Associated Canadian Theological Schools
of Trinity Western University

BIB 692: Special Topics
Septuagint Approaches and Methods

Dirk Büchner, PhD
Professor of Old Testament Studies
Summer 2020
3 credit hours
Prerequisites: Intermediate level Greek.
A knowledge of Hebrew is recommended, though not essential

E-mail: dirk.buchner@twu.ca
Course Dates: May 4 – Aug 15, 2020
Phone: 604-888-7511, ext. 3112
Class Days: Mon May 4 – Fri May 8
Class Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Note: this course will be delivered by live-stream on the Zoom platform. Students may participate through interactive online live-streaming of class sessions. A back-up system is recommended.

Course Description

The Old Greek or Septuagint version of the Jewish Scriptures is the product of the work of Jewish scholars who, beginning in the third century BCE, undertook to translate the Hebrew Bible into what became the vernacular of the Mediterranean world and significant portions of West and Central Asia following the conquests of Alexander the Great. In this course, we shall explore a number of larger topics that are receiving attention in contemporary Septuagint scholarship. These are: the Septuagint as translation, the Septuagint as Greek literature, the Septuagint as Sacred Scripture of the Early Church, the quest for the Old Greek of Samuel-Kings, and the Septuagint as source of new theological content for early Judaism and early Christianity.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students will have:

1. gained a perspective on the Septuagint, both as a translated text closely tied to its Hebrew original, and a text that has served as free-standing Greek Scripture to Jewish and Christian readers who knew no Hebrew.
2. gained a historical perspective on how Scriptural meaning was conceptualized in ancient times, as a window on contemporary views of Sacred Text mediated through translation.

3. gained a perspective of contested positions in some areas of contemporary Septuagint scholarship, in order to recognize the complexity of the discipline, and to find some footholds.

4. conducted in-depth language research by means of the available linguistic tools.

5. gained a desire to pursue Septuagint studies to inform and augment their ongoing language/textual research and interest in Biblical Interpretation.

**Course Outline with Readings**

The articles in the list below are available in electronic format via the Trinity Western University Library or other open access sources. Students who have registered will be able to access them directly through the TWU "Moodle" portal.

A reading guide by the instructor will accompany each article and will be posted for the relevant day.

**Monday May 4: The Septuagint as Translation of Scripture**

*(Topic 1 on the Course Portal in Moodle)*

**Readings from the secondary literature:**


**Readings in Greek:**

Gen 25:20-34

Exodus 3:1-15

Leviticus 19:9-17

**Tuesday 5: What words in the Septuagint Mean**

*(Topic 2 on Moodle)*

**Readings from the Secondary Literature:**


**Readings in Greek:**

Selected short passages from the Papyri and Inscriptional Literature

Exercises in Using the resources: Perseus, TLG, Papyri.Info, PHI, [https://www.atticinscriptions.com/](https://www.atticinscriptions.com/)

Lexical investigations into some of the following words in their Hellenistic Greek Environment:

εὐνοχὸς, δικαίωμα, ἀσχημοσύνη, ἐἰδωλον, προσήλυτος, σκάνδαλον, πρόσθεμα, αὐτόχθων, νυμφή

**Wednesday 6: The Reception of the Septuagint as Scripture**

(Topic 3 on Moodle)

Section A: The Septuagint in Pauline literature and the Epistle to the Hebrews

**Readings in the Secondary Literature:**


Section B: Origen, Augustine, Jerome and the Question about the Septuagint's Authority

**Readings in the Secondary Literature:**


Paul B. Decock, “Jerome's Turn to the Hebraica Veritas and his Rejection of the Traditional View of the Septuagint,” *Neotestamentica* 42.2 (2008): 205-222.

Thursday 7: The Septuagint's Historical books: The Old Greek, Codex Vaticanus and the Lucianic / Antiochene Text

(Topic 4 on Moodle)

Readings in the Secondary Literature: (details of exactly which portions of each article will be posted)


Readings in Greek:

A text from the *kaige*-section of Reigns, comparing Codex Vaticanus with the Antiochene Text

2 Samuel 13.

A text from the non-*kaige* section of Reigns, comparing Codex Vaticanus with the Antiochene Text

1 Kings 20

Friday 8: The Question of Septuagintal Theology

(Topic 5 on Moodle)

Readings in the Secondary Literature:

Larry Perkins, “The Greek Exodus Translator’s (or Translators’) Rendering of Elohim” *CBQ* 80: 17-37.


Robert Hiebert, “Iakob at the Iabok: Exegetical Observations concerning a Pericope of Septuagint Genesis” (in Print)

**Readings in Greek:**

Gen 25:20-34

Exodus 3:1-15

Leviticus 19:9-17

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

1) Preparation and Participation in Each Day's Prescribed Activities

a. being prepared to discuss the day's topic as a result of reading the assigned secondary literature and completing the reading guides

b. being prepared to translate and comment on the assigned passages in Greek

2) A summary and reflection on each day's activities

**Due:** a week after attending the course.

a. what have I learned from the day's readings? (one page)

b. what questions remain? (no limit)

c. what did I not find helpful? (no limit)

3) A major paper relating to any of the subject matter treated in class, or arising from the class. The paper must contain:
a. (comprising 20%) An overview of current research, and statement of the problem you wish to investigate and work on.

b. (comprising 60%) Own research. In this part you will showcase whatever your preferred approach to text and your skill-set may be (linguistic, historical, text-critical, narratological, thematic-interpretive).

c. (comprising 15%) Synthesis of current research and own research.

d. (comprising 5%) Bibliography

Length: 20-25 pages 1.5 spacing, font Times New Roman, size 12.

Format: SBL Style

Due Date: on or before Aug 15, 2020.

Grade Allocations

1. Self-assessment of preparation and participation .................................................. 25%
2. Summary reflections of each day ............................................................................ 10%
3. Major paper ............................................................................................................ 65%

Grading Scale

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Additional Bibliography and Resources

Bibliography


Muraoka, Takamitsu. “Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography With Special Reference to the So-called Interlinear Model.” Pages 221-235 in Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, eds., Die Septuaginta – Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten. WUNT 219. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008. [PDF will be supplied]


Greek Database: TLG = Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. [Accessible online via the TWU library website]