

## Associated Canadian Theological Schools of Trinity Western University

### BIB 760/RELS 681: Septuagint Exegesis

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Fall - 2016

3 credit hours

**Prerequisites:** To fully appreciate the Old Greek translation of the Old Testament requires some knowledge of Greek. So, two Greek Courses minimally are required. Since this is a translation from Hebrew texts, some knowledge of Hebrew would also be very helpful, but I will seek to teach the course in a way that does not require Hebrew.

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Course Dates: [September 13](#) – [December 6](#),  
2021

Class days and times: September 27 – October  
1, 2021, 8:30am – 12.30pm.

#### I. Course Description

Employing the Septuagint in the course of biblical or theological studies, whether for Old Testament or New Testament studies, requires considerable expertise. Because it is a translation, its exegesis and interpretation involve a close reading of Hebrew text (or rather literal translation of that text), that in most cases underlies the Greek text, a careful appreciation for the way the Greek translator did his work, and then a knowledgeable awareness of the way the Greek text subsequently came to be used as a text in its own right in Judaism and Christianity. Complexity abounds in each context. This course introduces the participant to various methodological elements that interpreters of the Septuagint must master in order to exegete this translation accurately and use it knowledgeably in other hermeneutical applications. Selected portions of the Greek translation of Exodus will be used to illustrate these elements.

#### II. Objectives

By the end of this course, each student should:

- 1) demonstrate moderate competency in the exegesis of selected portions of the Greek Old Testament focused in Exodus;
- 2) articulate the reason why specific aspects of such exegesis are necessary in order to develop a defensible interpretation of selected Septuagint texts, primarily materials from Exodus;
- 3) explain why evaluating the translator's technique is essential to understanding the Septuagint text;

- 4) use the various language tools available to interpret the Septuagint text (at least the edited form of that text as best we can reconstruct it today);
- 5) develop a profile of the Exodus translator and discern whether or not he paid attention to literary or theological issues in the preparation of his translation;
- 6) discern the value of the Septuagint as repository of a pre-Christian, Hellenistic Jewish hermeneutical understanding of the Old Testament.

### **III. Course Textbooks**

The professor will provide the Greek texts that will be used during the course. Students should have access to a corresponding Hebrew text or, if they do not have that competency, a copy of the New Revised Standard Version of Exodus.

Several articles will be available in pdf (these relate to sessions one to three particularly). It is expected that students will be reading in the range of 1200 pages of material for this course.

*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, edited by A. Pietersma and B. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, second printing, 2009). (available online [ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/](http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/))

Barr, James. *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations*. Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens XV (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

[Brayford, Sarah. *The Taming and Shaming of Sarah in the Septuagint of Genesis* (Denver, Col: Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver, 1998.)

Brayford, Sarah, "Characterization and Plots in Genesis 16: A Narrative-Critical Analysis," *Scriptura* 119 (2020:1), pp. 1-17

Dines, Jennifer. *The Septuagint* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

van der Louw, Theo. A. W. *Transformations in the Septuagint. Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 47 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007). Particularly pages 25-93.

Wagner, J. Ross. *Reading the Sealed Book. Old Greek Isaiah and the Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013). Particularly pages 1-147, 227-240.

Wevers, John. *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990).

#### Reference:

Aitken, James K. *No Stone Unturned. Greek Inscriptions and Septuagint Vocabulary*. Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible 5 (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

Evans, T.V. *verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch. Natural Greek usage and Hebrew Interference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Lee, John A. L. *The Greek of the Pentateuch. Grinfield Lectures on the Septuagint 2011-2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Lemmelijn, Bénédicte. *A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called 'Plagues Narrative' in Exodus 7:14-11:10*. OTS 56 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

Perkins, Larry. "VIII. People and Covenant," in *Handbuch zur Septuaginta. LXX.H. Band 5. Die Theologie der Septuaginta*. Ed. by Hans Ausloos and Bénédicte Lemmelijn (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus, 2020), 399-502.

#### **IV. Course Assignments**

1. From Sessions Five to Ten students will be given opportunity to present their exegesis of one of the portions of Exodus we are studying. This will be a 30 minute presentation in which key aspects of the Septuagint text assigned for that session will be discussed, which indicate how the translator was exegeting his Hebrew text and how this exegesis gets translated into Greek form. This will include:
  - a. A basic translation of the Greek text;
  - b. Historical and literary elements considered important for understanding the text;
  - c. An overview of the pluses and minuses in the Greek text in comparison to our existing Hebrew/NRSV text(s);
  - d. Identify any patterns or structures in the Greek text – parallelism, chiasm, inclusios, quotations, rhetorical devices, etc.;
  - e. Grammatical data – to what degree does the target text reflect the grammatical idioms of the target language, or the source text;
  - f. Lexical data – is there anything noteworthy in the lexical choices the translator is making in this passage?
  - g. Identify any hermeneutical issues that emerge through the translation process?
  - h. If the text is quoted elsewhere in scripture, provide some comment.

The student(s) will write up the results of their research and present it to the professor December 6. This will be in the form of a verse-by-verse commentary. It will be no longer than 20 pages in length. This is worth 50% of the final grade. This grade includes an evaluation of the in-class presentation and the final written assignment.

2. The professor will assign to each student a Greek lexeme used in the translation of Exodus. The student will analyze its usage in Greek Exodus. This involves a careful evaluation of the Hebrew term(s) it represents, the semantic value it carries, and a detailed summary of the places in Exodus where this Greek lexeme occurs and its contextualized meaning. If appropriate, consideration of usage in other segments of the Septuagint may be noted. The student will investigate the usage of this lexeme in Hellenistic Greek (e.g., papyri and inscriptions) and seek to discern to what degree the Hebrew equivalents are well rendered by these Greek equivalent. The goal is to discern whether this lexical choice has exegetical significance and if so, what that might be. Distribution and equivalents should be shown in chart form.

The final product will be a paper no longer than 15 pages. It will be due November 15 and is worth 35% of the final grade.

3. The other 15% of the final grade will be based on the reading report submitted by the student. This will include brief reflections (4-5 paragraphs) based upon the student's reading of the texts by Barr, van der Louw, and Wagner, and the professor's evaluation of the student's in class engagement. A reading report form will be circulated to the students during the course.

All written assignments will follow Turabian format, should be appropriately footnoted and contain necessary bibliography. Students may submit assignments by email, but must use a Unicode based Greek font. Such assignments should **not** be submitted in pdf.

*Course Grading:*

Assignment # 1	50%
Assignment # 2	35%
Reading report and Reflections	15%
Total	100%

**Grading Scale**

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

**V. Course Outline**

[Each session is approximately 100 minutes in length.]

September 27 - Session One: Introduction  
 Exegeting a Translated Text – Significant Assumptions  
 Working with the Göttingen Edition of Exodus  
 Introduction to *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* by John Wevers  
 SBLSCS Guidelines – located at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ioscs/commentary/prospectus.html>.  
 A. Pietersma “The Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on the Septuagint and the Guidelines for its Production” (Draft).

September 27 - Session Two: Possible examples of the translator's exegetical work and challenges for our exegesis of the Septuagint. Theophanies in Greek Exodus.  
 Readings for next session:

A. Pietersma, "Exegesis in the Septuagint: Possibilities and Limits (The Psalter as a Case in Point)," in *Septuagint Research* (eds. W. Kraus and R.G. Wooden; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL 2006), 33-46.

L. Perkins, "The Greek Translator of Exodus – Interpreter (translator) and Expositor (interpreter) – His Treatment of Theophanies," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43(2012):1-41.

Exodus 6:1-4

September 28- Session Three:

A Typology of Translation

Cultural Influences in Translation (Brayford, Day, de Troyer)

The Nature of Literalism – James Barr's *Typology*

"Free and Yet Faithful. On Translation Technique of LXX Exod 7:14-11:10," by Bénédicte Lemmelijn

Exodus 6:5-9

September 28 -- Session Four: Exegesis of the Septuagint – Principles and Process

Septuagint Exegesis – Al Pietersma

*Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*. Chapter One. Staffan Olofsson (p.1-27)

Texts by Wagner and van der Louw.

"The Canonical Context of Translation" – John Wevers

Exegetical Process

Exodus 6:10-13, 20-22

September 29 -- Session Five: Understanding the Relationship of the Greek Text to its Hebrew *Vorlage*

"Approaches Toward Scripture Embraced by the Ancient Greek Translators" – Emmanuel Tov  
Some issues in the *Vorlage* of Greek Exodus.

Larry Perkins, "Exodus Section 2.4.1.2." in *The Textual History of the Bible: Septuagint* ed. By A. Lange and E. Tov. Leiden: Brill, 2017, 135-142.

Exodus 6:23-30

September 29 -- Session Six: Exegesis and Lexicography in the Septuagint

Larry Perkins, "Observations on the Plague Narrative in Greek Exodus: Strategies Used by the Translator to Shape the Narrative," *JSCS* 52(2019): 73-90.

Exodus 7:1-7

September 30 - Session Seven:

Use of Characterization as a translation strategy – Aaron and Moses in Exodus 32-34 as case study. Cultural influences in translation.

Larry Perkins, "The Greek Translator's Portrayal of Aaron in Exodus 32," *JSCS* 50 (2017): 134-54.

Sarah Brayford, "Characterization and Plots in Genesis 16: A Narrative-Critical Analysis," *Scriptura* 119 (2020:1), pp. 1-17

Exodus 7:8-13 (Characterization of Pharaoh in Greek Exodus)

September 30 - Session Eight: Student Presentations

Exodus 7:1-7

October 1 - Session Nine: Student Presentation

Tent of Meeting/Tent of Witness – Theological perspectives in Greek Exodus.

Larry Perkins, “The Translation of מועד מושכן/אהל מועד and שכן in Greek Exodus,” JSCS 48(2015): 8-26.  
Exodus 7:8-13.

October 2 – Session Ten: Student Presentation/or Exegesis and Theology in Greek Exodus – Summary and Conclusions

Exodus 6 – “I, Yahweh” or “I am Yahweh” -- ἐγὼ κύριος in Exodus 6 and elsewhere.

It is expected that a student will come to class having read the material pertinent to that session. When we are discussing Septuagint text, the professor expects that the student will work through the Greek text prior to class, doing some comparison with the Hebrew text, either directly or indirectly through the NRSV.