



**BL 512-1 *Introduction to Hebrew Exegesis* (3)  
Winter 2009  
Instructor: R. R. Remin**

**Contacting the Instructor**

**Office:** A2081

**Class Times:** W Fr 8:15-9:30

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**Class Location:** L2100

**Course Description**

In this course the student reads selected portions of prose and poetry from the Hebrew Old Testament. The grammatical structures learned in the first semester are reviewed. New structures are learned. The basic principles of the exegesis of a Hebrew text are studied.

**Course Objectives**

**Primary Objectives**

1. Each student will continue to advance their knowledge of Hebrew grammar so as to improve their ability to interpret the Hebrew Old Testament faithfully. The emphasis falls on how understanding Hebrew improves ones ability to understand the Old Testament. To this end the student will add to their knowledge of how the Hebrew language works by:
  - Learning **grammar** (the characteristics of derived stems, participles, imperatives, and infinitives),
  - Reading portions of the Hebrew OT for discussion and translation in class,
  - Learning primarily at recognition level Hebrew **vocabulary** of the Old Testament as it occurs in the chapters of the text book. Emphasis is placed on words which occur over one hundred times and/or are theologically significant.
2. Each student will learn an exegetical method which will assist them in their movement from a text to a sermon/lesson.
  - Learn how to and practice carrying out **contextual, verbal** (word study), and **syntactical** analyses of selected OT texts,

- Learning the genres and sub-genres of the literature of the OT, their characteristics and their purposes and how to interpret texts consistently with their genre,
  - Learn how to do studies of Hebrew words and/or concepts in a meaningful and accurate manner and use this knowledge in the analyses above.
  - Learn the characteristics of Hebrew poetry and how to use these characteristics to better understand the meaning of the text,
  - Learn the strengths and weaknesses of some of the reference works (lexica, grammars, theological wordbooks, commentaries, translations, software) which are available to students.
  - Learn basic principles of textual criticism and how to read a critical apparatus as we read portions of the Hebrew OT. Learn the difference between different translations due to textual variants and those due to translation *per se*, and use this knowledge in a contextual and verbal analysis of a short Hebrew text.
3. Each student will learn (through lecture, illustration from OT texts read in class and completed assignments) how to follow through on their study of any given text with **theological** and **homiletical** analyses (or lesson plan) which will make the text's message relevant to a twenty first century audience and deliverable in an effective manner.
  4. Each student will learn to interpret OT texts with a hermeneutic which places highest value on contextual, verbal and syntactical reading of the text but which is also theologically informed. This hermeneutic is "literal" in the sense used by the Reformers in that the text is read and interpreted in the manner of all written human communication with attention to the grammar of language, figures of speech, genre, *etc.*. Each student will be required to begin to articulate the hermeneutic by which they will interpret the Old Testament.
  5. Each student will be repeatedly challenged to strive for interpretation and theological reflection which is relevant to those whom they will serve. Students will also be exposed to other theological and hermeneutical systems. Each student will learn and hopefully come to own the tradition of importance of Scripture correctly exegeted from the original languages which is part of our evangelical Protestant heritage as distinct from some other Christian traditions.
  6. Since attitudes are more often caught than taught, it is hoped that through interaction in class and by the example of the instructor in this course student will enthusiastically and realistically desire to interpret the Hebrew OT faithfully and effectively.

### **Secondary Objectives**

Although the following objectives are not the primary objectives of this course, they are objectives which relate to the learning outcomes which Ambrose Seminary desires

to accomplish in the lives of our graduates and to which your instructor is wholeheartedly committed and thus will be addressed in an informal manner at several points in this course.

7. Each student accept that the learning of Hebrew for the purpose of faithfully interpreting the Hebrew OT is not accomplished in a few seminary courses but rather through the practice of life long learning and a life long commitment to studying the OT in its original languages.
8. Each student will begin to reflect on how the authors of the OT communicated effectively by using language and especially genre “for all it was worth” in diverse contexts and the implications for effective communication in the twenty first century.
9. The nature of this course usually challenges students at the point of integration of the personal, theological and ministerial dimensions of their lives. This is expected and provides students with an opportunity to attempt such integration in a relatively safe environment.
10. Whereas the exegesis of the Hebrew OT is something of a skill and an art. Each student can improve their skills but not all are equally gifted. Again the nature of this course provides an opportunity for each student to begin to identify their God-given gifts and abilities.
11. Our evangelical Protestant tradition places a very high value on the faithful exegesis of Scripture and each student is expected to come to a better understanding and appropriation of the implications of this value system for our tradition’s understanding of who we are in Christ and our vocation in his service.
12. Because of the instructor’s particular interest and knowledge of the Ancient Near East and the Jewish cultural milieu in which the documents Hebrew OT were received and the differences within that setting as well as my particular interest in the diversity within the OT tradition, each student will learn something of OT authors communicated, served and lead Israel effectively in a variety of settings in a world characterized by diversity.

### **Required Texts**

These texts were required in the previous semester and again this semester.

W.S. LaSor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew, an Inductive Approach Based on the Hebrew Text of Esther*, 2 Vol. (W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978). (Please note that various re-printings of this text have rendered it a one volume text which students will inevitably render a two volume text – the student’s first creative act

by division among the other less beneficial “creative acts” in a first year Hebrew course which are usually created by assuming incorrect points of division.)

Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., Briggs, Charles A. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Clarendon Press, 1907).

Ethelyn Simon, Irene Resnikoff, Linda Motzkin and Susan Noss. *Tall Tales Told in Biblical Hebrew* (EKS Publishing Co., Oakland, CA, 1994).

## Course Schedule

This class meets Wednesday and Friday except for the following days:

- Jan 29 – Ambrose Seminary Winter Retreat
- Feb 17 and 19 – Winterim Modular Courses and/or Break
- April 15 – Last class
- April 17-23 Examination Week

The analyses are due as follows:

Contextual Analysis -- February 13

Verbal Analysis -- March 18

Syntactical Analysis – April 6

Theological and Homiletical Analyses -- April 15

The Mid-term examination is scheduled for February 27.

Absolute deadline for late assignments is April 23.

## Course Requirements

1. Prepare assignments in the textbook, the reader and/or readings of the Hebrew OT as directed before the class in which they are discussed. Participate in the discussion in class.
2. Complete vocabulary quizzes as directed.
3. Complete four analyses (contextual, verbal, syntactical, and theological/homiletical) on a selected text and as directed. A detailed instruction sheet for each of these analyses accompanies this syllabus.
4. Write the mid-term examination. This test tests a student’s ability to identify the characteristics of the derived stems and weak verbs.
5. Write the final examination. The final examines the students ability to read and analyze a short Hebrew text.
6. Complete an initial statement of your hermeneutic for the OT with special attention to your use of Hebrew of two to three pages in length. Specific detailed instructions will be provided.

## Course Grade

The following table is only intended to show the relative weight assigned each of the course requirements.

Mid-term in class	20%
Open book final	20%
Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
Four Analyses	40%
Statement of hermeneutic	10%.

## Important Notes

1. Remember The Rules For The Class
  - Have fun!
  - Make mistakes!
  - Ask dumb questions! There are no dumb questions!
  - Cheat in class!

Consider this classroom a safe zone! There are no topics which are off limit.
2. All hand written tests and examinations must be written in ink. All other assignments must be submitted in hard copy. The documents must use Greek and/or Hebrew fonts as appropriate and must not contain any “fancy formatting” that involves colours or unusual fonts. Email me and I will supply you with Hebrew and Greek fonts.
4. Absences are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught, namely the inductive method. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all.
5. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Catalogue* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's responsibility to be

familiar with these regulations. The following academic policies are particularly relevant.

- **Add/Drop Policy:** Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the Calendar of Events in the academic calendar.
- **Course Extensions or Alternative Examination Requests:** Students may not turn in course work after the date of the scheduled final examination for the course unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension.” Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office two weeks prior to examination week (noted as the “Last Day for Alternative Exam or Course Extension Requests” on the academic calendar). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”
- **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty.** The seminary maintains a zero tolerant policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.