



HB602: Hebrew 4

Spring 2012

Due West: Tuesdays 1:00-4:00 PM

3 Credit Hours

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Office Hours for Spring 2012

TBA; Other times by appointment. Additionally, for students taking Hebrew 2, I am willing to meet before class from 12:00-12:55 (we could eat lunch together and talk) and immediately after class from 4:00-5:00 on Tuesdays for anyone who wishes to meet. Your participation is recommended but not required. ☺ Breakfast or lunch discussions are also encouraged. Scheduling appointments is recommended but not required. Scheduling an appointment may be advantageous for those traveling a distance.

Course Description

HB602 Biblical Hebrew Four

Selected readings in the Hebrew Old Testament continue to foster the student's facility in translation and further familiarity with classical Hebrew grammar.

Prerequisites: HB 501, 502, 601 (Biblical Hebrew I, II, and III). In order to receive exegesis credit for this course, students must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis prior to taking this class. *Exegesis/Elective. Three hours.*

Course Purpose

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian church. As one component of preparing for that mission, increased competence in Biblical Hebrew is a powerful resource for Gospel preaching, teaching and ministry. The ability to read, accurately interpret, and effectively minister with Hebrew Law and Poetry (the major genres of the OT after that of narrative) sensitively and well opens the door to have a deeper, more nuanced, and more faithful understanding of Scripture and Biblical Theology.

Course Objectives

- Further increase your ability to accurately read Hebrew orally.
- Further mastery of Hebrew vocabulary.
- Further increase in your ability to use advanced Hebrew lexicons profitably and with nuance, including genre and subgenre nuance.
- Further increase in your understanding of how morphology, the verbal system and syntax function, including genre and subgenre verbal system and syntax. This will include increased understanding of how syntax and the verbal systems function differently in the genres of poetry and legal texts than they do in narrative prose. Your deepening understanding of these genre-specific grammar and syntax dynamics will be demonstrated by greater insight into the text and increasingly nuanced and accurate exegesis and translation. This will also increase your ability to translate Hebrew poetry into English and to increasingly be able to assess English translations of Hebrew Poetry. 😊
- Come to better understand the linguistic, semantic and text linguistic complexities¹ in comprehending, interpreting and translating the two genres of Hebrew poetry and Biblical Law.
- Better understand and benefit from the insight that parallelism exists on every level of the Hebrew poem (a la' Adele Berlin).
- Be able to operate with increasing comfort and competence the linguistic and stylistic dynamics of poetry and law. This will include the ways that the Hebrew verbal system operate differently in poetry than in prose, and how to negotiate the waters of the tensions between syntax and stylistics in Hebrew poetry as well as develop your ability to perceive and exegete multiple levels of syntax and significance in Hebrew poetry .

¹ Less work has been done up to this point on text linguistics in Hebrew poetry (and even less in law), but there is some careful initial work in these areas that will benefit us and make you more competent readers and exegetes. 😊

- Discuss a second intermediate level Hebrew grammar and properly prepare you to use solid and advanced Hebrew reference works in the future.
- Increase your ability to read, comprehend, translate, aesthetically appreciate, exegete, and responsibly hermeneutically and ministerially appropriate Hebrew legal and poetic texts² (practical wisdom, speculative Wisdom, Psalms, including subgenres, erotic love poetry, and prophetic texts) rounding out your knowledge of crucial Hebrew genres and sub-genres. Since the Psalms are so central and crucial to the ministry of any Gospel minister the ability to increasingly read Hebrew poetry competently and beficially will make your access to the Psalms (and all other poetic literature) able to inform and feed your ability to challenge and comfort the people of God from one of the richest portions of Scripture. ☺
- Increase your ability to read, comprehend, exegete, translate and personally and ministerially appropriate Hebrew poetic and legal texts by better understanding inter-clause relationships, supra-sentence dynamics, and the significance of sub-genre syntaxes. This will allow you to understand and profitably use all of the Text Linguistics oriented articles, commentaries and reference works that will increasingly be written during your ministry. Your deepening understanding of Discourse Grammar and syntax will be demonstrated by greater insight into the text and increasingly accurate and nuanced exegesis, translation and interpretation.
- To introduce how to interpret Hebrew poetry and legal texts and then both model for the students, and develop and encourage their own ability to read and interpret Hebrew poetry and legal texts in their multiple dimensions.
- Further develop and apply your understanding of textual criticism and further increase your insight and ability to profitably use the textual apparatus of your *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* as we interpret less textually stable texts than Ruth.
- To begin to be able to both comprehend and to thoughtfully evaluate discussions, arguments and conclusions made about Hebrew poetry and legal texts in articles, books, commentaries, sermons, etc. This class will also give you the skill set to begin to profitably use and critique the better commentaries on poetry, Psalms and Law.
- To further increase the desire to use your Hebrew Bible in *all* ministerial contexts, including your devotional life.
- Gain the ability to increasingly see the exegetical, theological and ministerial value of the competent minister/teacher and his/her Hebrew Bible. The final goal here is that by the time your formal Hebrew instruction in Seminary is over you will be able to be self-training in Hebrew the rest of your life and competent and motivated to use the *very best*

² This will include a growing appreciation that many of the dynamics and nuance of Hebrew poetry and the communicative efficiency and richness of this major genre disappear in English translation. ☺ The better your Hebrew becomes, the more you will perceive *what has been there all along*. ☺

dictionaries, grammars, tools and commentaries in a discerning and critical way in order to enable you to value and use Hebrew as a core skill and irreplaceable component of your Gospel ministry. Brothers and sisters, don't settle in ministry in riding a three wheeled tricycle when you can learn to handle a Harley! ☺

- To equip students for their future study and use of legal texts, Poetic and Wisdom books as a personal, theological and ethical resource for their lives and others. For example, it would be difficult to overestimate the contribution that the Psalms have played in the life of the synagogue and the Christian church. It would be wonderful in the future to see the church increasingly benefit from legal texts, poetic texts and the Wisdom literature as well.
- To give students the opportunity for significant input regarding questions, content and issues that they want us to think through together and sustained opportunities for discussion as we read texts together.
- To aid students in continuing to develop biblical and theological analysis, research skills, rhetorical skills in leading discussions, critical thinking and evaluation, reading, writing and conversational skills.

Required Textbooks for Masters, MDiv and ThM students

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, and Amazon) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

In addition to your BHS, lexicon and Putnam from last semester, the following books will be used in HB602³.

Berlin, Adele, and Lida Knornina. *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, The Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1985. Paperback--ISBN-13: 978-0802803979.

Fokkeman, Jan P. *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide*, Trans. I. Smit, paperback. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0664224394.

Wendland, Ernst R. *Analyzing the Psalms, Second Edition*, paperback. Dallas: SIL International, 2002, ISBN 9781556711299.

³ If you want to read a book in December and January on the history of attempts to understand Hebrew poetry in order to better understand how we got to where we are in the 1980's and beyond, I recommend reading this excellent book, James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History*, The John Hopkins University Press, paperback, June 1998, ISBN 978-0801859441.

Williams, Ronald J. *William's Hebrew Syntax, Third Edition, Revised and Expanded by John C. Williams*, paperback, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0802094292.

Journal articles will sometimes be distributed and discussed.

Optional Supplemental Reading for Masters and MDiv students

For those who wish enrichment and further discussion on Hebrew poetry more fully informed by text linguistics we can meet while eating lunch for an hour after class or another mutually agreeable time and discuss a solid additional book on poetry and/or Biblical Law.

This book will be chosen in January in conversation with those of you who desire an extra hour of Hebrew enrichment. ☺

Additional Required Textbooks for ThM students

Lunn, Nicholas P. *Word-Order Variation in Biblical Hebrew Poetry: Differentiating Pragmatics and Poetics*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Paternoster Press, 2006. ISBN 1842274236.

I will also require additional work in Hebrew Grammar and Syntax. Which particular book or articles that will be read will be worked out in consultation with any ThM students who desire to do this based on their present skills and competence in the areas of Hebrew grammar, syntax, poetry and legal texts. ;-)

Course Requirements

Students are to be properly prepared for each class meeting having thoughtfully read all textbook materials and having worked hard and faithfully with the assigned Hebrew text of the day. Two pieces of work will be written. First, a paper on a text, chosen by you and approved by Ome, will be written to demonstrate the skill set learned⁴ and proficiency gained during the semester. This will *not* be a research paper in the normal sense, but rather to show your increasing ability to do independent work. All you can use for the paper is KB4/HALOT and Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, your textbooks and assigned articles, and works on grammar and syntax as well as books and articles written on poetry that do *not* deal with your chosen text. The class is intended to build sufficient skills in you that you can grow those skills in a lifetime of use of the Hebrew Bible and will therefore be liberated to effectively use *and critique* commentaries and journal articles *after* your direct and focused encounter with the Hebrew Bible for teaching and ministry⁵. Second, a three to five page sermon or Adult Sunday School class paper based on the work done in your original paper and faithfully grounded in

⁴ This implies, among other things, demonstrating the increasing ability to not simply attempt to interpret verse by verse, but more importantly, the ability to understand and interpret *the entire poem!*

⁵ I cannot overstate how crucial and necessary the development of this ability is for effective, mature, biblically faithful ministry! ☺

your research. Informed and prepared classroom discussion and interaction will be a crucial component of this course.

Rules of Engagement in Class Discussion⁶

You are invited and encouraged to intellectually engage one another and your professor in this class! Thoughtful and vigorous discussion is crucial to this class. Learning Biblical Hebrew involves thoughtful and disciplined inquiry about the language in which 76% of Scripture was written in. Such learning and inquiry is best done in community, and there is no greater potential for productive interaction – interaction that is mutually beneficial and productive of real, valid, and worthwhile answers – than in a community of Christian scholarship. Recognizing that together we form a small community of truth-seekers devoted to Christ, his Kingdom and Scripture, let us commit ourselves to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and love. The following guidelines are proposed as some ground rules, or “rules of engagement,” for our class discussions and interaction:

- Deepening one’s understanding of another language requires being willing to make mistakes in learning the language. Try to remember this and relax. ☺
- Be humble, courteous, and respectful.
- Work hard to correctly understand the day’s assignments, the biblical text and one another.
- Try to articulate your thoughts as clearly as possible.
- Avoid personal attacks.
- Keep clearly in mind that our mutual goal is Truth, not personal gain or ego.
- Avoid monopolizing the conversation.
- Try to stay on topic.
- Welcome criticism and questions.
- Expect disagreement at times, and deal with it constructively when it arises.
- Be quick to apologize if you offend someone.
- Be equally quick to forgive if you are offended by someone.

Seminary Policies Link for Students: In addition to the particular policies involved in this course, click this link and read carefully as a part of this course syllabus contract:

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf

Style and Bibliographical Formatting Requirements

For the research paper, students are required to follow the form and style guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These guidelines are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “Style and Form Standards for all Masters Level Programs,” (Erskine Seminary). All papers must be typed/processed (12-point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the “Style and Form Standards” (Erskine Seminary). In this course, footnotes and a bibliography are required in each paper.

⁶ These rules represent a slightly modified version of Dr. John Wingard’s rules. I’d like to thank my generous friend and former colleague for sharing them with me and allowing me to modify them.

The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted towards page requirements. The font used is to be clear and legible, such as Arial, or Calibri. Students who need help in finding good Hebrew or Greek fonts should ask me for assistance. No papers will be accepted that are not stapled or put in an appropriate binder.

Your paper will be an analysis of a suitably sized Psalms text (consult with me for advice on picking an appropriately sized Psalm that is literarily and theologically rich) that we do not do in class, applying all the techniques that are developed in the course textbooks, discuss and do in class. The second week of class I will distribute a handout entitled "Guidelines for Writing the Hebrew 602 Exegetical Paper." This handout will present the procedures to follow in writing your paper, some specific additional bibliographic suggestions, discussion of the two approaches you can take and a model paper for the class taken from the best paper written last year. The hard copy of the paper, and its electronic form submitted in both Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF forms will be due at the beginning of class on the last week of the Spring semester. Late papers will not be accepted.

Grading Policy:

Percentage of Work: the writing of the assigned original work paper 50%, the related sermon or Adult Sunday School lesson 15%, and the quality of preparation, demonstration of developing skill set and class participation 35%.

Grading Scale

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C	69-0	F
92-91	B+	79-78	C-		
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

Hebrew Class Attendance Policy

Students must attend each class meeting. If a student must be absent they are responsible for all work due and accomplished during that class session. One class period can be missed without penalty. Any additional class period missed, unless it constitutes a genuine emergency (to be determined by the professor) threatens the student's ability to successfully pass this course. Students who miss more than one class period should consult with the professor to see whether they can pass the course.

Some Important Semester Dates

Classes begin	January 30
Final Drop/Add Day	February 6
Incompletes for Fall Due	March 1
Incompletes for January Term Due	April 1
Registration deadline for Summer Term 2012	April 23
Easter Break	April 2-8
The Spring Whitesides/Robinson Conference	April 18-19
Senior Day	April 30
Classes end on campus	May 4
Exam week on campus	May 7-10

Select Bibliography

This will be added in the January update to this syllabus. This will include bibliographies for legal texts, poetry texts and Text Linguistic works for both of these genres.

Course Outline: Lectures and Assignments

Dear class, I will provide specific reading assignments in the near future with an updated version of this section of the course syllabus in December. In the meantime, feel free to begin reading in the textbooks and in the book of Psalms. We will do poetry for most of the semester, and switch to legal texts for the last three or four weeks of the semester.