

**Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Prose U. of Pennsylvania Michael Carasik**

Fall 2007 — HEBR 153/453; JWST 173/473

Mon / Wed 5-6:30 PM

E-mail: [mcarasik@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:mcarasik@sas.upenn.edu)

Classroom:

Office: Williams 443

Phone: 746-2878

Hours: by appointment

**Texts:** *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*  
readings to be found on our Blackboard site:  
Berlin, "Point of View in Biblical Narrative"  
Brettler, "The Creation of Biblical History"  
Carasik, "Three Biblical Beginnings"  
Geller, "History, Literature and Language in the Study of Text"  
Greenberg, "Some Postulates of Biblical Criminal Law"  
Tigay, "Conflation as a Redactional Technique"

**Texts to be read will be selected from among the following:** 1 Samuel 1, 1 Kings 15:1-5, 16:23-33  
Exodus 21:28-36, Leviticus 5:20-26, Deuteronomy 24:14-22  
Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Ruth, Jonah

**Recommended Hebrew tools:**

- Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*  
or Joüon/Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*
- Brown, Driver & Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT*  
or Koehler/Baumgartner, *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*
- Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the OT*  
or a computer concordance

**Helpful Web Site:** <http://people.brandeis.edu/~brettler/biblehelp/brettler.html>

**Grades:** will be based on class preparation, an exam, and a final paper. **Students who are taking the course for graduate credit** will also be expected to prepare 10 additional chapters of biblical prose (chosen by you, approved by me) outside of class, well enough to be able to discuss them with me, overall and in detail, in an oral exam format.

**Prerequisite:** successful completion of HEBR 152 or permission of the instructor

**Note:** Students who enter the class with a background in Modern Hebrew or whose familiarity with Biblical Hebrew was acquired in high school or other non-university setting are expected to acquire, as early as possible in the semester, a strong enough knowledge of the grammar, morphology, and syntax of Biblical Hebrew to enable you to read the course selections with attention to detail.

This course is intended as an introduction to the prose literature of the Hebrew Bible. By the end of the class, the successful student can expect to be able to read biblical prose texts independently and take advanced Bible exegesis courses. The intent of the course is for students to **1** gain an overall familiarity with the literature of the Hebrew Bible in the original language, and specifically with the genres of history, narrative, and law; **2** develop the skills necessary for close reading of biblical prose texts; **3** approach biblical prose texts as literary creations; and **4** understand biblical prose in its aspect as a window an ancient and non-European culture. In addition, students will become familiar with standard biblical idiom through a series of translation exercises based on the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12-36.