Course Syllabus
WYB3502HS – Hebrew Poetry
Wycliffe College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Leslie Demson, Adjunct Instructor
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Course Identification

Course Number:	WYB3502HS
Course Format:	TBA
Course Name:	Hebrew Poetry
Class Times:	Fridays, 10:00am-12:00pm
Prerequisites:	Three previous semesters of Hebrew (or equivalent), or permission from the instructor.

Course Description

This course will offer a broad selection of biblical poetic texts of different genres and time periods, in order to familiarize students with the distinctive features of Hebrew poetry: both its conventional literary constraints and its artistic range. Students will develop their fluency in reading Hebrew poetry while they compare that corpus to ancient neighbouring poetic traditions, explore textual/philological issues, review attempts by scholars to define the "poetic" in biblical literature, and identify poetic themes and theologies. Evaluation will be based on the student's weekly preparation of the assigned text (30%), class participation (10%), a midterm (20%), and a final exam (40%).

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*
- Holladay, William L., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988)

Bibliography – *Students are strongly encouraged to supplement their library with one of the suggested lexicons:*

- Clines, David J.A., *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield/Phoenix, 2009)

- Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs (BDB), *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951)

Introductions to Hebrew Poetry

- Berlin, Adele, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Indiana University Press, 1992)
- Collins, Terrence, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry: A Grammatical Approach to the Stylistic Study of the Hebrew Prophets* (Biblical Institute, 1978)
- Cross, Frank Moore, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Eerdmans, 1997)
- Dobbs-Allsopp, F.W., *On Biblical Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2015)
- Kugel, James L., *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (Yale University Press, 1981)
- O'Connor, Michael P., *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Eisenbrauns, 1980; reprinted 1997 with afterward)
- Watson, Wilfred G.E., *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield Academic Press, 1986)
- Westermann, Claus, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim, Richard N. Soulen (John Knox Press, 1981)

Special Topics:
- *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Linguistics,* 2013 (UofT Library, online)
- Alter, Robert, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Basic Books, 2011)
- Futato, Sr., Mark D*., Basics of Hebrew Accents* (Zondervan Academic, 2020)
- Joüon, Paul, Muraoka, T., *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2006)
- Longacre, Robert E., Bowling, Andrew C., *Understanding Biblical Hebrew Verb Forms: Distribution and Function Across Genres* (SIL International Publications, 2015)
- Putnam, Frederick C., Patton, Matthew, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse: A Guide to Working with Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* (Zondervan Academic, 2019)
- Sáenz-Badillos, Angel, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Course Website(s)
- Quercus: https://q.utoronto.ca/

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask Steve Hewko (stephen.hewko@wycliffe.utoronto.ca) for further help.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS, students will be able 1) to recognize and describe grammatical aspects of Hebrew poetry, 2) to recognize and describe basic genres, literary structures, artistic devices, and themes of Hebrew poetry, 3) to understand biblical Hebrew poetic forms and content within their ancient Near Eastern literary context, 4) to understand the history of scholarly efforts to identify the poetic in biblical Hebrew literature, 5) to achieve a greater degree of fluency in reading and translating biblical Hebrew poetry.

(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES, students will become better readers of the poetic texts of the Old Testament in the original language, will be able to relate biblical poetic texts to theological topics and liturgical contexts, and will acquire skills useful for exegesis for biblical, theological, and pastoral settings.

(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION, students will acquire a greater appreciation of the richness and complexity of biblical poetry, much of that comprising song, prayer, and prophetic speech, and will develop habits of close, attentive reading of Scripture.

(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP, students will acquire useful skills for the exegetical spadework undertaken for preaching and teaching Scripture.

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

(1) *Preparation of assigned text (30%) – Students will prepare a translation, be prepared to parse verb forms, and (where applicable) be ready to identify issues flagged in the marginal and apparatus notations.*

(2) *Class participation (10%) – In addition to preparing texts for class, students are encouraged to have prepared questions. As well, students may be assigned readings which they should be prepared to discuss.*

(3) *Mid-Term Quiz (20%)*

(4) *Final Exam (40%)*

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/ secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document

"Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019 .

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule [The following schedule of biblical texts to be translated will necessarily be modified depending on the weekly progress of the class.]

Week 1

Introduction

Week 2

Psalm 27; Psalm 113 [Psalms of Confidence; Hymns]

Week 3

Psalm 48; Psalm 30 [Zion Psalms; Psalms of Praise]

Week 4

Psalm 79; Lam 1:1-11 [Laments; Acrostic poems]

Week 5

Lam 1:12-22; Isa 40:1-11 [Laments, cont'd; Prophetic poetry]

Week 6

Prov 31:10-31 [Wisdom poetry]

Week 7

READING WEEK

Week 8

MID-TERM

Week 9

Song of Songs 4 [Lyric]

Week 10

Exod 15:1-18; (Psalm 114) [Epiphany]

Week 11

Judges 5 [Epiphany]

Week 12

Judges 5 (cont'd); (Psalm 29)

Week 13

Num 24:2-9 (Job 38:1-11) [Voices of the non-Israelite]

Exam Week
TBD