction to Textual Criticism; Wegner ch.4 (pp. 89–105)  
Reading the BHS Apparatus for the set text with reference to Wegner Excursus 1 (pp. 106–119). |
| 6     | 22/10| Introducing the Dead Sea Scrolls – Learning to Use the Volumes of Discoveries of the Judean Desert [DJD]  
Reading the DSS of the set text’s manuscripts, and the BHQ Apparatus |
| 7     | 29/10| Textual Criticism: Selecting a Reading; Wegner Chp 5; Comment and Evaluate on BHQ Notes on the Set Text (Assignment 1(a) and 1(b)). |
| 8     | 5/11 | Note: We will also consider a few commentaries here. (Topic: Appreciating commentaries)  
*Key concepts:* Urtext; internal and external evidence; best reading; emendation |
| 9     | 12/11| How to do a Word Study  
*Key concepts:* Semantic range; scope, lexicography |
| 10    | 19/11| Determining the Historical Contexts  
Steck ch.9: bring Steck. Assignment 3 (Part B) |
| 11    | 26/11| Literary Criticism  
*Key concepts:* Structure, identifying connectives and words, literary integrity, disunity, and contexts;  
odoublets; tensions; layers  
Steck chs.1 and 4 |
| 12    | 3/12 | The Other Exegetical Methods and the Exegetical Process  
*Key concepts:* Redaction, form-critical, traditio-historical criticism.  
Steck ch.11: bring Steck |

This Course Outline is subjected to change according to class size, participant’s proficiency of Hebrew language and knowledge of Hebrew Bible, and other circumstances. The set text and scope of reading will be decided in the first few lessons.

**REFERENCE TOOLS:**

Dictionaries and Lexicons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>

**Concordance**


**Grammar and Syntax**


**Dead Sea Scrolls Reference**


**Other Books**


Miscellaneous Items of Interest


Suggested for anyone with a weak background in English grammar:
Long, Gary A. Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew: Learning Biblical Hebrew Grammatical Concepts through English Grammar. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. [EBSCOhost; A student who used it commented, “It has been VERY helpful in my understanding of English-to-Hebrew terms. I really like the way it breaks down what the terms are in English—with examples. Then it gives you the same thing in Hebrew—with examples. Pure genius in my book! I would definitely recommend this book to any student who is having trouble with grammar.”]

Vocabulary, Parsing, and Quiz Website made by a DTS student with the needs of DTS students in mind:
http://www.creativemargin.com/learn/iParsing/ [This book provides the same Hebrew text as BHS but without the text-critical apparatus. At the bottom of each page are parsing and meanings for the words on the page that appear fewer than 70 times in the OT or those having a weak verb root. A glossary at the back gives meanings for words used over 70 times. (A person might consider having this as a paper copy of the Hebrew Bible and an electronic version of BHS with its apparatus. Think about what might work best for you. ]

Vocabulary Website, called ProVoc (has Hebrew and other languages also). It is for Mac OS X
http://www.arizona-software.ch/provoc/

Vocabulary Website: http://www.animatedhebrew.com [“A curriculum developer at Briercrest has written a nice interactive program for Ross’s vocabulary, verb paradigms, and lessons (with flash). It downloads freestanding for a PC, but Macs can access an online version. Online, you have to wait a minute for some modules to load.” —John Hilber]

Another Vocabulary & Paradigm Website: http://www.lionelwindsor.net/language_tools_hebrew.html

Quiz Website: http://quizlet.com/subject/hebrew/ [The student who found this says, “It has flash cards, tests, and other helps. It is very user friendly! It has vocabulary for Jonah or Ruth on flash cards, the Mitchel vocabulary, and more.” You can scroll through lists of items offered (for both modern and biblical Hebrew), or you can use the search bar at the top of the page to find items you might like to try, for example: Mitchell flash cards: http://quizlet.com/subject/hebrew-mitchel/, Jonah flash cards: http://quizlet.com/subject/hebrew-jonah/, Ruth Flash cards: https://quizlet.com/subject/hebrew-ruth/]

Font Website: http://scripts.sil.org/SIL Ezra

Font Website: http://www.sbl-site.org/Resources/Resources_BiblicalFonts.aspx

For reading in Hebrew or Greek with assistance: Being developed by John Dyer at DTS, an online Hebrew and Greek reader's Bible: http://bible.johndyer.name/. You type the reference of the OT or NT verse or verses that you want to read and the level of vocabulary assistance you want; it has other features also.

Audio Website: http://www.audiotreasure.com/. This site has the Bible read in various languages (Russian, Italian, Mandarin, Hindi, etc.). Here is the direct link to Hebrew:

Audio Website: audioscriptures.org provides free access to the Bible read in a large number of languages, including Hebrew.

Audio Website: http://www.talkingbibles.net/files/0123/OT/OT.html

Audio Website: This one has the OT read aloud and is especially easy to use.
http://www.aoa1.org/hebrew_audiobible.htm

Audio Website: OT read in Hebrew available in Mp3 format here: http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt00.htm

Audio Website: Charles Grebe at animatedhebrew.com said, “You can get an excellent recording of the entire Hebrew Bible by Shlomo Bertonov from The Central Library for the Blind in Israel. The last time I checked the cost was US$50. They also have a sample of the recording on the web site. This same recording (by Shlomo Bertonov) is also available from resellers in the US e.g. (hebrewworld.com, solomonstreasurechest.com). You will probably also find an audio editor useful to give you better playback control. Especially when you are just starting, the audio recordings will be too fast for you to follow. With an audio editor you can select short portions of the recording to playback repeatedly. I recommend Audacity. It’s free, open source, cross-platform and easy to use.”
Aleppo Codex Website: http://www.aleppocodex.org

Isaiah Scroll Website: http://www.imj.org.il/shrine_center/IsaiahScrolling/index.html

Leningrad Codex Website: http://archive.org/stream/Leningrad_Codex

Leningrad Codex table of contents, two websites:
http://openlibrary.org/books/OL24998735M/The_Leningrad_Codex


BibleWorks 10: Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research (CUHK Library Workstations: UL #3, #4; CC #G29, #216; UC #UC1FPUDE01)