

Divinity School, Committee on Historical Studies

Bible Area Curriculum

Students in the doctoral program in the Bible Area elect one of four possible concentrations for structuring their program and focusing their research agenda:

Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East;

Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature;

Biblical Studies: Jewish and Christian Bible;

New Testament and Early Christian Literature

Students formally designate their chosen concentration in their course of study petition. Changes among concentrations are possible as students proceed and their scholarly agenda develops in consultation with faculty advisors.

These concentrations, with possible sets of Qualifying Examinations and requirements for departmentally administered language exams, are listed below. Reading knowledge of German and French, as certified by the requisite University or Divinity School examinations, is required for all. Additional language study may be indicated by students' particular areas of research.

The faculty requires Ph.D. students to complete at least one exam from those offered in the other nine areas of study in the Divinity School. The Qualifying Examination, taken in the student's third or fourth year of residence, consists of these four written examinations (4 hours each), and an oral examination with all faculty examiners covering both the student's exam answers (and the more general bibliography covered by the exam), and a paper that demonstrates the student's capacity for high level, original research. The Divinity School faculty stipulates that there must be four faculty examiners present at the oral exam.

The Bible Area offers six examinations:

Bible 1 History and Religion of Israel and the Ancient Near East

Bible 2 Hebrew Scriptures

Bible 3 Historical Contexts of Earliest Christianity

Bible 4 New Testament and Early Christian Literature

Bible 5 Special field for Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East (e.g., Archaeology, Semitic Languages or Special Culture --Assyrian, neo-Babylonian, Egyptian, etc.)

Bible 6 Special field for New Testament and Early Christian Literature (e.g., Hellenistic Judaism, Septuagint, Papyrology, Hellenistic Philosophy, Ancient Rhetoric, Greek and Roman Religion, Early Christian Art and Architecture, etc.)

The following descriptions of possible exam choices for each concentration presume that the first four qualifying exams are based upon standard bibliographies (as published in the Guidelines), with some options (broader and more specialized) to widen and focus historical context and text corpora given the scope of the concentrations. Exams five and six are designed as special topics and the bibliographies for these are set by the examiner.

A. Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East

Hebrew Bible Literature (Bible 2)

History, Culture and Religion of the Ancient Near East (Bible 1, broader list)

Special field exam: Archaeology, Semitic Languages or Special Culture (Assyrian, neo-Babylonian, Egyptian), etc. (Bible 5)

Fourth exam out of area

Required languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Northwest Semitic dialects (Phoenician, Punic, Moabite), Greek (Koine/LXX)

As in all concentrations, other languages may be necessary depending on student's focus (e.g., Hittite, Egyptian)

B. Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature

Hebrew Bible Literature (Bible 2)

Hebrew Bible History (Bible 1)

Rabbinic Literature and Interpretation (History of Judaism 1)

Fourth exam out of area

Required languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek (Koine/LXX), an additional ANE language (e.g., Akkadian, Ge'ez, etc.) □

C. Biblical Studies: Jewish and Christian Bible (MT, LXX, NT)

2 exams in 1 "Testament" (Bible 1, 2, 3 or 4)

1 exam in the other (Bible 1, 2, 3 or 4)

1 exam outside the field (in any area of the Divinity School, such as theology, ethics, history of religions, sociology of religion)

Required Languages:

HB Concentrators: Hebrew (biblical), Greek (Koine/LXX), Aramaic, an additional ANE language

NT Concentrators: Hebrew (biblical), Greek (Attic and Koine)

D. New Testament and Early Christian Literature

NT and Early Christian Literature (Bible 4)

History, Culture and Religion of the Greco-Roman World of late antiquity (Bible 3, broader list)

Special Field exam: Hellenistic Judaism, Septuagint, Papyrology, Hellenistic Philosophy, Ancient Rhetoric, Greek and Roman Religion, Early Christian Art and Architecture, etc. (Bible 6)

History of Christianity: Ancient Period (History of Christianity 1)

Languages: Greek (Attic and Koine), Hebrew (biblical), a third patristic language depending upon research focus (Latin, Coptic, or Syriac)

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