

Providence College / Theological Seminary
Seminary: OT6101 Exegesis of Hebrew Narrative
College: 163.41 Intermediate Hebrew I: Exegesis

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SYLLABUS

The instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus up to the first day of class.

Course Description

This is a course in Biblical Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew developed from ancient Hebrew known through inscriptions to the later form found at Qumran. As a sacred text the Old Testament was preserved and refined in what are called Masoretic texts. This Hebrew must be distinguished from mishnaic and modern Hebrew.

Hebrew Narrative studies the grammar, vocabulary, and morphology encountered in the book of Ruth, as found in the Masoretic manuscripts. The later vocalic interpretations and text divisions are a part of the study of Biblical Hebrew.

Course Objectives

The student will improve proficiency in Biblical Hebrew, regarding grammar, and vocabulary, and especially narrative tense sequence and structure.

The student will begin learning to consult and use Hebrew language tools.

The student will become familiar with the BHS text, with its textual footnotes, and with the Masoretic scribal contributions.

The student will begin to understand the theology and message of the book of Ruth.

Course Texts: Required

(Texts available at the Providence Bookstore: 1-204-433-7110 or 1-800-668-7768; email: bookstore@prov.ca.)

Chisholm, Robert B. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. [See note attached to "Kautzsch" in "Course Texts: Recommended" below. *Gesenius* can be used as an alternative to Chisholm.]

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Regensburg, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

Leningrad Codex B 19^A is the oldest complete Hebrew manuscript and has become the standard

text for study of the Hebrew Old Testament. This edition includes the masorah and textual notes which will be part of the study in this course. The Snaith edition (London) will not be sufficient for the purposes of the course. If you cannot afford *BHS*, photocopy Ruth from the copy in the Seminary reference library. The Providence Library reference section has copies of both *BHS* and of the earlier edition, *BHK* (*Biblica Hebraica* edited by Kittel), which has quite different textual footnotes. If you use the library's copy, make sure you are using *BHS* and not *BHK*.

Holladay, William L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, 1981.

This lexicon is based on the 5-volume work of Koehler-Baumgartner, but Holladay has many suggestions of his own. Older lexicons such as Brown-Driver-Briggs or Gesenius are acceptable but not preferred, as they do not include recent research and are more difficult to use.

Scott, William R. *A Simplified Guide to BHS*, 4th ed, Bibal Press, 1987, 2007.

Course Texts: Recommended

Bush, Frederic W. *Ruth, Esther*. Word Biblical Commentary. Word, 1996.

This is a fine commentary on these two books; it will be a long time before you need any more.

Kautzsch, E., ed. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Revised by A. E. Crowley. Oxford: University Press, 1910.

This is the classic Hebrew grammar. *Gesenius* can be used in class as an alternative to Chisholm, an intermediate grammar.

Vance, D. *A Hebrew Reader for Ruth*. Hendrikson, 2003.

Course Requirements

Class functions as a workshop, so regular class attendance is mandatory, regular absence will affect grade up to and including course failure. Class will consist of readings from Ruth. Lexical, syntactical, exegetical, literary, historical, and theological questions will be discussed for each of the readings. It will be necessary to bring the texts to each class. Class times will include a review of introductory grammar. That is, each student will have *BHS*, Holladay, and Chisholm books in front of them in class; hopefully also Bush.

1. Class Participation: for each class the student must prepare to translate any part of the weekly passage. Students may bring an English Bible to class, but it will stay closed unless there is a particular reason to consult it. Students will not bring their own English translation to class, but rather are expected to be able to work entirely with the Hebrew text throughout the class. Class preparation includes familiarity with *BHS* footnotes and the assigned reading. Ability to read Hebrew orally is also included. 20%

2. Weekly Translation Quizzes on the passage for that week. They may include other questions from the Hebrew text, or from the Scott reading. 20%
3. Vocabulary Quizzes. Based on vocabulary to be announced, depending on which introductory grammar the incoming students have used. 20%
4. Research Paper: each student will be required to demonstrate proficiency in the interpretive task in a research paper (7-10 pages) on Ruth 4:13-17, or some part of that passage. If you use only a part of this passage, divide it along some natural line of content or style, and explain briefly why you divided it at that point. Examine textual, lexical and syntactical questions; and note compositional and theological issues. Make use of the commentaries listed in the course Bibliography.

To be more specific, the paper should make reference to narrative sequence, the text footnotes, sentence structure, the grammar noted in Chisholm or Gesenius, and the meaning / theology of the passage (some of these need appear only in footnotes, but none should be ignored). That is, the method of the paper should more or less duplicate the method of class time. 20%
5. Final exam will test for cognitive clarity of syntax and exegesis. The exam will require grammatical and exegetical analysis of passages studied in class. A lexicon and Gesenius' *Grammar* or Chisholm's *From Exegesis to Exposition* may be consulted. 20%

Course Schedule

Course Introduction, Grammar Review, begin Ruth 1:1f

Ruth 1:1-10 Scott, pages 8-12; Chisholm, pages 119-133 (Narrative sequence)

Ruth 1:11-17 Scott, pp13-17; Chisholm 60-66 (Noun state and case).

Ruth 1:18-2:3 Scott, ch 4; Chisholm 72-78 (article, infin. abs, infin. const.)

Ruth 2:4-10 Scott, ch 5 beginning (pp25-29); Chisholm 79-85 (verb stems)

Ruth 2:11-17a Chisholm 85-94 (Verb aspect and mood)

Ruth 2:17b-23 Chisholm 94-103 (*Waw*-consecutive)

Ruth 3:1-10 Chisholm 103-112 (Volitional forms)

Ruth 3:11-18 Chisholm 142-47 (Hebrew poetry)

Ruth 4:1-9 Chisholm 169-76 (Poetic style and techniques)

Final Exam Research Paper due

Bibliography: Ruth

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999.

Bush, Frederic W. *Ruth, Esther*. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas, TX: Word, 1996.

Campbell, E., Jr. *Ruth*. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

Chisholm, Robert B. *A Workbook for Intermediate Hebrew: Grammar, Exegesis, and Commentary on Jonah and Ruth*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006.

Hubbard, Robert L., *The Book of Ruth*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.

Bibliography: Hebrew

Arnold, Bill T. and John H. Choi. *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge: University Press, 2003.

Chisholm, Robert B. *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Regensburg, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch. Revised by A. E. Crowley. Oxford: University Press, 1910.

Holladay, William L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.

Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Transl. and ed. under M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-1999.

Lambdin, Thomas O. *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971.

Lisowsky, Gerhard. *Kondordanz sum Hebraischen alten Testament*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981.

Saenz-Badillos, Angel. *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Trans J. Elwolde. Cambridge: University Press, 1988, 1993.

Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Waltke, Bruce K. and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Watson, Wilfred G.E. *Classical Hebrew Poetry*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984.

Weingreen, J. *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

To send E. Neufeld an email, go to the prov.ca web site > Seminary > Faculty > Ed Neufeld > Contact Information (at the bottom of that page is an email form).