



BSBB6305 READINGS IN NORTHWEST SEMITIC LITERATURE

FALL 2023

Dr. R. Dennis Cole
Thurs 2-4:30p
Dodd Faculty #201
504-816-8221

SEMINARY MISSION STATEMENT

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar is designed to introduce the student to the extant literature of Northwest Semitic language family which are comparable to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. The study includes a comparative analysis of Northwest Semitic grammar, syntax, and other linguistic issues. Epigraphic materials in Hebrew, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Aramaic, Syriac, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite are translated and interpreted. Prerequisites: Hebrew I and II.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 1.** The student will be enabled to read a variety of extant literature from NW Semitic dialects of Ugaritic, Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Aramaic & Syriac, and Hebrew, derived from archaeological research and other historical sources. The student will interact with background history of the languages, cultures, and documents.
- 2.** The student will be able to analyze the major comparative elements of grammar and syntax of the NW Semitic language family via textbook, chart studies, and inductive research.
- 3.** The student will translate a variety of NW Semitic texts (varied languages & literary types) for inductive grammatical application and literary analysis.
- 4.** The student will develop facility in philological analysis of Hebrew terminology through NW Semitic comparisons via translation of texts and lexical study. This will enhance the student's ability to utilize advanced lexical aids such as Hebrew and cognate language dictionaries as well as the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary.
- 5.** The student will enhance their knowledge of Hebrew grammar & syntax through comparative linguistic analysis, facilitating further reading and research in the Hebrew-Aramaic Bible.

TEXTBOOKS

Bekins, Peter. *Inscriptions from the World of the Bible: A Reader and Introduction to Old Northwest Semitic*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2020.

Cooke, George Albert. *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish*. Legare Street Press, 2022

Fassberg, Steven E. and Avi Hurvitz, eds. *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.

Freedman, David Noel; A. Dean Forbes; and Francis I. Andersen. *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992.

Moscatti, Sabatino. *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology*. Port Linguarum Orientalium. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964.

Hackett, Jo Ann and Walter E. Aufrecht, eds. *“An Eye for Form” Epigraphic Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014.

Jackson, Kent P. *The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.

Johns, Alger F. *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*. Berrien Springs: Andrews Univ. Press, 1972.

Lindenberger, James M. *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*. 2nd ed. SBL: Writings from the Ancient World, 14. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003.

Selected ANE texts and readings.

CLASS PROCEDURE

1. The seminar structure will consist of weekly meetings of discussion related to the grammar of a given NW Semitic language dialect and translation of selected texts in that language. In the beginning of the semester, the professor will lead both the discussion of the grammar and the translation. In the second half of the seminar, the students will lead the translation dialogue.
2. The student will review 4 books and 20 academic journal articles on NW Semitic Literature and the relationship with the study of Biblical languages and historical / cultural contexts.

3. The student will translate and analyze several traditional major NW Semitic texts, highlighting important grammatical and syntactical features and morphological structures. The student should also search out and read articles in the library related to the given language and text discussed in class.
4. The student will investigate a text not translated in the seminar for a research paper presentation during the final weeks of the course. The research shall consist of translation, textual analysis, historical & grammatical study, and comparative linguistic inquiry.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System (Faculty/Students/Staff) Canvas.NOBTS.edu.
3. Bluejeanshelpdesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Bluejeans & NOBTS Bluejeans classrooms (On and Off-Campus)
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS On-Campus Phone system.
5. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests in the Flex classrooms and for general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
6. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time)
7. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

HELP FOR WRITING PAPERS AT “THE WRITE STUFF”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer. A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf

PLAGIARISM ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

MEETINGS CONTENT FOCUS

Aug 17 INTRODUCTION TO NW SEMITIC LANGUAGE FAMILY

24 INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL & IMPERIAL ARAMAIC

31 READINGS IN DANIEL & EZRA

Sept 7 READINGS IN EZRA & ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI

Sept 14 READINGS IN NABATEAN ARAMAIC PRAYERS &

21 SAMARITAN OSTRACA, ETC.

28 HEBREW OSTRACA: LACHISH LETTERS, ARAD TEXTS,
KHIRBET QEYAF A

Oct 12 INTRODUCTION TO MOABITE LANGUAGE
TRANSLATION OF THE MESHA STELE

Oct 19 INTRODUCTION TO AMMONITE LANGUAGE
TRANSLATION OF AMMONITE INSCRIPTION:
DEIR 'ALLA BALAAM TEXTS

- Oct 26 INTRODUCTION TO UGARITIC
- Nov 2 TRANSLATION OF BAAL-ANATH #67
- Nov 9 TRANSLATION OF THE KERET EPIC
FURTHER STUDIES
Nov 14-16 ETS Annual Meeting – San Antonio
- Nov 27 Research Paper Presentations

Evaluation

Translations of NW Semitic Literature	30%
Book & Article Reviews	30%
Research Paper	40%

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Semitic & NW Semitic Literature

- Bekins, Peter. *Inscriptions from the World of the Bible: A Reader and Introduction to Old Northwest Semitic*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2020.
- Bennett, Patrick R. *Comparative Semitic Linguistics: A Manual*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.
- Bergstrasser, Gotthelf. *Introduction to the Semitic Languages: Text Specimens and Grammatical Sketches*. Translated with Notes and Bibliography and an Appendix on the Scripts by Peter Daniels. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983.
- Conrad, Edward W. & Edward G. Newing, eds. *Perspectives on Language and Text: Essays and Poems in Honor of Francis I. Andersen on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday, July 28, 1985*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987.
- Cooke, George Albert. *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish*. Legare Street Press, 2022.
- Driver, G. R. *Semitic Writing From Pictograph to Alphabet*. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1948.
- Fassberg, Steven e. & Avi Hurvitz, eds. *Biblical Hebrew in Its NW Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives*. The Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006
- Fleisch, Henri. *Introduction a L'Etude des Langues Semitiques*. Paris: Libraire D'Amerique et D'Orient, 1947.
- Goldenberg, Gideon. *Semitic Languages: Features, Structures, Relations, Processes*. London:

Oxford Univ. Press, 2013.

- _____. *Studies in Semitic Linguistics: Selected Writings*. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1998.
- Golomb, David. "Working With No Data" - *Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987.
- Gordon, Cyrus; Gary Rendsburg; and Nathan H. Winter. *Eblaïtica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaïte Language*. 4 vols. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987-2002.
- Hackett, Jo Ann & Walter Aufrecht, eds. "An Eye for Form" – *Epigraphic Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2014.
- Hetzron, Robert, ed. *The Semitic Languages*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 1997.
- Lipinski, Edward. *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*. 2nd ed. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*. Leuven, Belgium, Peeters Press, 2000.
- Levin, Saul. *The Indo-European and Semitic Languages: An Exploration of Structural Similarities Related to Accent, Chiefly in Greek, Sanskrit, and Hebrew*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971.
- Moscatti, Sabatino, ed. *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology*. *Port Linguarum Orientalium*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964.
- Naveh, Joseph. *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy ad Palaeography*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes Press; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982.

Ammonite

- Aufrecht, Walter E. *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989.
- Hackett, Joan. *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla*. Harvard Semitic Monographs, 31. Chico: Scholars Press, 1980.
- Jackson, Kent P. *The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Macdonald, Burton & Randall Younker, eds. *Ancient Ammon*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Aramaic and Syriac

- Aufrecht, Walter and John Hurd. *A Synoptic Concordance of Aramaic Inscriptions (According to H. Donner & W. Roellig)*. The International Concordance Library, Vol. 1. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press and Biblical Research Associates, 1975.
- Bowman, R. A. *Aramaic Ritual Texts From Persepolis*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Burns, Ross. *Damascus: A History*. Cities of the Biblical World. New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group, 2007.
- Cowley, A. *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Edited with Translation and Notes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Fales, Fredrick Mario. *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian*. Rome: Università degli studi, 1986.
- Heinrichs, Wolfhart, ed. *Studies in Neo-Aramaic*. Harvard Semitic Studies 336. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990.

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- Younger, K. Lawson, Jr. *A Political History of the Aramaeans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Politics*. Archaeology and Biblical Studies, 13. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016.

Edomite

- Bartlett, John R. *Edom and the Edomites*. JSOT Monographs, 77. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.
- Edelman, Diana, ed. *You Shall Not Abhor and Edomite For He Is Your Brother*. Atlanta: SBL/ASOR Publications, 1995.
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Hebrew

- Aharoni, Yohanon; Joseph Naveh; Anson Rainey. *Arad Inscriptions*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981.
- Andersen, Francis I.; A. Dean Forbes. *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible: Dahood Memorial Lecture*. Rome: Biblical Institute Pres, 1986.
- Barr, James. *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament: With Additions and Corrections*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987.
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Moabite

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Phoenician

- Bonnet, Corinne; E. Lipinski; Patrick Marchetti. *Religio Phoenicia: Acta Colloquii Namurcensis Habiti Diebus 14 et 15 mensis Decembris anni 1984*. Namur: Societe des Etudes Classiques, 1986.
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Canaanite

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Ugaritic

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