

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2015

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Near Eastrn Lang and Cultures
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Near Eastern Languages/Culture - D0554
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences
Level/Career Graduate, Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog 5125
Course Title Syriac I
Transcript Abbreviation Syriac I
Course Description Introduction to Syriac
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week (May + Summer)
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No
Grading Basis Letter Grade
Repeatable No
Course Components Seminar
Grade Roster Component Seminar
Credit Available by Exam No
Admission Condition Course No
Off Campus Never
Campus of Offering Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites
Exclusions

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 16.1103
Subsidy Level Doctoral Course
Intended Rank Junior, Senior, Masters, Doctoral

Requirement/Elective Designation

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students who finish this course will understand all the grammar of the Syriac dialect of Aramaic and will be able to read texts in the original with the aid of a dictionary.

Content Topic List

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Syntax

Attachments

- OSU Syllabus Syriac I 2.24.14.docx

(Syllabus. Owner: Acome,Justin)

Comments

- Sent back at department's request. *(by Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal on 08/05/2014 12:33 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Acome,Justin	04/17/2014 04:37 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Acome,Justin	04/17/2014 04:37 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel,Garett Robert	04/20/2014 09:46 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	08/05/2014 12:34 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Acome,Justin	08/05/2014 02:15 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Acome,Justin	08/05/2014 02:15 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel,Garett Robert	08/26/2014 11:04 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen,Dawn Hogle,Danielle Nicole Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin,Deborah Kay Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	08/26/2014 11:04 AM	ASCCAO Approval

Syriac I **NELC 5125 (3 Units)**

Meetings: MWF 9:10-10:05 am, Location: TBA

Kevin van Bladel

Office Hours: Hagerty Hall 300G, M1-2pm and by appt.

E-mail: vanbladel.2@osu.edu

This is an introduction to the most extensively attested and most securely understood dialect of ancient Aramaic, Syriac, which was used for literature from the 3rd century CE onward. Syriac became the standard literary language of Christians all across southwestern Asia, used by communities on both sides of the prosperous Syrian and Mesopotamian frontier between the Roman and Sasanian Persian Empires. Church missions using Syriac reached as far as southern India and China.

Syriac literature flourished most productively from the 5th to the 9th centuries, making it one of the most important languages for the study of Late Antiquity and the early Islamic period. By the end of the 9th century, Arabic replaced Aramaic as the main written and spoken language among Christians of the Middle East, although learned churchmen continued to compose numerous new texts in Syriac down to the present. Some of these later Syriac works are historical sources of the highest importance, including, for example, descriptions of the Mongol conquest, philosophical and scientific treatises, and such unusual texts as a Syriac description of a cleric's journey to colonial South America.

Classical Syriac authors composed a number of grammatical and linguistic treatises that let us know fairly precisely how this dialect was pronounced, whereas other dialects of Aramaic are not so well described by ancient authors themselves. Special annotations were developed for Syriac texts, including the Bible, that indicate many features of pronunciation that are otherwise left ambiguous by the script. Because classical Syriac is still used today as a liturgical language by several Eastern churches, we also have at our disposal a number of different continuous, living traditions of pronunciation that assist in our understanding of the ancient pronunciation. All this information makes Syriac an ideal place to start learning ancient Aramaic, since you can learn to speak the language aloud as a real language (called *kthovonoyo* or the literary language by speakers of modern Aramaic), and the pronunciations you learn for this dialect will be approximately correct for other ancient dialects of the same period. Moreover, Syriac orthography is fairly conservative, representing features of the language that were pronounced at a very early time, but which had been lost by the third century CE. Since learning Syriac means learning many of these archaic spellings, this facilitates moving from the dialects of Late Antiquity to Aramaic texts of a much older time, including the standard administrative Aramaic of the Achaemenian Persian Empire (ca 550-330 BCE), when those spellings represented the current pronunciation, and even going as far back as the earliest inscriptions of the 9th century BCE.

There are, of course, important differences between the dialects, both in grammar and usage—no language remains stable over such a long period and over such a great area—yet experience shows that beginning with Syriac will make it possible to learn any other ancient dialect with relative ease and to approach it not as a code to be deciphered but as a language that was spoken out loud.

Course Outcomes

Students who finish this course will understand all the grammar of the Syriac dialect of Aramaic and will be able to read texts in the original with the aid of a dictionary.

Course Books (available at SBX):

- ♦ Wheeler M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Syriac*, Caravan 1999.
- ♦ Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, trans. J.A. Crichton, Williams & Norgate, 1904 (reprint with Appendix by Eisenbrauns, 2004).
- ♦ J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford, 1903.

Online Resources:

- ♦ <http://www.bethmardutho.org/> [Gives access to Syriac computing resources including fonts.]
- ♦ <http://bethmardutho.cua.edu/hugoye/> [Online journal of Syriac studies. A useful source of bibliography for recent publications in Syriac studies.]

GRADING:

100 points possible (A = 93-107, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, E = 0-59)

20 pts. Monday quizzes (vocabulary, geography, names, 2 pts. per quiz)

20 pts. Homework (assigned from lessons in textbook)

20 pts. In-class exercises

20 pts. Midterm exam

20 pts. Final exam

Note: Regardless of your point total, you must pass the final to pass the class!

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed ; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

Class Attendance Policy

Students should plan to attend all classes. 20% of the grade is based on in-class exercises, and students who miss classes will miss lose points in this category.

Disability policy

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for

Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

SCHEDULE (subject to changes!):

Week 1: Introduction to Aramaic and Syriac. Preliminary. Lesson 1.

Introduction to Aramaic. Phonemics. Sound rules: stress, syllabification, spirantization, retrogressive vocalic reduction. Script. Gender. G-verb concept.

Week 2: Lessons 2-3.

Perfect verb. Direct objects. Pronominal suffixes. Relative clauses.

Week 3: Lessons 4-5.

Possession. *Koll*. More on pronoun suffixes. Plurals.

Week 4: Lessons 6-7.

Pronouns. Copulas. Demonstratives. III-weak verbs.

Week 5: Lessons 8-9.

Active participles. Adjectives. Pronoun suffixes type II.

Week 6: Lesson 10-11.

I-yod verbs. Construct state. Adverbs. Hollow verbs. Geminate verbs.

Week 7: Midterm February 20! Lesson 12.

Passive participles.

Week 8: Lesson 13-14.

Absolute state. Numbers. Infinitive. Imperfect verb, part 1.

Week 9: Lessons 14-15.

Imperfect verb, part 2.

Week 10: Lessons 16-17.

The Pa‘‘el. The Aph‘el.

Week 11: Lessons 17-18.

Medio-Passive verbs. Ethp‘el.

Week 12: Lesson 19.

The Ethpa‘al.

Week 13: Lesson 20.

The Ettaph‘al.

Week 14: Reading practice.

Readings in the Peshitta.

Week 15: Reading practice and Review.

Readings in the Peshitta. Review.

Final Exam: time as scheduled, in regular class room