

Hebrew 323: Biblical Texts
Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fall 2007

Class: MWF 1:20-2:10

Instructor: Jim Kirk

Office: 1336 Van Hise Hall

Office Hours: after class or by appointment

Location: 115 Van Hise

Email: jkirk@wisc.edu

Office Phone #: 262-8240

Home Phone #: 265-5844

Welcome to Intermediate Biblical Hebrew (a.k.a. Biblical Texts)! The primary purpose of this course is to reinforce and expand your existing knowledge of Biblical Hebrew. We will work towards this goal in the best way possible, by reading Biblical Hebrew. In addition to reading texts together in class we will systematically review Biblical Hebrew grammar and continue to build vocabulary (by the end of the spring semester you should know all the Biblical Hebrew words that occur 25 times or more). Finally, we give some thought to the literary features of Biblical Hebrew narrative: how did the biblical authors artfully craft their language to create richly meaningful stories?

REQUIREMENTS:

1) **Attendance** is crucial for your success in this class. You are expected to come to class with all the assigned work completed and ready for active participation. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student and be prepared for the next class session.

2) **Weekly translation:** Come to class prepared to translate from an unmarked Hebrew text, parse all verbs, identify all forms. You may use notes, but you may not use a prepared translation. Students will take turns reading one- or two-verse portions of the assigned text aloud and then translating. When a student finishes reading and translating, I may ask a few simple grammatical questions. I will also field any questions that arise. Then we will move onto another reader, who will pick up where the last one left off.

To prepare for class, read the assigned text in advance (roughly 10-15 verses per day). Look up any words you don't know. Consult *BHRG* or another reference grammar if any phrases or words are unclear. Make a note of anything you can't figure out on your own, and ask about it in class.

3) Every Monday we will begin class with a brief 10 minute **quiz** that will test you primarily on material covered the previous week, especially vocabulary, morphology review, and translation. The quiz will start at the beginning of the hour, so please do not be late. There will be no make-up quizzes (except at my discretion--talk to me if you have a valid excuse), but your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

4) **Reading: A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar:** This is a reference grammar, and so you should not try and memorize every detail. However, I would like you to read every assigned section more or less closely depending on the amount of detail in it. I will offer you some guidance on approaching specific sections as the semester progresses.

4) We will have a **mid-term** (Fri., October 19) and a **final exam** (Mon., Dec. 17 at 7:25 P.M.). Both exams will be cumulative. We will discuss them in more detail later in the semester.

5) **Paper:** You must read Shimon Bar-Efrat's *Narrative Art in the Bible* and write a 7-10 page analysis of the book of Ruth with respect to one of the literary features discussed in Bar-Efrat (i.e., narrator, characters, plot, time and space, stylistic devices). I will give you more information on the

assignment later in the semester. You will be responsible for this reading on the midterm. The paper will be due roughly two weeks after we finish reading the book of Ruth.

6) It is important that you gain the ability early on in your study of Biblical Hebrew to read Hebrew aloud fluently. To encourage you in this you must prepare a narrative text of chapter length from Ruth or Jonah and read it for me during office hours (or by appointment). This is due by **December 7** (feel free to complete the assignment earlier in the semester). A good, free, oral recording of the Hebrew Bible is available at http://www.aol.org/hebrew_audiobible.htm.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HEBREW DEPT. GRADUATE STUDENTS:

1) In addition to the assigned reading in *BHRG*, Hebrew Department graduate students should read the corresponding sections in Joüion/Muraoka. We will work from *BHRG* in class, but please feel free to ask me questions arising from Joüion/Muraoka outside of class.

2) Hebrew Department graduate students will meet with Prof. Miller for an additional “4th Hour” of credit in Hebrew historical morphology. Please contact her for more information. She will give me a grade for this 4th hour that will be averaged in with your other grades for the class.

COMMUNICATION:

1) I have set up a course email list for our use. The address is: hebrst323-1-f07@lists.wisc.edu. Please feel free to use this list to communicate with your fellow students, arrange study groups, ask questions, or do anything else related to Biblical Hebrew.

2) I will post files for download on the Learn@UW website (<http://learnuw.wisc.edu>).

<u>GRADING:</u> (approximate %; GS = Graduate Students)	Grading Scale:	A	93-100 (Outstanding)
Oral Reading:	10% [GS 10%]	AB	89-92 (Exceptional)
Quizzes:	20% [GS 15%]	B	82-88 (Good)
Paper:	20% [GS 15%]	BC	79-81
Midterm Exam:	25% [GS 20%]	C	70-78 (Adequate)
Final Exam:	25% [GS 20%]	D	60-69 (Marginal)
GS “4 th Hour”	20%	F	0-59 (Inadequate)

TEXTBOOKS:

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. JSOT Supplement 70/Bible and Literature Series 17. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000. [NAB]

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1979.

Elliger, K. and Rudolph, W., eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967-77.

Joüion, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Subsidia Biblica 27. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006. [Recommended; 1991 ed. is fine too.]

Landes, George M. *Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary: Learning Words by Frequency and Cognate*. Resources for Biblical Study 41. Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2001.

van der Merwe, Christo H. J., Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. [BHRG]