



OT Independent Study

Spring 2016

2 Credit Hours

Narrative Criticism in the Hebrew Bible

Instructor's Name: Deirdre Brouer

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**Denver Seminary Mission** - "Denver Seminary prepares men and women to engage the needs of the world with the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture."

## I. Course Description

This course focuses on narrative criticism in the Hebrew Bible (OT) through exegetical study of selected narratives in the Hebrew Bible, analyzing the style and structure of selected narratives in the Hebrew Bible, comparing OT narrative with ANE narrative, and composing a modern-day biblical Hebrew narrative.

## II. Denver Seminary Educational Values

Denver Seminary is committed to students attaining four Educational Values:

1. *Biblically and Theologically Grounded*, 2. *Contextually Sensitive*, 3. *Spiritually Mature and Growing*, and 4. *Vocationally Fit*. This course most directly contributes toward the realization of the following two educational values:

1. ***Biblically and Theologically Grounded*** - *Demonstrate integrated biblical and theological competence.* In this course, students will discover biblical and theological features of the OT through a study of its Hebrew grammar and syntax. The study of Biblical Hebrew is far from limited to the study of linguistic features. It opens a door into the Semitic world where the Israelites thought, breathed, and lived in covenant relationship with God. Their language (Hebrew) reveals much about the nature and character of God, and the human dynamics that took place in the world of the ancients.
2. ***Spiritually Mature and Growing*** - *Exhibit a mature and growing Christ-likeness in their character.* Learning biblical languages is challenging and requires a mature spirit and a great deal of determination in order to attain proficiency. This course will emphasize the importance of persevering with grace, patience, and respect for peers and for the Hebrew Bible. These characteristics, combined with humility and determination, promise to create strong Christian character and effective ministers of the gospel who will be able to access the Old Testament in its original language and exegete its text with great care. Through the *study of the language*, students will

develop a growing sensitivity to the aspects of the Jewish worldview that are based on the Hebrew language, and students will become more at ease with issues related to Jewish-Christian dialogue.

### III. Course Objectives

1. To bring the message of the OT narratives to bear on the needs of the contemporary world.
2. To broaden and solidify knowledge of biblical Hebrew (vocabulary, morphology, syntax) by means of exegesis of select OT narratives and composing a biblical Hebrew narrative.
3. To understand the basic contributions of the methodological approach of narrative criticism.
4. To understand narrative style and structure in the OT and learn how to apply it.
5. To better perceive the insights a greater literary sensitivity can provide to the analysis and teaching of the biblical text.

### IV. Course Assignments & Assessment

1. **Reading (20%).** Read at least 800 pages over the course of the semester from the following books. Reading log to be submitted at midterm and finals.
  - Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Rev. ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
  - Alter, Robert. *The World of Biblical Literature*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
  - Amit, Yairah. *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.
  - Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004.
  - Ferry, David. *Gilgamesh: A New Rendering in English Verse*. New York: Noonday Press, 1993.
  - Fokkelman, J. P. *Reading Biblical Narrative: an Introductory Guide*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
  - Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature)*. Reprint ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
  - Tribble, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

2. **Hebrew Writing (20%).** Students will write their own biblical Hebrew narrative by constructing at least 3 sentences per week.
3. **OT Narrative Translations (20%).** Students will translate weekly from the following OT passages. Over the course of the semester, each book will be read in its entirety in a modern English translation such as NIV or ESV. From this reading, each student will select a short passage (5-6 verses) to translate and parse.
  - Numbers
  - Judges
  - Ruth
  - 1–2 Samuel
  - Nehemiah
4. **Midterm Paper (20%).** Students will submit a 7-10 page paper that focuses on Hebrew narrative style/structure. Students will choose one of the following options for this paper:
  - Exegete a specific biblical Hebrew narrative in the OT.
  - Track a particular narrative device in the OT across multiple biblical Hebrew narratives.
  - Compare two or more OT narrators with attention to their different styles.
  - Compare a biblical Hebrew narrative to an ANE narrative such as The Epic of Gilgamesh.
5. **Final Paper (20%).** Students will submit a 7-10 page paper that focuses on how the student can apply what they have learned to their own biblical Hebrew narrative writing. Approximately 2 pages of this paper will consist of the student's biblical Hebrew narrative.

**COURSE SCHEDULE – Spring 2016**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>READING LOG (Title and page numbers)</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS <i>due Friday</i></b>
Jan. 25		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Numbers
Feb. 1		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Numbers
Feb. 8		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Numbers
Feb. 15		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Judges
Feb. 22		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Judges
Feb. 29		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Ruth
Mar. 7		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
Mar. 14		<b>Due: Midterm Paper</b>

Mar. 21	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>READING LOG (Title and page numbers)</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS <i>due Friday</i></b>
Mar. 28		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
Apr. 4		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
Apr. 11		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
Apr. 18		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
Apr. 25		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Samuel
May 2		Writing: 3 Hebrew sentences Reading: 62 pages Translation: 5-6 verses from Nehemiah
May 9		<b>Due: Final Paper</b>