



ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

## BSBB9405 READINGS IN NORTHWEST SEMITIC LITERATURE

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### **SEMINAR 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.

### **Core Value Focus and Curriculum Competencies**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity, in that it enhances the student's ability to interpret the Bible accurately. Characteristic Excellence is addressed in that the student should exhibit excellence in the ability to interpret Scripture. Servant Leadership is the focus core value for this year and is expected to be modeled in classroom demeanor. This course primarily addresses the competency of Biblical Exposition by preparing the student to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately. The 2017-18 Core Value focus is on **Servant Leadership**.

### **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

1. Students 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. Students will interact with background history of the languages, cultures, and documents.
2. Students 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. Students will translate a variety of NW Semitic texts (varied languages & literary types) for inductive grammatical application and literary analysis.
4. Students 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. Students will enhance their knowledge of Hebrew grammar & syntax through comparative linguistic analysis, facilitating further reading and research in the Hebrew-Aramaic Bible.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

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.

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.

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

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

## **Selected ANE texts and readings.**

## **SEMINAR PROCEDURE**

1. The seminar structure will consist of alternating weeks 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. Students will translate and analyze several traditional major NW Semitic texts, highlighting important grammatical and syntactical features and morphological structures. Students should also search out and read articles in the library related to the given language and text discussed in class.
3. Each 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. In the final paper presentations, the students will distribute to seminar participants electronic copies of the work via DropBox at least four days in advance of the seminar meeting. Each research paper will have a Reviewer to be assigned later for the presentation.

## **MEETING    CONTENT FOCUS**

25 Jan	INTRODUCTION TO NW SEMITIC LANGUAGE FAMILY INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL & IMPERIAL ARAMAIC READINGS IN DANIEL
8 Feb	READINGS IN EZRA & ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI
22 Feb	READINGS IN NABATEAN ARAMAIC PRAYERS & SAMARITAN OSTRACA, ETC. HEBREW OSTRACA: LACHISH LETTERS, ARAD TEXTS, KH. QEIYafa
8 Mar	INTRODUCTION TO MOABITE LANGUAGE TRANSLATION OF THE MESHHA STELE
29 Mar	INTRODUCTION TO AMMONITE LANGUAGE TRANSLATION OF AMMONITE TEXTS AND INSCRIPTIONS: DEIR 'ALLA BALAAM TEXTS
12 Apr	INTRODUCTION TO UGARITIC TRANSLATION OF BAAL-ANATH #67 TRANSLATION OF THE KERET EPIC
26 Apr	SEMINAR PAPERS
10 May	SEMINAR PAPERS

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 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*. Andesite Press, 2017.
- 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.
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- 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.
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- 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.
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- 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.
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### ***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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