

**Ph.D./M.A. Seminar: Textual Traditions of the Old Testament**  
**OT 6R1010**  
**McMaster Divinity College**

**Fall Semester 2024**  
**Tuesdays 9:00 – 10:50 am**  
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## **I. Description**

A study of the various scribal traditions which preserved the Old Testament with attention to the disciplines of textual, redaction and canonical criticism. The variety of ancient witnesses to Old Testament texts will be analyzed and evaluated for their contribution to the establishment of the original text of the Old Testament, to the elucidation of the development of the texts of the Old Testament, and to the role of particular texts and manuscripts as canonical texts.

## **II. Purpose**

**A. Knowing:** To have a thorough knowledge of the character and development of the full spectrum of ancient scribal traditions which preserved the Old Testament text with special attention to Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Latin sources; To have a thorough knowledge of the historical and social contexts in and for which the various works were originally translated; To know the canons of lower (textual) criticism; To understand the relationship between lower and higher criticism and identify the ambiguity in the distinction between them.

**B. Being:** To gain a deeper appreciation for the role of scribes and translators in the preservation of the Bible; To locate oneself within this enduring tradition; To appreciate the impact of ancient textual forms on communities of faith.

**C. Doing:** To learn how to access the textual witnesses to the Old Testament text; To refine one's ability to work sensitively with the ancient scribal traditions, for the purposes of textual, redaction, and canonical criticism; To develop clear and creative presentations (written and oral form) of the textual traditions of the Old Testament.

### III. Reading Resources

Jobes, Karen H., and Moisés Silva. *Invitation to the Septuagint* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

McCarter, P. Kyle. *Textual Criticism: Recovering the text of the Hebrew Bible*. Guides to Biblical scholarship. Old Testament Guides. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (4<sup>rd</sup> edition). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2022.

Ulrich, Eugene C. *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. Grand Rapids/Leiden: Eerdmans/Brill, 1999.

Articles distributed in class and on course website.

Optional: Würthwein, Ernst. *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*. Edited by Alexander A. Fischer. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014.

All required and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours. See also the Digital Theological Library for resources.

### IV. Schedule

#### A. Phase 1: Orientation to Textual Criticism

The first phase of this course is a combination of reading and discussion to orient students to the relationship between the textual traditions of the Old Testament and the traditional practice of textual criticism. This phase will culminate with a paper by each student which will provide an orientation to the textual traditions available for their particular project and provide a text critical analysis of key passages.

#### B. Phase 2: Orientation to Textual Tradition Research

The second phase of this course is a combination of reading, discussion and presentation to orient students to the stream of textual tradition research on the Old Testament. This phase will culminate with a paper by each student which will present an example of the shape of particular textual traditions related to their corpus within the Old Testament.

#### C. Phase 3: Reflection on Textual Traditions and Canon

The final phase of this course encourages reflection on the impact of textual traditions research on the canonical shape of the Old Testament with reference to canonical approaches to the Old Testament.

## September

### 10 Orientation

#### 17 Class: Text Criticism

- Read: Tov ch. 1 (pp. 1-18); McCarter ch. 1
- Tradition: Qumran (Tov ch. 5, pp. 109-170; optional: Würthwein 54-78)
- Independent Work: progress on gathering witnesses, identify at least one issue in your passage

#### 24 Class: Scribal Tendencies and Text Critical Goal

- Read:
  - Scribal Tendencies: McCarter (ch. 2), Tov (ch. 10, pp. 277-322; ch. 12, pp. 335-386)
  - Text Critical Goal: Waltke (1989), McCarter (ch. 1, p. 12), Tov (ch. 13.3.4, pp. 396-398)
- Tradition: Masoretic (Tov ch. 3, pp. 35-86; optional: Würthwein 15-53)
- Independent work: Provide initial overview of text traditions for one OT book: what they are and how to access them

#### 1 Class: Text Critical Procedure

- Read: McCarter (ch. 3), Optional: Würthwein 155-206
- Tradition: Old Greek and Old Greek Revisions (Tov ch. 7, pp. 205-214; ch. 8, pp. 215-262; Jobes-Silva (Intro, chs. 1, 2, 4, 7, 8); Optional: Würthwein 95-129.
- Independent work: Provide initial text critical example from your OT book

## October

#### 8 Class: Text Critical Procedure

- Read: Tov (ch. 13.1-4, pp. 387-406); Hendel (2017)
- Tradition: Samaritan, Aramaic, Latin, Arabic (Tov ch. 6, pp. 171-204; ch. 9, pp. 263-274; Optional: Würthwein 79-92; 130-154; Flesher-Chilton 1-89; Weitzman 15-163)
- Independent work: Provide another initial text critical example from your OT book  
***Text critical Papers due by Sat, Oct 12, 11:59 pm on Avenue 2 Learn (discussion, assignment hand in)***

#### 15 No Class: Reading Week (begin work on Text Traditions paper)

#### 22 Class: Text Traditions

- Read: Sweeney, Bodner, Walters, Tov 283-326, Ulrich Part 1
- Independent work: Provide choice for passage to trace text tradition differences and their social contexts

#### 29 Class: Text Traditions

- Read: Jobes-Silva chs. 9-10, 14
- Independent work: Provide initial thoughts on key differences between traditions for your paper

## November

### 5 Class (with Steve Delamarter): Text Traditions

- Exercise #1 Orientation to Ethiopic manuscripts

### 12 Class (with Steve Delamarter): Text Traditions

- Exercise #2 with Steve Delamater on Ethiopic manuscripts

*Text tradition Papers due by Nov 16, 11:59 pm for posting on Avenue 2 Learn (discussion, assignment hand in)*

### 19 No Class: Evangelical Theological Society

### 26 No Class: Society of Biblical Literature

## December

### 3 Class: Review Textual Tradition papers

### 10 Class: Review Textual Tradition papers

*Canonical Reflections due by Dec 11, 11:59 pm for posting on Avenue 2 Learn (discussion, assignment hand in)*

## V. Digital Resources

We will be using **Avenue 2 Learn** this semester for sharing resources for reading as well as distributing papers for evaluation.

## VI. Learning Experiences

### A. Class Experiences

This is a graduate seminar style class of collaborative learning in which professor and students are engaged in active learning together. Learning to critically (in its positive sense) engage material is essential to functioning in a graduate program and is expected of all students in our MA/PhD. It is expected that all students will not only attend these sessions, but also that they will assume responsibility for contributing to and learning from the experience. This means that readings will be completed prior to arrival in class and that student and presenter alike will pursue the acquisition of knowledge in the learning environment. It is expected that ALL members of the class will ask questions and contribute insights whenever opportunity is given, during and following presentations by professor or student alike. Students are graded on their level of preparation and contribution. When reading is assigned, each student must post a 1-2 page reflection on their reading to Avenue 2 Learn prior to classtime.

**Value:** 15%

**Submission:** PDF submitted to Avenue 2 Learn (discussion)

## B. Textual Criticism Paper

For this paper the student will choose a particular corpus in the Old Testament that is related to their thesis/dissertation topic. They will then write a minimum 15-page research essay which first of all provides an overview of the main textual witness traditions for this corpus, including for example Hebrew (e.g., MT, Samaritan Pentateuch, Qumran manuscripts, Nash Papyrus), Greek (e.g., OG), Aramaic (e.g., Targums, Peshitta), Latin (e.g., Old Latin, Vulgate), and Arabic. Identify the main traditions, extant witnesses, and an initial description of the character and development of each tradition and their temporal, spatial, and sociological provenance. Secondly, the paper will identify key text critical issues for their corpus and, following text critical methodology which includes an expression of the goal of the text critical enterprise, make appropriate decisions on the best reading. Papers are due in .pdf format by Oct 12, 11:59 p.m. Submit through Avenue 2 Learn.

**Value:** 30%

**Due:** October 12, 2024, 11:59 p.m.

**Submission:** PDF submitted to Avenue 2 Learn (assignment and discussion)

## C. Textual Tradition Paper

For this learning experience the student will write a minimum 25-page research paper comparing and contrasting at least the Hebrew and Greek traditions of their chosen corpus in the Old Testament. The concern in this paper is not with text critical issues but rather on the way the Hebrew and Greek (and others if needed) traditions function as texts in their own right and were used within particular sociological contexts. Papers are due in .pdf format by November 16 at 11:59 p.m. submit to Avenue 2 Learn and post to the appropriate discussion there as well. Discussions on papers will be on Dec 3, 10 with reviews from colleagues posted to A2L following the session it is presented.

**Value:** 40%

**Due:** November 16, 2024@11:59 p.m.

**Submission:** PDF submitted to Avenue 2 Learn (assignment and review discussion)

## D. Canonical Reflection

In a final written reflection (minimum 5 pages) the student will provide reflection on the impact of the course and research on the student's view of canon with reference to canonical approaches, especially streams of research beginning with Brevard Childs and James Sanders (see Resources for this in Avenue 2 Learn for specific articles).

**Value:** 15%

**Due:** December 11, 2022@11:59 p.m.

**Submission:** PDF submitted to Avenue 2 Learn (assignment and discussion).

## VII. Format and Evaluation

So I can properly evaluate your work the following guide is to be used for papers in this class.

- **Medium for Submission:** All material in this class is to be submitted in .pdf format to Avenue 2 Learn.
- **Style:** All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Title page, footnoting where appropriate and bibliography are not included in the length required. Material should be written in excellent modern literary English with proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric (including an introduction, conclusion and logical flow of argument). If it helps an outline may accompany the “paper” but this is not included in the length of the “paper.” Secondary and Primary sources should be used, cited and footnoted appropriately.
- **Gender Inclusive Language:** McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011). See further: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.
- **Citations:** You must cite the source of your material very carefully, not only when quoting from a section, but also when drawing from it as a resource. Quotations should be kept to a minimum as I favour summary and integration of secondary literature (footnoted).
- **Statement on Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.
  - this is a special issue for those pursuing second and third degrees in theology. It is understood that students will be building on earlier ideas and work, but it is expected that students will not hand in material that is merely “warmed over” previous work. If there is reason for concern speak with the professor about this.

**A special note about AI:** You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you “tidy up” your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own as if it is one’s own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g.,

failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty @ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

- **AODA:** In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

**So I can properly evaluate your work and help you grow in your biblical and writing skills the following evaluation guide should be kept in mind as you write:**

- **Presentation:** Is the spelling correct? Does the grammar/syntax reflect proper English? Is the paper laid out properly?
- **Argumentation:** Is there a good introduction and conclusion? Does the argument flow with ample support? Is the question answered?
- **Content:** Are all the points considered? Is there proper documentation of sources used?

## VIII. Accountability

**Note on Timeliness of Submissions:** Since this is a seminar style course all participants must be timely in their submission of material. People will need to read the various submissions and once the schedule is set there is no room to switch dates. For that reason there are considerable penalties for late materials in this course. Each **DAY** a paper is late will mean the loss of half a letter grade (5%). Take this into account when planning out your semester.

**Note on Timeliness of Attendance:** From time to time you may find that you are late for class. Late arrivals, hereafter called “tardies,” are unacceptable and will lead to a negative disposition in the professor and your classmates. Such “tardies,” however, can be redeemed at the rate of Timbits for the entire class at the session following the tardy as well as a coffee for the professor.

**Rule of the Timbits (הלכה התמבטים):** Because “tardies” raise the ire of the covenant community (bound by this covenantal syllabus document delivered here at the foot of the “Mountain”), those who are late for class must have a means by which to atone for such “accidental sins” (בְּשִׁגָּגָה, if they are defiant sins, בְּיָד רָמָה, then the offender will be “cut off” from the community, see Num 15:27-31). which means anyone late for class will need to bring Timbits for the entire class (מִנְחָה) no later than the next class meeting plus a Tim Hortons coffee (נֶסֶךָ) for the professor (cream, no sugar). This מִנְחָה and נֶסֶךָ will function simultaneously as both a sin offering (חֲטָאת, Leviticus 4) atoning for the accidental sin of the offender and a peace offering (שְׁלָמִים, Leviticus 3) enhancing the fellowship of the covenant community. See the high professor for further details and any torah-rulings (see Haggai 2:10-14) regarding specific situations.

Especially important is to take seriously the cry of Joel of old in 1:13:

חָגְרוּ וְסָפְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים	Gird yourselves <i>with sackcloth</i>
הִילֵלוּ מִשְׁרְתֵי מִזְבֵּחַ	And lament, O priests;
בָּאוּ לִינוּ בְשָׁלִים מִשְׁרְתֵי אֱלֹהֵי	Wail, O ministers of the altar!
כִּי נִמְנַע מִבֵּית אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וְנֹסֶךְ:	Come, spend the night in sackcloth
	O ministers of my God,
	For <u>the grain offering and the drink offering</u>
	Are withheld from the house of your God.

And note his promise of a reward to those who repent in 2:14:

מִי יוֹדַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחֵם	Who knows whether He will turn and relent
וְהַשְׁאִיר אַחֲרָיו בְּרָכָה	And leave a blessing behind Him,
מִנְחָה וְנֹסֶךְ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	<u>Even a grain offering and a drink offering</u>
	For the LORD your God? <sup>1</sup>

## IX. Bibliography:

For bibliography for books with primary texts of the major witnesses to the OT, see:

Bazylinski, Stanislaw. *A Guide to Biblical Research: Introductory Notes* (subsidia biblica 28). Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006.

Abel, F.-M. *Grammaire du Grec Biblique suivie d'un choix de papyrus*. Paris: Gabalda, 1927.

Adair, J. R. "Light from Below: Canonical and Theological Implications of Textual Criticism." *Old Testament Essays: Journal of the Old Testament Society of South Africa* ii, no. 1 (1998): 9-23.

Aitken, James K., ed. *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Albrektson, B. "Difficilior Lectio Probabilior - A Rule of Textual Criticism and Its Use in Old Testament Studies." *OTS* 21 (1981): 5-18.

Albrektson, B. "Masoretic or Mixed: On Choosing a Textual Basis for a Translation of the Hebrew Bible," *Textus* 23 (2007): 33-49.

Barr, J. "Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators." In *Festschrift Walter Baumgartner*. *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* no. 16, 1-11. Leiden: Brill, 1967.

Barthelemy, D. *Etudes d'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, OBO, 1978.

Barthelemy, D. et al., *The Story of David and Goliath*. OBO 73; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986.

Barthelemy, D. *Les Devanciers de Aquila*. VTSup 10. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963.

Barthélemy, Dominique, Gerard J. Norton, and Stephen Pisano. *Tradition of the text: studies offered to Dominique Barthélemy in celebration of his 70th birthday*. *Orbis biblicus et orientalis* ; 109. Freiburg, Schweiz/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991.

Bons, Eberhard, and Jan Joosten, eds. *Septuagint Vocabulary: Pre-History, Usage, Reception*. SCS58. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, see the "definitive" work on this: Mark J. Boda, *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 53-54.



- Botte, B., and P.-M. Bogaert. "Septante et Versions grecques." In *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, edited by J. Briend and É. Cothenet. Vol. 12, Fasc. 68, cols. 536-693. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1993.
- Brown, William P. *Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1-2:3*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 132. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Christiansen, D. L. "In Quest of the Autograph of the Book of Jeremiah: A Study of Jeremiah 25 in Relation to Jeremiah 46-51," *JETS* 33 (1990) 145-154.
- Colwell, E. C. "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P45, P66, P75." In *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. NTTS no. 9. 106-24. Leiden: Brill, 1969.
- Cook, J. "Questions of Textual Criticism. To Reconstruct or Not?" Chap. in *Colloque "Bible et Informatique: HerméNeutique" Tübingen, 26-30 August, 1991*. 515-22. Paris & Genève: Champion & Slatkine, 1992.
- Cross, F. & Talmon, S. *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1975.
- Cross, Frank Moore *From Epic to Canon*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
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- David, Robert, Manuel Jinbachian. *Traduire la Bible hébraïque: de la Septante à la Nouvelle Bible Second = Translating the Hebrew Bible: from the Septuagint to the Nouvelle Bible Second*. Montréal: Médiaspaul, 2005.
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- Hebrew Text." In *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After Their Discovery. Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20-25, 1997*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam, 1-7. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society in cooperation with the Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000.
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- Glenny, W. Edward. "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos," *VT* 57 (2007): 524-547.
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- Gooding, David W. "An Appeal for a Stricter Terminology in the Textual Criticism of the Old Testament." *JSeS* 21 (1976): 15-25.
- Gordis, T. "On Methodology in Biblical Exegesis." *JQR* 61 (1970): 93-118.
- Goshen-Gottstein, M. H. "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: Rise, Decline, Rebirth." *JBL* 102, no. 3 (1983): 365-99.
- Goshen-Gottstein, M. H. "Theory and Practice of Textual Criticism. The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint." *Textus* 3 (1963): 130-58.
- Goshen-Gottstein, M. H. "Editions of the Hebrew Bible—Past and Present." Pp. 221-42 in M. Fishbane and E. Tov (eds.), *'Shar'arei Talmon': Studies in the Bible, Qumran and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992.
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- Griggs, C. Wilfred. *Early Egyptian Christianity: from its origins to 451 CE*. (Rev. ed.). Leiden: Brill, 2000.
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