

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 5121
Course Title Jewish Aramaic
Transcript Abbreviation Jewish Aramaic
Course Description Provides students grammatical and textual skills to read Jewish post-biblical Aramaic and to introduce them to some of the most important texts written in the language. Introduces grammar of Jewish Aramaic, dialectical differences among the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Palestine, and Jewish Babylonia, and how these differences are reflected in the manuscript and inscriptional evidence.
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 Lecture
Grade Roster Component Lecture
Credit Available by Exam No
Admission Condition Course No
Off Campus Never
Campus of Offering Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites The class presupposes a good working knowledge of Hebrew or prior coursework in Aramaic (e.g. biblical Aramaic or Syriac)
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

- Know enough Jewish Aramaic to make sense of a passage from the major texts with the aid of a dictionary and analyze its grammar and syntax;
- Have read selections from each of the major types of Jewish Aramaic texts, encompassing biblical interpretation, narrative and folklore, poetry, and ritual
- Have some familiarity with the historical background of each of those texts and how their cultural concerns are expressed in their style, syntax, and vocabulary
- Have formed opinions about larger issues raised by Jewish Aramaic literature and be able to express those opinions

Content Topic List

- Targum
- Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds
- Aramaic liturgical poetry
- Babylonian Aramaic magical bowls

Attachments

- Jewish Aramaic syllabus 8.22.14.docx: updated syllabus

(Syllabus. Owner: Acome, Justin)

Comments

- - not intended to satisfy any elective or specific coursework requirements for any undergraduate majors or minors
- updated syllabus attached, including book acquisition and grading details *(by Acome, Justin on 08/22/2014 01:04 PM)*
- - On syllabus, please include grading information, indicating the percentages assigned to various requirements.
-If the course can count as an elective on any of the Dept's undergraduate majors, please upload an updated curriculum map. If the course cannot count in that capacity, please make a note to that effect in the comments box.
(by Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal on 08/18/2014 11:11 AM)
- An indication of where the required texts must be provided on the final syllabus. *(by Heysel, Garrett Robert on 08/13/2014 02:29 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Acome, Justin	08/05/2014 02:16 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Acome, Justin	08/05/2014 02:16 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel, Garrett Robert	08/13/2014 02:29 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	08/18/2014 11:12 AM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Acome, Justin	08/22/2014 01:04 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Acome, Justin	08/22/2014 01:04 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel, Garrett Robert	08/31/2014 08:30 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Hogle, Danielle Nicole Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Nolen, Dawn	08/31/2014 08:30 PM	ASCCAO Approval

NELC 5121: JEWISH ARAMAIC

Instructor: Michael Swartz
Office: Hagerty Hall 321
Email: swartz.69@osu.edu
office hours: TBA

Meetings: Spring semester 2015
Day/Time: Mondays 2:15-5:00 pm
Building/Room: TBA

Topics:

From the end of the Second Temple period to the rise of Islam, Aramaic was the main spoken language of Jews living in the Land of Israel, the southern Levant, and the Persian Empire. It was the language spoken by Jesus and his followers, the ancient Rabbis, and their contemporaries. It was also the language of much of the region's literature, culture, commerce, and magic. During the rise of classical Judaism from the first to the sixth centuries CE, the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds, Bible translation and interpretation, poetry, and hundreds of inscriptions were written in Aramaic.

Course Description

NELC 5121 is designed to give students of Hebrew, biblical Aramaic, and Syriac the grammatical and textual skills necessary to read Jewish post-biblical Aramaic and to introduce them to some of the most important texts written in the language. The course will introduce you to the grammar of Jewish Aramaic, the dialectical differences among the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Palestine, and Jewish Babylonia, and how these differences are reflected in the manuscript and inscriptional evidence. Moreover, you will read selections from the major literary works in Jewish Aramaic, such as the Targum, the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds, Aramaic liturgical poetry, and the Babylonian Aramaic magical bowls.

Most class sessions will focus on a particular text. Each class unit will be introduced by a brief presentation of the historical issues it raises and include a discussion of the major thematic, stylistic, and bibliographic issues pertaining to the text, as well as a reading of assigned passages. We will also learn to use reference works and research tools for Jewish Aramaic.

Learning Objectives

1. Know enough Jewish Aramaic to make sense of a passage from the major texts with the aid of a dictionary and analyze its grammar and syntax;
2. have read selections from each of the major types of Jewish Aramaic texts, encompassing biblical interpretation, narrative and folklore, poetry, and ritual;
3. have some familiarity with the historical background of each of those texts and how their cultural concerns are expressed in their style, syntax, and vocabulary;
4. have formed opinions about larger issues raised by Jewish Aramaic literature and be able to express those opinions.

II. Class Requirements

A. The class presupposes a good working knowledge of Hebrew or prior coursework in Aramaic (e.g. biblical Aramaic or Syriac).

B. Preparation of class sessions is an essential requirement of this course. Every class will involve extensive in-class readings of the text assignments. These readings will be an important part of your grade. You will be expected to have prepared the reading assignment to the best of your ability, and to be familiar with the thematic and historical issues to be raised in the session, especially as raised in the articles and textbook readings.

PLEASE NOTE: The readings for the class must be prepared **without the use of a translation**. The only exceptions are for the biblical texts that are translated in the Targum and form the basis for Midrashic interpretation; and for Hebrew phrases and biblical quotations that appear in the Talmud and Midrash, for which you may use a scholarly Bible translation (such as the JPS Tanakh or the New Revised Standard, etc.) and my notes. [class preparation & participation: 20% final grade]

C. One in-class text presentation. The text, from one of the corpora we are studying, **must be approved by me**. For this presentation you will teach the class your text, guide them through its language, analyze its style and substance, and discuss the major issues it raises. The text must be prepared without the use of a translation. The presentation is to be accompanied by a translation and commentary written by the student. [presentation: 20% final grade]

D. Graduate students will write **one ten-to-fifteen-page research paper** on an Aramaic text or linguistic problem in the study of Aramaic. The paper can expand on the subject covered in the in-class presentation or can cover another subject. It must be submitted in hard copy (stapled) **by XX/XX/20XX** at 12:00 noon to the NELC office (Hagerty Room 300). The topic **must be approved by me by the tenth week of class**. [paper: 60% final grade]

E. Students will participate according to their background in Aramaic, Hebrew, or Jewish studies. More advanced students or those more acquainted with Hebrew or Aramaic will be asked to contribute to the class in such a way that will allow them to learn and not simply rely on prior knowledge. At the same time, students will learn cooperatively, so that beginning students can benefit from their classmates' language skills and more advanced students will learn to clarify their ideas. Students are encouraged to form study teams to prepare text assignments.

F. Grade Summary

class preparation & participation: 20%

In-class presentation: 20%

Research paper: 60%

IV. Course Policies

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/>.

[It is important that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic misconduct. For details, please review the University's guidelines at: <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>. If you have any questions, please contact me.]

Attendance

This course is designed so that much of our learning will take place in the classroom. Therefore, **your attendance at classes and preparation for in-class readings will be critical to your success in the course.** You are responsible for information, assignments, and texts given in class, whether you were present or not. Late papers and exams will not be accepted.

Communication

All email communication will be sent to your **OSU email address**. If you do not use this address regularly, please arrange to have your email forwarded from your OSU email account to your usual address.

Students with Disabilities

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/>.

III. Texts

A. Textbooks [available direct from publishers, amazon.com, and SBX]:

1. Frederick E. Greenspahn, *An Introduction to Aramaic* (2nd ed. Society of Biblical Literature; 2003). The textbook is based on biblical Aramaic but incorporates later stages of Aramaic.
2. Thomas O. Lambdin, *An Introduction to the Aramaic of Targum Onqelos*, revised by John Huenergard (Harvard, 2002). A grammar of the earliest systematic Aramaic translation of the Bible.
3. Isaac Jerusalemi, *The Talmud Is in Aramaic*. (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1982) A handbook to the Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud that selects narrative passages from the Talmud and “walks you through” them analyzing the roots, morphology, and idioms in them.
4. Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (reprinted, New York: Judaica Press, 1980). Available in several editions and online. Jastrow is the standard Hebrew dictionary for Rabbinic literature and until recently was the only comprehensive dictionary for rabbinic Aramaic (see below). Using this dictionary is a learning experience in itself--it requires some hunting around for

roots--and it is dated, but it is useful and easy to obtain. However, the dictionaries by Sokoloff are now definitive.

B. **Primary texts** for in-class reading and articles for required background reading will be posted on the CARMEN website for this course or distributed in class.

C. **Dictionaries and reference works:**

1. There are now three comprehensive dictionaries by Michael Sokoloff, all published by Bar Ilan University Press. These dictionaries are the definitive resources for the study of Jewish Aramaic. They are not only based on the best manuscripts and inscriptions, but they offer helpful guides to finding the roots and other grammatical clues for understanding words. Copies will be available in the Thompson Library Grand Reading Room. However, if you are serious about doing further research in Jewish Aramaic, you may want to buy them:

- *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (2002).
- *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (2nd ed., 2002).
- *A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* (2003).

2. Reference Grammars and Anthologies:

- Gustav Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch nach den Idiomen des palästinischen Talmud des Onkelostargum und Prophetentargum und der jerusalemi* (1960)
- J. N. Epstein, *Diqduq Aramit Bavlit* (2006; in Hebrew)
- Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Daniel J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts : (Second Century B.C.-Second Century A.D.)* (1978)
- David Marcus, *A manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic* (1981)
- T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (2011)
- Franz Rosenthal, *Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (2006)
- _____, *An Aramaic Handbook* (1967)
- William Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*

IV. Course schedule

In this schedule, class sessions are listed by weeks of class. The schedule is subject to change, especially depending on the pace and students' expertise and interests; you will, of course, be notified in advance. It is subject to change (check your OSU email accounts). For the first five weeks we will concentrate on grammatical forms; for the rest of the semester we will concentrate on the main dialects and corpora. The schedule lists (1) the grammatical topics that will be covered that week; (2) the chapters in Greenspahn and Lamdin that correspond to those topics; (3) the text corpora from which we will draw our readings for that week; and (4) some of the articles and secondary sources for background reading. You are not required to do the exercises in the textbooks other than the assigned text readings, but they are there if you find them useful.

Each numeral represents a week of class:

1. Introduction; the verb system
 - Greenspahn, 1-7
 - Lambdin, Introduction, 1
 - E. Y. Kutscher, "Aramaic," *Encyclopedia Judaica*
2. Conjugations in strong verbs (G, D, and H), pronominal suffixes
 - Greenspahn, 8-20
 - Lambdin, 1-6
 - Text: Daniel 7, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
 - Philip S. Alexander, "Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures"
3. Weak verbs, passives, reflexives
 - Greenspahn, 21-25
 - Lambdin, 12-15
 - Text: Onkelos
 - M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Language of Targum Onkelos and the Model of Literary Diglossia in Aramaic"
4. Prepositions, Particles, and Syntax
 - Lambdin, 7-9
 - Text: Onkelos, Palestinian Targums
 - Paul V.M. Flesher, "Is Targum Onkelos a Palestinian Targum? The Evidence of Genesis 28–50"
5. Absolute, Imperative, Infinitive, other forms
 - Greenspahn, 26-32
 - Lambdin, 16-22
 - Text: Genesis Rabbah
6. The Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (excerpts)
 - Text: Genesis Apocryphon
 - Greenfield, "Standard Literary Aramaic"
7. "Galilean" Aramaic
 - William Stevenson, *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic* (selections)
 - Text: Leviticus Rabbah
 - Michael Sokoloff, "The Current State of Research on Galilean Aramaic"
8. Palestinian Talmud
 - Text: Palestinian Talmud
 - Yochanan Bruer, "Aramaic in Late Antiquity"
9. Palestinian Talmud
 - Text: Palestinian Talmud (cont'd.)

10. Palestinian Aramaic Epigraphy

- Texts: Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions and amulets
- Steven Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of Synagogues during the Greco-Roman Period*, ch. 4

11. Babylonian Talmud

- Jerusalmi, *The Talmud Is in Aramaic* (selections)
- David Marcus, *A Manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic* (selections)
- Text: Babylonian Talmud

12. Babylonian Talmud

- Jerusalmi, *The Talmud Is in Aramaic* (selections)
- David Marcus, *A Manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic* (selections)
- Text: Babylonian Talmud

13. Babylonian Magical Texts

- Texts: Magical Bowls
- Michael D. Swartz, "Jewish Magic in Late Antiquity."

14. Palestinian Aramaic Poetry

- Yahalom and Sokoloff, *Shirat Bene Ma'arava* (selections)
- Joseph Yahalom, "'Syriac for dirges, Hebrew for speech:' Ancient Jewish Poetry in Aramaic and Hebrew"