

# CHTH G105-C05 - NT/OT 6ZS6 Linguistic Modeling for Biblical Study

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McMaster Divinity College  
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Fall 2022 (Term 1)  
Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.–12:50 p.m.

## Course Description

This course focuses upon developing appropriate linguistic models and methods to enhance study of the Bible in its original languages. These models may include such approaches as forms of discourse theory, SFL-based models, relevance theory, translation theory and related topics, according to individual student interest—all applied to selected issues and passages in the original languages of the Bible. This course may be taken by those working in either Greek or Hebrew and may be repeated in a new program with new content.

## Course Objectives

The general objectives of the course are as follows, although individual students will have personal objectives based upon their own linguistic and research interests.

### Knowing:

1. to develop the student's ability to formulate and analyze advanced linguistic methods and models appropriate to study of the Bible in its original languages
2. to master the pertinent literature regarding such methods and models
3. to gain familiarity with a wide variety of linguistic models

### Being:

3. to become a competent constructive critic of the linguistic models of others
4. to apply such methods or models in appropriate and interesting ways to enhance understanding of the Bible

### Doing:

5. to be able to articulate the nature of the method or model chosen in dialogue with others
6. to become competent at devising and developing relevant linguistic models for biblical analysis
7. to utilize recent advances in supporting media, such as OpenText.org, in the development of such methods and models

## Course Prerequisites

Prerequisites: At least two years of study of the appropriate ancient language(s), admission to the M.A. or Ph.D. programs of McMaster Divinity College. A conversation with the professor is recommended.

### **Course Requirements**

This is a graduate research-level course in biblical studies and will be taught in this way. Therefore, it is assumed that students will perform as research degree students to facilitate learning. This means that students will be expected to do suitable academic work outside of the classroom.

The major requirements include demonstrated knowledge of a range of linguistic methods (as demonstrated in a single 5,000-word paper), the development and application of a particular linguistic model along with pertinent bibliography (10,000 word paper), and critical response to the work of other students, including one formal response to a specific student's work (2,500 words). The word count (inclusive) for each paper is to be indicated on the title page of each draft of each paper in order to be deemed complete.

The student is to do new (for the student and the discipline) work that goes well beyond summary of previous work and suggests and develops new ways of understanding (i.e. literature surveys are to be kept to a minimum in the major paper). Dates for discussion of topics and presentation of material will be set on the second meeting of the course (the first meeting is Tuesday, September 13, the second September 20). Come prepared. The expectation is that all students will be present for all meetings, and materials for discussion will be distributed in advance per the agreed schedule.

### **Course Textbooks**

Required reading:

Porter, S. E. *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.

There are also readings for each day that the class meets. I do not expect you to read everything, but to read enough to be familiar with the topic and to be able to do your own research.

Recommended reading:

Porter, S. E. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

This is an invaluable book for any academic to read as a guide to success in the academic world, as well as providing important guidance for successfully writing one's dissertation.

Each student is also responsible for developing a pertinent bibliography for their own reading and research.

### Course Assessment

Each student is required to complete all of the following requirements (failure to complete all constitutes grounds for failure of the course):

1. Participation and Reading. Participation is required in all course meetings, including evidence of having read the paper(s) of the day and active participation in discussion of the paper(s). Failure to participate adequately can result in reduction of the student's final grade. The student is also expected to read the required textbook and major sections of other books (such as those listed above) on method in linguistic research. Failure to demonstrate adequate depth and breadth of reading can result in reduction of the student's final grade.

2. Presentation and defense (5,000 words) of a particular linguistic model in relation to other potential models available for the study of the Bible, including their relationships, contributions, strengths, and weaknesses. This should be a specific engagement of one linguistic model with other potential linguistic models (**October 18**). This paper is to be electronically distributed to all course participants by the end of the previous Friday. The paper is due on **October 18**. 25%.

3. Presentation of a major research project on an appropriate method for linguistic study of the Bible, with application to a selected text(s) (including distribution of paper to all course participants by the previous Tuesday, with bibliography). The presentation will be two minutes maximum, but discussion will take the entire period. Date for presentation to be agreed. See number 4 below.

4. Submission of a major research paper on an appropriate method for linguistic study of the Bible (10,000 well-selected words). The research paper should chart new ground in the subject—both in terms of the student's own and previous work and in terms of the discipline. This is to be a revised form of the paper presented under par. 3 above, benefiting from the response, class discussion and further reflection. The theory and application must be suitably balanced so as to contribute to both. The revised and final copy of the paper is due the last day we meet (**December 6**). 50%.

5. Presentation of a formal, critical response to one of the major research projects, including two minutes of formal presentation (as well as distribution of the response paper at least one day in advance, with bibliography).

6. A written critical response to one other paper presented for the course (2,500 words). This written response, a revision of par. 5 above, is meant as its own contribution to knowledge. It due the last day we meet and is to take into consideration the revisions to the originally presented paper (**December 6**). 15%.

7. Prepared comments on the nature of linguistic modeling. Students should attend prepared to assess the work presented during the course and to respond to individual presentations and more general trends in linguistic modeling. These comments will be presented orally at the final

meeting of the course on **December 6** and are designed to engender a genuine discussion among students, with minimal direction from the professor. 10%.

The professor assumes that students already know how to research and write papers. Content, clear thinking and depth of analysis and research are the most important requirements, but clarity and consistency of presentation are also of high importance. Students *must* follow the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses* in presentations and submission of all written work. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade.

Some tips for presenting a good paper: make sure your short titles are short (nothing beyond the colon, except under the rarest of circumstances), (virtually) never put Greek or Hebrew script in quotation marks, and don't rely upon your citation software to be correct (you will need to check proper punctuation, German capitalization, etc.). Remember, you are responsible for what you submit.

Late papers are reduced 5% per day they are late, including late distribution of papers for others (both major presentation and response). Failure to make a valid attempt at each and every assignment may result in failure of the course. All papers are to be submitted electronically as a PDF.

### **Learning Community Standards**

This course attempts to create a learning community focused upon the sharing and growth of knowledge through critical presentation and discussion. This means that there may sometimes be critical opinions expressed. Opinions and statements are always to be courteous and constructive so that all may benefit from them. Some of your long-held critical theories may be called into question, and some of your favorite scholars may be challenged. This is part of the process of learning.

The following guidelines are presented to encourage all students to participate together in this learning community and should be kept in mind at all times.

1. Do not hesitate to offer constructive criticism of the work of others in the class. Be sure to offer serious arguments and do so in ways that address the issues and do not attack the person.
2. Do not be offended if criticism of your work is offered in the above spirit. Learning to give and accept criticism is part of scholarly development. Respect the right to disagree.
3. Respect the opinions of others, even if you do not agree with them. Extend courtesy by not ridiculing others' ideas, but feel free to respond to them logically and critically and in an orderly manner.
4. Be on time to class, whether in-person or online, or be prepared to offer an explanation after class to the professor.
5. Stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.
6. Students may eat and drink in class so long as they do not distract others or leave the remains of such activities behind for others to clean up. Cleanliness may not be next to godliness but it is essential as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Devote your full attention to this course while in the classroom or livestreaming it and do not be doing work on any other subject.

8. Conversation and discussion are welcome, so long as all are welcome to participate. Do not carry on other conversations in class, especially with those seated immediately adjacent to you. If something being said or done in class is not clear, please ask the professor at an appropriate time and in an appropriate way.

9. No cell phones may be used in any way, and no computers may be used on anything but immediate and direct course business.

**Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class, with all the consequences implied.**

### **Statement on Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. 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 at <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

### **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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### **READ On Bookstore**

The recommended textbooks for this class, as well as some of the other readings, are available from the MDC's book service, READ On Bookstore, in the Hurlburt Family Bookstore, McMaster Divinity College. For advance purchase (highly recommended before the course begins), you may contact READ On Bookstores by phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; or e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Bernice Quek, the bookstore manager, is more than willing to send books to students. Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Course Schedule**

The course will meet on Tuesday mornings (the first meeting is **September 13**) from 11:00 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. (or thereabouts—sometimes longer). This outline is approximate. Adjustments may be made in light of student presentations.

The readings for each week include a variety of materials. Students may find other readings that are at least as pertinent and instructive and are encouraged to read these as well. I do not expect that all the readings will be read for a given week. The readings are to serve as a guide to the subject matter under discussion for the day.

### **September 13 Introduction of Course**

Discussion of objectives of course

*Readings:*

Lyons, J. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Or other suitable introductions to linguistics. There are many, but most of them published in North America are transformational-generative in orientation. You should at least be familiar with the orientation of a linguistics approach to questions of language.

Porter, S. E. "Studying Ancient Languages from a Modern Linguistic Perspective: Essential Terms and Terminology." *Filología Neotestamentaria* 2 (4; 1989) 147–72 (available online).

Finch, G. *How to Study Linguistics*. London: Macmillan, 1998.

Macaulay, M. *Surviving Linguistics: A Guide for Graduate Students*. 2nd ed. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla, 2011.

### **September 20: The History of Linguistics**

An overview of the history of linguistics with relation to Hebrew and Greek study

Agreement of topics and schedule of presentations

*Readings:*

Allan, K. *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics*. 2nd ed. London: Equinox, 2010.

Robins, R. H. *A Short History of Linguistics*. 3rd ed. London: Longman, 1990.

Seuren, P. A. M. *Western Linguistics: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Or find another suitable history of linguistics.

### **September 27: The Rise of Modern Linguistics**

An overview of the major strands in the development of modern linguistics

*Readings:*

Davis, P. W. *Modern Theories of Language*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

De Beaugrande, R. *Linguistic Theory: The Discourse of Fundamental Works*. London: Longmans, 1991.

Ivic, M. *Trends in Linguistics*. The Hague: Mouton, 1970.

Lepschy, G. C. *A Survey of Structural Linguistics*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1980.

Or find other suitable discussions of modern linguistics, including other introductions (see also readings for October 4).

**October 4: Various Linguistic Models**

The variety of contemporary linguistic models is explored

*Readings:*

Dixon, R. M. W. *Basic Linguistic Theory. I. Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Droste, F. G., and J. E. Joseph, eds. *Linguistic Theory and Grammatical Description*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1991.

Hengeveld, K., and J. L. Mackenzie. *Functional Discourse Grammar: A Typologically-based Theory of Language Structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Moravcsik, E. A., and J. R. Wirth, eds. *Syntax and Semantics. Volume 13: Current Approaches to Syntax*. New York: Academic, 1980.

Quigley, A. E. *Theoretical Inquiry: Language, Linguistics, and Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Sampson, G. *Linguistic Schools*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Or find other suitable discussions of various linguistic models.

**October 11: Linguistic Models in Biblical Studies**

Introduction to contemporary linguistic models in biblical studies

Brief discussion of progress toward presentations and papers

*Reading:*

Porter, S. E. "Linguistic Schools." In *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate*, edited by David Alan Black and Benjamin L. Merkle, 11–36. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020.

Students are encouraged to read about as many different models of linguistics used in biblical studies as they are able.

**October 18: Discussion of Variety of Linguistic Models**

Student presentations of linguistic model. All students should come to class having read the papers distributed by the end of the previous Friday. They are to be prepared to discuss a range of different linguistic models, including how theirs is positioned in relation to these others.

**Paper on Variety of Linguistic Models due.**

Paper to be electronically submitted to the Professor in PDF format

**October 25: Intensive Hybrid Week October 24-28 (no class meeting)****November 1: Systemic Functional Linguistics**

An overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics, especially in New Testament studies

*Readings:*

Porter, S. E. "Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Greek Language: The Need for Further Modeling." In *Modeling Biblical Language: Selected Papers from the McMaster Divinity College Linguistics Circle*. Ed. Stanley E. Porter, Gregory P. Fewster, and Christopher D. Land, 9–47. LBS 13. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

- Porter, S. E. "Recent Developments in Systemic Functional Linguistics: A Review Article." *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics* 8 (2019) 5–32 (available online).
- Bartlett, T., and G. O'Grady, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Halliday, M. A. K. *Introduction to Functional Linguistics*. London: Arnold, 1985. 4th ed. Rev. Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Halliday, M. A. K. *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of language and Meaning*. London: Arnold, 1978.
- Halliday, M. A. K., and R. Hasan. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Halliday, M. A. K., and J. J. Webster. *Text Linguistics: The How and Why of Meaning*. London: Equinox, 2014.
- Hasan, R. *Linguistics, Language, and Verbal Art*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Martin, J. R. *English Text: System and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1992.
- Thompson, G., W. L. Bowcher, L. Fontaine, and D. Schönthal, eds. *The Cambridge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Feel free to read individual entries within the Martin and Doran volumes reviewed in *BAGL* or other SFL works if you have read the above and have time.

### **November 8: Presentations**

Papers to be presented are to be distributed one week in advance, so the previous Tuesday, by midnight. The response is to be distributed on Monday by noon at the latest.

### **November 15, 22: ETS/SBL (no class meeting)**

### **November 29: Presentations**

Papers to be presented are to be distributed one week in advance, so the previous Tuesday, by midnight. The response is to be distributed on Monday by noon at the latest.

### **December 6 (Final week): Final Meeting (and Presentations if required)**

Discussion of general responses to topic

### **December 6: Major Paper and Revised Response due.**

Papers are to be electronically submitted in PDF format directly to the professor (before midnight), but students are responsible to ensure that formatting is maintained.

**This syllabus for this course is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course at any time.**