I. Course Description

The student is introduced to the basic tools and methods of Hebrew exegesis (including word studies) with application of these methods to readings in the Pentateuch, Psalms, and/or Latter Prophets. An attempt is made to correlate (or "bridge the gap" between) exegesis and the teaching and preaching of the Word.

II. Course Objectives

1) To review inductively the basic principles of Hebrew grammar and syntax.

2) To begin to learn the basic steps for doing Hebrew exegesis (including textual criticism, lexical, grammatical, syntactical and theological analyses) by applying them both to Hebrew narrative (in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Jonah) and to Hebrew poetry (in the Psalms).

3) To discover the value of word studies for Hebrew exegesis, theological interpretation and even for sermonic illustrations.

4) To become familiar with the historical and literary contexts of Exod. 20-21 & Deut. 4-5 (legal literature), Jonah 1-3 (prophetic literature) and of selected Psalms to help unlock the meaning of these various texts.

5) To begin to apply the results of exegetical studies to teaching and preaching the Word.

III. Textbooks

A. Required textbooks

Besides the Hebrew Bible (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) and the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon (A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament) which the student is expected to have from the first-year class, there are six (6) basic textbooks. The first two are indispensable exegetical tools: (1) Bruce Einspahr, Index to Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon; (2) Ronald J. Williams, Williams’ Hebrew Syntax (3rd ed. Univ. of Toronto, 2007). Also there are three valuable manuals for acquiring the skills for doing Hebrew exegesis: (3) Douglas Stuart, Old Testament Exegesis:

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1 This syllabus is tentative & may be changed. [Syllabus revised: 7-02-2009]

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B. Other helpful tools
Other recommended resources include: (1) Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Eisenbrauns: 1990)—a valuable (though massive) intermediate Hebrew grammar to help solidify one's Hebrew grammar and syntax; and (2) Bernhard W. Anderson, Out of the Depths (revised eds., 1983, 2000)—a useful handbook for studying the Psalter. (3) Robert B. Chisholm, A Workbook for Intermediate Hebrew (Kregel: 2006—abbrev. WB) facilitates inductive review of grammar using (for our purposes) Jonah, in the transition to exegesis. As an optional workbook, it may be used but not unless helpful.

IV. Requirements for Grading

1. Exam
The only exam will emphasize translation and parsing and will count 30% of the total grade (see class schedule below).

2. Word studies
A mini-word study on <j^n` and its precise meaning in Jonah 3:9, 10 (or qj) in Deut. 4:1, 45; or hu*r` in Jonah 1:2; 3:10) is due Sept 28 [about 3 to 5 single-spaced pages] and will comprise 6% of the grade. The major word study on either jx^r*—translated "kill" in the KJV of Exodus 20:13— or aN*q^ in Deut. 4:24 & 5:9 is due on Oct. 19 (about 6 to 12 single-spaced pages) and will count about 12%.

3. Exegetical paper and oral report
Each student must write one exegetical paper [35% of the grade] on an assigned Psalm to demonstrate his own exegetical abilities. The student is urged not to consult commentaries for this paper. An automatic "F" will accrue to any student who depends on commentaries for this paper. Furthermore the student ought not to use an English translation until after thoroughly grappling with the Hebrew text on his own. However the use of any exegetical tool (as well as journal articles if used judiciously) is permitted. You must document the usage of journal articles, general resources, or any other tools. A grade penalty will occur for failure to document borrowed ideas. The student will find it

Be sure to document completely any reference to source materials including any minimal consultation of commentaries or the Internet (only as the very last step—after doing your own work).
advantageous to begin to work on this Psalm a little at a time as the principles for exegesis are explained in this course.

The original paper (normally 15 to 25 pages) must be turned in by the beginning of the last class session. A possible oral report of about 30 to 45 minutes (as well as interaction with other student papers) counts an additional 1%. Photocopies of the paper should be provided for each classmate for the oral presentation and an additional copy for the teacher's file. After being graded, one copy will be returned to the student.

4. Weekly assignments
The composite daily grade will count about 16% of the total grade. From time to time, the professor may ask for the assignment (and/or the Heb. translation and parsing of the assigned passage) to be turned in for inspection. This will be used as a barometer to gauge the effort and daily diligence of the student. Reports on required reading assignments and/or other exegetical tasks (including what portions the student translated from the assigned Hebrew text) must be recorded and turned in weekly on standardized reading slips obtainable from the seminary office. The combination of reading slips and other daily work handed in will comprise about 13% of the grade. The other 3% will be divided equally (1% each) between class attendance, the synthesis of Psalm 1 and the synthesis of Psalm 23. The use of English translations and commentaries is discouraged on these weekly exercises until after the student has tried to grapple with them firsthand.

V. Class Schedule (for Fall 2009)


Sept. 7 NO CLASS. LABOR DAY.


Sept. 28 Mini-word study due on $<j^n$ in Jonah 3:9, 10 (or $cj$) in Deut. 4:1,45; or $hu^r$ in Jonah 1:2; 3:10). Study of Deut. 4:15-19. Word study guidelines for $jx^r*$ and $aN^*q^\wedge$. Brief lecture?: Ancient Near Eastern Legal Literature and Law Codes. Assignment: translate Hebrew text.


Oct. 19 Major word study due on $jx^r*$ in Deut. 5:17 [Exod. 20:13] (or $aN^*q^\wedge$ in Deut. 4:24, 5:9). Possible "catch-up" day on translation. Possible brief introduction to term paper expectations (see handout).

summary statements (synthesis) of Bible passages.


23 FINAL EXAM (primarily new translation & parsing skills plus ability to explain textual apparatus). Good idea to practice these skills on Psalm for exegetical paper.


Dec. 7 Study of Psalms 8, 15, 127, 111 & 128 [or perhaps some other psalm(s)] in class with students presenting an oral report and summary of the message and exegetical findings, etc. [Be sure to bring your Hebrew Bibles and exegetical tools so as to be able to follow and interact with other students' presentations.]