

Abilene Christian University
College of Biblical Studies | Graduate School of Theology

BHEB 622.01 Elementary Syriac

Fall 2015 W 1:30-4:20 BSB 104
3 credit hours

I. Personal Info

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II. GST Mission: CBS seeks to fulfill ACU's mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world by providing preparation for congregational leadership through biblical and theological studies and Christian spiritual formation for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ. The purpose of the GST in particular is *to equip men and women in effective missional leadership for ministry in all its forms, and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry.*

III. Class Description

Aimed at graduate students with no prior knowledge of Syriac, this class contributes to GST's mission to provide strong academic foundations by introducing students to the dialect of Aramaic known as Syriac, with the aims of their becoming acquainted with the basic features of its grammar, building vocabulary, and acquiring an elementary reading skill. The instructor will help students understand the relevance and value of a knowledge of Syriac for various areas of inquiry. The course will employ lecture, grammar and vocabulary drills in class, daily translation assignments, and discussion of secondary reading material.

IV. Required Texts

Sebastian Brock. *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*. Gorgias Handbooks 7. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006.

Sebastian Brock. *An Introduction to Syriac Studies*. Gorgias Handbooks 4. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006.

John Healey. *Leshono Suryoyo: First Studies in Syriac*. Gorgias Handbooks 2. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2005.

* Download the audio files for the illustrative texts: <http://gorgiaspress.com/bookshop/p-324-leshono-suryoyo-first-studies-in-syriacbrby-john-healeybrgorgias-handbooks-2.aspx>.

V. Recommended Texts

T. Nöldeke. *Compendious Syriac Grammar*. Translated by J.A. Crichton. Edited by A. Schall. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001.

J. Payne Smith Margoliouth. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. (Eisenbrauns reprint, 1998)
Michael Sokoloff. *A Syriac Lexicon. A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns and Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009.

VI. Grading

Assignments and tests will receive scores of 0-100 and be weighted as follows:

Class participation	25%
Quizzes	35%
Mid-Term Test	20%
Final Exam	20%

Weighted totals will be tabulated and grades assigned according to the following scale:

92-100	A
83-91	B
74-82	C
65-73	D
Below 65	F

VII. Attendance Policy

Students are required and expected to attend all class meetings and to arrive on time for class. In the event of an absence, the student is responsible for the material covered in class. More than one unexcused absence will result in a reduction of one letter grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in being dropped from the class.

VIII. Assignments

Class participation. Students must participate in class activities, such as presenting translated exercises and texts when assigned to do so. In addition to translating in class, students will be expected to contribute to classroom discussions of assigned reading. Translations should demonstrate an elementary-level grasp of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

Reading. Students are expected to read the texts assigned in the syllabus, both grammar and secondary reading, and be prepared to discuss them in class. The mid-term and final exams may include questions about any of the assigned readings.

Quizzes. There will be a quiz each week over vocabulary and grammar covered in previous sessions. The quizzes will focus primarily on material most recently covered, but they may also include cumulative material.

Mid-Term Test. The mid-term will cover the grammar, vocabulary, and translation assignments given up to that time. It may also assess student's comprehension of and engagement with secondary reading.

Final Exam. The final will cover grammar, vocabulary, translation, and secondary reading covered since the midterm.

Pathways. A Pathways assignment is not applicable for this course.

IX. Academic Integrity & Title IX This course observes ACU's academic integrity policy and Title IX provisions. For information about these policies and the steps that are taken to report incidents, see the links below:

<http://www.acu.edu/academics/provost/documents/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>

<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/hr/title-ix>

X. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. If a student requests accommodations under ADA, please notify the instructor one week prior to the course. If needs arise during the course, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

XI. Student Learning Outcomes and Course Competencies

Student Learning Outcomes	Competencies	Evaluation
1) Competency in languages appropriate for one's degree (GST 3)	1) Identify the most common vocabulary used in classical Syriac	1) Daily reading, quizzes, test, final
2) See 1	2) Recognize and render all types of nouns and verbs in use in classical Syriac; identify all major Syriac syntactical structures	2) Daily reading, quizzes, test, final
3) See 1	3) Translate Syriac sentences of elementary to intermediate difficulty	3) Daily reading, quizzes, test, final
4) See 1	4) Demonstrate the ability to implement basic Syriac grammatical tools	4) Daily reading, quizzes, test, final
5) Critical facility with the most important primary sources and issues of scholarly discussion (MA 1)	5) Assess the significance of Syriac studies as a discipline and as a tool supporting other disciplines, particularly biblical studies	5) Class discussions, test, final

Proposed Class Schedule*

NB: Vocabulary lists and additional exercises will be given each week to supplement the material in Healey's grammar.

26 August

Healey I-III: The Alphabet, Vowels and Other Signs, and Pronouns

Homework: vocabulary list 1; assigned exercises

For Quiz 1:[†] vocabulary list 1; possessive pronoun endings and independent personal pronouns

2 September

Quiz 1

Reading: Brock, *Introduction*, chapters 1-4.

Healey, IV-V: The Verb – the simple perfect and the participle; ܕܡܪܥ, ܪܥܡ and composite tenses

Homework: vocabulary list 2; assigned exercises.

For Quiz 2: vocab list 2; simple perfect, participle, and the perfect of ܪܥܡ and composite tenses

9 September

Quiz 2

Reading: Brock, *Introduction*, chapter 5

Healey, VI-VII: Nouns and adjectives; the imperfect, imperative, and uses of –ܐ

Homework: vocabulary list 3; assigned exercises

For Quiz 3: vocab list 3; noun and adjectives forms; the simple imperfect and imperative

16 September

Quiz 3

Reading: Brock, *Introduction*, chapter 6 and Appendix

Healey, VIII-IX: Derived stems of verbs; other verb forms

Homework: vocab list 4; assigned exercises

For Quiz 4: vocab list 4; derived verb forms (see Paradigm 1, pp. 100-1); non-*p^e* 'al imperatives, infinitives and participles (see Paradigm 2.A, p. 102).

23 September (Summit)

Quiz 4

Reading: Brock, "Syriac Studies in the Last Three Decades: Some Reflections," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 247 (PDF)

Healey, X-XII: verbs with guttural letters; verbs beginning with ܐ and ܐܢ; verbs with two root consonants

Homework: vocab list 5, assigned exercises

For Quiz 5: vocab list 5, grammar TBD

* The professor reserves the right to adjust the proposed schedule according to the needs of the class.

[†] NB: Quizzes may include cumulative vocabulary in addition to the most recent vocabulary list.

30 September

Quiz 5

Reading: Brock, *Bible in Syriac*, chaps. 1-2

Healey, XIII-XIV: Object pronouns attached to verbs & adverbs; numbers, days, and months

Homework: Vocab list 6, assigned exercises and/or Healey Reading Text 1

For Quiz 6: Vocab list 6; attached pronouns, numbers

7 October

Quiz 6

Reading: Brock, *Bible in Syriac*, chap. 3

Healey: Catch-up (if necessary) & review; Text 1 (translated for homework) and Text 2 (together in class)

Homework: prepare for midterm; finish translating text 2

14 October

Midterm Test

Reading: Brock, *Bible in Syriac*, chap 4-8

Healey: Finish text 2 (completed for homework); text 3 (in class)

Homework: Vocab list 7; translate Text 4

For quiz 7: Vocab list 7; TBD

21 October

Quiz 7

Reading: Brock, *Bible in Syriac*, Part II, pp. 103-22.

Healey: Text 4; begin text 5

Homework: Vocab list 8; translate to the end of Text 5

For quiz 8: Vocab list 8; TBD

28 October

Quiz 8

Reading: Brock, *Bible in Syriac*, Part II, pp.122-53; J. Edward Walters, "The Philoxenian Gospels as Reconstructed from the Writings of Philoxenos of Mabbug," *Hugoye* 13.2 (2010). The article is available online at

<http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/volume-index/441.html>.

Healey: Text 5; begin Text 6

Homework: Vocab list 9; finish translating text 6

For quiz 9: vocab list 9; TBD

4 November

Quiz 9

Reading: Lucas van Rompay, "Syriac Studies: The Challenges of the Coming Decade," *Hugoye* 10.1 (2007). The article is available online at

<http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/hugoye-author-index/413.html>.

Healey: Text 6; begin Text 7

Homework: Vocab list 10; finish Text 7

For quiz 10: Vocab list 10; TBD

11 November

Quiz 10

Reading: S.H. Griffith, "A Spiritual Father for the Whole Church: the Universal Appeal of St. Ephraem the Syrian," *Hugoye* 1.2 (1998). Article available online at <http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/hugoye-author-index/97.html>.

Healey: Text 7

Homework: Vocab list 11; Text 8

For quiz 11: vocab list 11; TBD

18 November

Quiz 11

Reading: Michael Philip Penn, "Monks, Manuscripts, and Muslims: Syriac Textual Changes in Reaction to the Rise of Islam," *Hugoye* 12.2 (2009). The article is available online at <http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/volume-index/433.html>.

Healey: Text 8; begin Text 9

Homework: Finish translating Text 9

For quiz 12: Vocab list 12; TBD

25 November: Happy Thanksgiving!

2 December

Quiz 12

Reading: Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Revisiting the Daughters of the Covenant: Women's Choirs and Sacred Song in Ancient Syriac Christianity," *Hugoye* 8.2 (2005). The article is available online at <http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/hugoye-author-index/166.html>.

Healey: Finish Text 9; Text 10

Prepare for Final Exam

9 December

Final Exam

Appendix A: Syriac Computing

See the following Penn State site for useful information:

<http://tlt.psu.edu/suggestions/international/bylanguage/syriac.html>.

Join the Hugoye mailing list: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hugoye-list>

Join the Facebook group: Beth Mardutho

Meltho Unicode Fonts download (for Mac OS X and Windows 2000, XP)

<http://www.bethmarduthod.org/index.php/download/fonts.html>

Mac Word Processing: Mellel (<http://www.redlers.com/index.html>)

Mac Syriac Keyboards: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/staff/pormann/syriac>

PC Word Processing: Office XP (Word, etc.)

If you're programming savvy, check out LaTeX: <http://www.latex-project.org/> (Some people swear by LaTeX, but I find it difficult to use. On the other hand, it's free software, so it doesn't hurt to give it a go!)

Appendix B: Other Useful Online Resources

1. Lexicons

Online searchable version of Jessie Payne-Smith's *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*:

<http://dukhrana.com/lexicon/PayneSmith/>

2. Research

- Resources for Syriac studies at Dumbarton Oaks:
<http://www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/resources/syriac>
- Syriac bibliographies by topic at the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity: <http://www.csc.org.il/db/db.aspx?db=SB>

3. Digitized Manuscripts

- Catalogue of digitized manuscripts at The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library:
<http://www.hmml.org/> (click on 'Research' to go to the manuscript search engine)
- A number of the Vatican's manuscripts (many of them unique and ancient) are now digitized and free to view online: <http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guii/scan/link.jsp> (see especially Borg.sir and Vat.sir)