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OT 706 Semitic Language Seminar

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OT 706 Semitic Language Seminar (Focus: Northwest Semitic Epigraphy)

Spring 2008; T/Th 8:00–9:15; M 304
Office hours: T/Th 9:30–10:30; W 2:30–3:30

Instructor: John A. Cook
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BC 336; 859–858–2292

3 credit hours
enrollment limit: 15
prerequisites: OT501/502

Description

Analysis of texts from selected historical, cultural, linguistic, and literary near-neighbors of biblical Israel enriches students' grasp of Biblical Hebrew. This course focuses on Northwest Semitic Iron Age epigraphs, including those written in the dialects traditionally designated "Canaanite" (Hebrew, Moabite, Phoenician, et al.), in Aramaic, and in mixed dialects.

Goals

1. To learn the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the NWS languages, and to understand the salient linguistic characteristics of the various languages and dialects;
2. To compare the linguistic features of the NWS languages to the Hebrew as found in the Masoretic Text;
3. To study the epigraphy of the texts so as to read them in their original script;
4. To learn to apply historical grammar and comparative Semitics to the study of these texts;
5. To consider the importance of the NWS epigraphs to an understanding of the biblical text.

Requirements

1. Class attendance is critical. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade.
2. Class preparation and participation. In preparing a text for class, you are expected to:
 - a) be able to read the text from a photo or line drawing
 - b) transliterate the text from a photo or line drawing
 - c) identify lexically and morphologically all words in the text
 - d) recognize dialectal features of the text
 - e) vocalize the text
 - f) situate the text in its historical context
 - g) understand difficulties in interpretation of the text
3. Each student will serve as *epigrapher (and/or paleographer)/archaeologist* for one of the inscriptions (10%). The tasks of the epigrapher/archaeologist are (1) to compile a script chart for the inscription and evaluate the script; (2) to compile a list of various ways to read and/or reconstruct the text; and (3) to provide a summary of the archaeological context of the inscription. The epigrapher/

archaeologist should provide each member of the class with the results of his/her labors one week before the inscription is scheduled to be read in class.

4. Each student will serve as *linguist/Hebraist* for one of the inscriptions (10%). The tasks of the linguist/Hebraist are (1) to evaluate the language/dialect of the inscription; (2) to summarize linguistic connections between the inscription and ancient Hebrew. The linguist/Hebraist should provide each member of the class with the results of his/her labors one week before the inscription is scheduled to be read in class.
5. Each student will serve as *historian/biblical scholar* for one of the inscriptions (10%). The tasks of the historian/biblical scholar are (1) to provide a summary of the historical background of the inscription; (2) to summarize implications the inscription has for our understanding of ancient Israelite history/culture/religion/literature. The historian/biblical scholar should provide each member of the class with the results of his/her labors one week before the inscription is scheduled to be read in class.
6. Paper (25%). The paper will comprise your independent work on a text not prepared for class. Consult with me concerning your interests in the content/genre of the text and to stake your claim for a text. The paper should be structured as if it is the initial publication of the text, including your transcription, vocalization, translation, and line-by-line observations on relevant features of orthography, morphology, syntax, and interpretation. The paper should be written in clear, coherent English and adhere to normal academic format as represented, for example, in the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Turabian*. The written version of the paper is due on May 19 (by 5 p.m.). One letter grade will be deducted for each day (i.e., 24 hour period) the paper is late.
7. Midterm (20%; March 27) and final exams (25%; May 22, 8 a.m.).

Schedule (tentative)

Date	Topic	Reading Due
<i>Week 1</i>		<i>Introductions</i>
02/12	Course/resources/epigraphy	
02/14	NWS and historical grammar	
		<i>Hebrew</i>
02/19	Gezer (KAI 182)	
02/21	Siloam (KAI 189) and Silwan (KAI 191)	
02/26	Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud	

Moabite

02/28	Mesha (KAI 181)
03/04	Mesha (con't)
03/06	Mesha (con't)
03/11	Mesha (con't)

Ammonite and "Philistine"

03/13	Amman (KAI 307) Tell Siran (KAI 308)
03/18	Ekron (KAI 286)

Phoenician

03/20	Ahiram (KAI 1-2)
03/25	Yehimilk (KAI 4)
03/27	<i>Midterm exam: Hebrew, Phoenician, Ammonite, and Philistine</i>

Spring Break — No Class

04/08	Kilamua (KAI 24)
04/10	Karatepe (KAI 26)
04/15	Karatepe (con't)

Aramaic

04/17	Sefire (KAI 222-224)
04/22	Sefire (con't)
04/24	Panammuwa I (KAI 214)
04/29	Panammuwa (con't)
05/01	Tel Fekhariye (KAI 309)
05/06	Tel Dan (KAI 310)
05/10	Deir Alla (KAI 312)
05/13	Presentation of papers
05/15	Presentation of papers

Basic Bibliography — Northwest Semitic Epigraphs**A. Text Editions**

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