

MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES: BIBLICAL STUDIES, PHD

Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC). MELC's PhD track in Biblical Studies, a part of MELC's Hebrew and Judaic Studies program, offers advanced study of the languages and philology of the Hebrew Bible as well as the history and archaeology of ancient Israel in its Middle Eastern context.

At the heart of MELC's Hebrew Bible/Old Testament track are texts composed over a period extending from the early Iron Age to the Hellenistic-Roman period. The goal of this PhD track is to prepare students to research and teach these texts, in both the historical contexts in which they were originally composed, and as they have been understood in later historical periods. Drawing on faculty in MELC, the Jewish Studies Program, and other departments, the Biblical Studies program takes an interdisciplinary approach to biblical literature that involves the study of language, literature, history, archaeology, and other fields. This program can be tailored for individual students with different interests.

View the department's PhD general procedures (https://www.sas.upenn.edu/nelc/grad_programs/phdProcedures.html).

For more information: <https://nelc.sas.upenn.edu/biblical-studies> (<https://nelc.sas.upenn.edu/biblical-studies/>)

View the University's Academic Rules for PhD Programs (<http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/>).

Curriculum

A total of 20 course units is required for graduation.

PhD students in Biblical Studies must acquire proficiency in the following areas:

Primary Field

- Hebrew and Aramaic of the Biblical period
- Biblical Literature
- History, geography, and archaeology of Israel in the Biblical period in their ancient Middle Eastern context
- Culture, social, and political institutions and history of Israelite religion in the Biblical period in their ancient Middle Eastern context

Ancillary Fields

- A secondary field in either Cuneiform Studies (Akkadian) or Egyptology, and comparative studies relating the secondary field to Biblical Israel; or a secondary field in Biblical Archaeology.
- Hebrew epigraphy, Northwest Semitic languages, elementary Arabic, and comparative Semitics; Greek adequate for use of the Septuagint; post-Biblical literature and exegesis

Other Program Milestones

In addition to the above-described required coursework, PhD students are responsible for two (2) European language reading exams, candidacy exams, and qualifying exams before preparing a dissertation proposal.

Secondary Field in Biblical Studies

Graduate students from other programs who wish to take a secondary field in Biblical studies must complete the following requirements:

- Four (4) graduate-level courses in Biblical Hebrew texts; ability to sight-translate uncomplicated texts
- Biblical literature: familiarity with the content of the Bible, distinctive features of its main genres, and important literary-critical issues
- History and culture of ancient Israel
- Comparative studies relating Biblical Israel to the student's Primary Field

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2024 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.
