

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

History of the Hebrew Language (Hebrew 5105, Spring 2017)

Instructor: Office:

Email:

Office hours:

Hebrew 5105 orients the student to a panorama of the entire history of the Hebrew language, documented for approximately 3,000 years. For the first 2,000 years, our knowledge of the language is largely a function of the few documents which have been preserved (intentionally or fortuitously) in contrast to the last 1,000 years where a more voluminous documentation is evident. A bonus is thus that the early part of the course will resemble a history of Hebrew Literature course, surveying as it does extant Hebrew texts, but the student must recognize that the primary thrust of the course is the investigation of the language itself. By definition, the course will introduce students to the bibliography essential for work in Hebrew in any time period.

The only required texts are a complete Hebrew Bible and Angel Saenz-Badillos' *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Translated by John Elwolde; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993 [*Historia de la Lengua Hebrea*, 1988]). In addition, the student will receive copies of selections from other Hebrew texts which will form the basis of generalizations about the development of Hebrew. These texts will constitute both the in-class exercises and the homework, in conjunction with articles which will be assigned periodically. Any quizzes on the assigned readings will be announced in advance.

Graduate students will consult with the professor for projects that they will pursue relevant to the course.

Grading (in general):

Quizzes & Homework 20%

Midterm 20% Tues Feb 28

Term Paper 20%

Final Exam 40%

Late homework assignments and quizzes are not accepted. Because of inevitable circumstances beyond the student's control, 10% of all assignments and quizzes will be dropped. This means that for those who faithfully submit all works, 10% of their work with the lowest grades will be dropped. Quizzes will be graded on a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 is an A (all correct), 9 is a B (one item wrong), 8 is a C (two items wrong), etc. A student receives a zero if the quiz is not taken.

The student is responsible for all information and materials and class discussion that occurs, even in his or her absence. The absent student must make arrangements with other class members to obtain notes or to be apprised of class developments when absent. Plagiarism is not tolerated, and the student is reminded to read about academic misconduct in the student handbook. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to inform me in a timely manner.

Working Schedule (subject to revision):

Note: no class on Veterans' Day, Tuesday, Nov.11

- Week 1 Alphabet; Old Canaanite inscriptions
- Week 2 Early Hebrew inscriptions (first millennium B.C.E.)
- Week 3 Early biblical poetry
- Week 4 First temple biblical Hebrew
- Week 5 First Temple Hebrew (continued)
- Week 6 Second temple biblical Hebrew
- Week 7 Personal names; transliterations; problem of Hebrew as a "living language"
- Weeks 8-9 Early Hebrew Manuscripts (3rd century B.C.E. to 2nd century C.E.); Qumran; Samaritans; orthography (plene/defective spelling, diversification of scripts)
- Week 10 Mishna, Tosefta, Baraita
- Week 11 The Masora and issues of vocalization (Tiberian, Babylonian, Palestinian); Talmudic information
- Week 12 Geniza manuscripts; Piyyutim; the grammarians
- Week 13 Medieval Europe (Spain, Italy, France, Ashkenaz) and geographically isolated communities (Yemen, North Africa)
- Week 14 19-20th century