

HEBR ST 653/514
WISDOM LITERATURE: PROVERBS & QOHELET

(...AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...)

UW-Madison
Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies
Spring 2013

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Place and Time:

Class meeting time: T 8:50-9:40; Th 8:50-10:45

Class meeting place: Van Hise 1351

Final exam date: May. 18, 2013, 7:45-9:45 am

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of biblical wisdom literature in Hebrew and Greek. It will provide students with a forum for detailed, critical engagement with the text and historical interpretation(s) of the books of Proverbs, Qohelet, and Job, as well as brief forays into Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon. Modern scholarship has wrestled with appropriate methodologies for understanding Israelite wisdom literature, with some (but not total) success. Students will analyze the text (alongside its ancient translations) from a variety of methodological perspectives, so that they might broaden their own understanding of appropriate ways to enter into inscrutable texts: they will develop and apply theories of metaphor and conceptual blending in order to come to grips with the literary features of wisdom literature, and they will approach the text with philological, linguistic, and text-critical tools, in order to deal with the corpus's formation and the early history of its interpretation.

Student Achievement Goals:

Students will:

1. demonstrate competence in engaging Classical Hebrew wisdom literature and poetry, with an a view towards the literary appreciation of the text.
2. (a) learn how to use and (b) gain experience with the multitude of available reference grammars, dictionaries, commentaries, elements of secondary

- literature, and electronic resources pertinent to the study of Classical Hebrew poetry, with particular emphasis on the Wisdom Literature.
3. apply methodologies for understanding the religious practices and sentiments related by the corpus.
 4. exhibit a high level of fluency in cognitive approaches to ancient texts, including such aspects as metaphor and blending.

Course Rationale:

The ability to deal critically with the facets of biblical study handled in this course—literary appreciation of Hebrew poetics and a refined understanding of the major problems in studies of Wisdom Literature—are necessary skills in the field. In addition, the readings in cognitive approaches to texts assigned in this class serve an emergent strength of the department, as we seek more fully to understand the biblical text as a product of the intersection between embodied human cognition and the social and historical settings of the Bible’s development and early interpretation.

Course Requirements:

- Requirements differ for graduate students and undergraduate students. Both groups will be expected to fulfill the requirements listed here, but undergraduate students will not be expected to work in a second ancient language (i.e., they will not be expected to work in Greek at all, unless they choose to do so), and the standards for their satisfactory completion of the readings and assignments will be set at a commensurately lower level.
1. 15% — Class attendance and participation, having prepared diligently to translate the biblical readings for the day, analyzing all forms and syntactic constructions. Unexcused absences will be deducted from the final grade.
 2. 15% — Once during the semester, students will lead a Thursday session of the class (ca. 45 minutes thereof) in a detailed reading of a passage (for which the rest of the class has prepared the LXX). The student will prepare text and notes for the portion under investigation (graduate students will be expected to use observations from LXX + one other ancient version [Targ., Vulg., Pesh., etc.]). Further details will be distributed at the beginning of the class.
 3. 30% — Final research paper, most likely based on the student’s presentation (req. 2 here).
 4. 20% — Midterm exam (1 hr.)
 5. 20% — Final translation exam (cumulative, 1 hr.)

Texts:

Required:

- Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* [=ISWL] (London: T & T Clark, 2010).
- access to: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* [BHS] (ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984).
- access to: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906; repr.,

Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson **OR** rev. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1952 [**BOTH WORK**]).

- access to: Learn@UW, where some resources will be posted (including the recommended sources below).
- access to: the Menahem Mansoor graduate study room (#1334 Van Hise), where a few other resources are held.

A Note on Grading in the Course:

The default grading system of this course is for a letter grade. The Professor **will adhere stringently to the following definition of grades:**

A	Excellent, highly innovative work demonstrating outstanding command of the material, and very few doubts as to preparation for further, independent* training in the area.
AB	High quality work, demonstrating credible innovation, with above-average grasp of the material and foreseeable capabilities to work independently in the field.
B	Good, dutiful, and solid work, but with moderate innovation and slightly-above-average grasp of the material; a few doubts as to the student's preparation to work independently in the field in future study, but some further study will enable the student to do so.
BC	[This one strikes the professor as a relatively unnecessary grade, and will not be used except in extraordinary circumstances. If the student has not achieved the threshold of a B, see the next grade down...]
C	Satisfactory, but on weak footing; a few concerns arise concerning the student's ability to move forward competently, but not enough to prevent doing so; ostensibly a recommendation against pursuing advanced study in the area without significant further study.
D	Poor, barely adequate work; a recommendation not to continue in advanced study in the area.
F	Failure to attain a sufficient level of achievement in the coursework to convince the professor that the student is ready for or capable of further study in the subject.

Please notice that **B=good** and **C=satisfactory** in this schema. The professor wishes to draw particular attention to this fact for a number of reasons; students are invited to consult with the professor privately in order to decide whether the graded option is best for them.

NOTA BENE: The Professor does not conduct business concerning special exemptions/assignments, etc. over e-mail, via Twitter, on Facebook, via text message, over the phone, or even via carrier pigeon (as impressive as that feat might be). In order to make any requests, students must speak with the professor face-to-face, either before or after class, or at a pre-arranged time (it is completely permissible to arrange the meeting through one of the media listed above).

* "Independent" here should not be construed as an automatic invitation to ask the Professor for an independent study opportunity. Rather, an A or AB is intended to signal that the student is fully prepared to begin to write those components of a dissertation in which this material will feature heavily. Expectations of further study, of course, apply.

Course Schedule:

T Jan 22: Introduction & Extra-Biblical Wisdom

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 1–22
- Merikare (*COS* 1.35 [pp. 61–66])
- Amenemhet (*COS* 1.36 [pp. 66–68])
- Instruction of Any (*COS* 1.46 [pp. 110–115])
- Instruction of Amenemope (*COS* 1.47 [pp. 115–122])
- Dua-Khety or Satire of the Trades (*COS* 1.48 [pp. 122–125])

Th Jan 24: Introduction & Extra-Biblical Wisdom

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 107–144
- Dialogue between a Man and His God (*COS* 1.151 [p. 485])
- A Sufferer’s Salvation (*COS* 1.152 [pp. 486])
- The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer (*COS* 1.153 [pp. 486–492])
- The Babylonian Theodicy (*COS* 1.154 [pp. 492–495])
- Dialogue of Pessimism or The Obliging Slave (*COS* 1.155 [pp. 495–496])

T Jan 29: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 23–47
- Prov 5:1–6:35
- Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3–15, 33–47.

Th Jan 31: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 7:1–8:36 (LXX Prov 8:1–13)
- Claudia Camp, “What’s So Strange about the Strange Woman?” in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis* (FS N. Gottwald; ed. D. Jobling et al.; Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1991), 17–31.
- George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980 [repr., 2003]), 33–34 (“Personification”).
- George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 57–110.

T Feb 5: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 9:1–10:32
- Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 160–191.

Th Feb 7: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 22:1–23:35 (LXX Prov 23:1–11)
- Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 191–216.

T Feb 12: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 24:1–34
- Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 1–38.

Th Feb 14: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 25:1–26:28 (LXX Prov 26:1–12)
- Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 38–73.

T Feb 19: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 27:1–28:28
- Karen Sullivan and Eve Sweetser, “Is ‘Generic is Specific’ a Metaphor?” in Fey Parrill, Vera Tobin and Mark Turner (eds.), *Meaning, Form and Body* (Stanford CA: CSLI Publications, 2009).

Th Feb 21: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 29:1–30:16 (LXX Prov 30:1–10)
- William Brown, “The Didactic Power of Metaphor,” *JSOT* 29.2 (2004): 133–154.
- Ray van Leeuwen, “Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs,” *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1992): 25–36.

T Feb 26: Proverbs

Required Readings:

- Prov 30:17–31:31
- Michael V. Fox, “Ethics and Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs,” *Hebrew Studies* 48 (2007): 75–88.
- Michael V. Fox, “The Epistemology of the Book of Proverbs,” *JBL* 126 (2007): 669–684.

Th Feb 28: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 71–84.
- Qoh 1:1–2:26 (LXX Qoh 1:1–12)
- Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 3–36.

T Mar 5: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Qoh 3:1–4:17
- Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 36–69.

Th Mar 7: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Qoh 5:1–6:11 (LXX Qoh 6:1–12)
- Douglas B. Miller, “Qohelet’s Symbolic Use of הבל,” *JBL* 17 (1998): 437–454.

T Mar 12: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Qoh 7:1–8:17
- Karel van der Toorn, “Echoes of Gilgamesh in the Book of Qohelet? A Reassessment of the Intellectual Sources of Qohelet,” *Veenhof Anniversary Volume* (Leiden : Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 503–514.

Th Mar 14: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Qoh 9:1–10:20 (LXX Qoh 10:1–13)
- Carolyn J. Sharp, “Ironic Representation, Authorial Voice, and Meaning in Qohelet,” *BibInt* 12 (2004): 37–68.

T Mar 19: Qohelet

Required Readings:

- Qoh 11:1–12:14
- Stephan de Jong, “God in the Book of Qohelet: A Reappraisal of Qohelet’s Place in Old Testament Theology,” *VT* 47 (1997): 154–167.

Th Mar 21:

MIDTERM

T Mar 26 — SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE (NO CLASS)

Th Mar 28 — THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

T Apr 2: Job

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 49–70.
- Job 1:1–2:13; 42:10–17

Th Apr 4: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 3:1–5:27 (LXX Job 3:1–12)
- Carol Newsom, “The Book of Job as Polyphonic Text,” *JSOT* 97 (2002): 87–108.

T Apr 9: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 6:1–8:22
- Michael Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” in *The Voice from the Whirlwind* (ed. L. G. Perdue and W. C. Gilpin; Nashville: Abingdon Press), 86–98.

Th Apr 11: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 9:1–10:22 (LXX Job 9:1–12)
- René Girard, “Job as Failed Scapegoat,” *HUCA* 37 (1966): 73–106.

T Apr 16: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 27:1–29:25
- Ellen van Wolde, “Towards an ‘Integrated Approach’ in Biblical Studies, Illustrated with a Dialogue between Job 28 and Job 38,” in *Congress Volume: Leiden, 2004* (ed. A. Lemaire; VTSup 109; Brill: Leiden, 2006), 355–380.

Th Apr 18: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 30:1–31:40 (LXX Job 31:29–40)
- Matitahu Tsevat, “The Meaning of the Book of Job,” *HUCA* 37 (1966): 73–106.

T Apr 23: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 32:1–33:33
- David J. A. Clines, “Putting Elihu in his Place: A Proposal for the Relocation of Job 32–37,” *JSOT* 29.2 (2004): 243–253.

Th Apr 25: Job

Required Readings:

- Job 38:1–42:9 (no LXX)
- Michael B. Dick, “The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt and Yahweh’s Answer to Job,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 243–270.

T Apr 3: Other Jewish Wisdom Literature: Ben Sira

Required Readings:

- Weeks, *ISWL* 85–106.
- Ben Sira 1:1–30 (in Greek; compare with available Heb. MSS)

Th May 2: Other Jewish Wisdom Literature: Ben Sira

Required Readings:

- Ben Sira 24:1–34 (in Greek; compare with available Heb. MSS)
- Jane S. Webster, “Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon,” *JSOT* 78 (1998): 63–79.

T May 7: Other Jewish Wisdom Literature: Wisdom of Solomon

Required Readings:

- Wisdom 7:1–30
- Greg Schmidt Goehring, “Election and Knowledge in the Wisdom of Solomon,” in *Studies in the Book of Wisdom* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 163–182.

Th May 9: Other Jewish Wisdom Literature: Wisdom of Solomon

Required Readings:

- Wisdom 8:1–21
- Carol A. Newsom, “Models of the Moral Self: Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism,” *JBL* 131 (2012): 5–25.