B.A. in Near Eastern Studies - Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East

Students who major in Hebrew Bible & Ancient Near East Studies engage with premodern texts, languages and cultures that continue to inspire and influence our modern world. They immerse themselves in ancient civilizations of the Near East, including Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Egypt, the Levant (modern Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon), Anatolia (modern Turkey) and Persia (modern Iran).

At the core of the major is a two-year sequence in biblical Hebrew, which is augmented by the study of biblical Hebrew prose texts, biblical poetry, and other ancient languages. Students additionally use archaeological, historical and cultural perspectives and methods to enrich their studies, an interdisciplinary approach that includes opportunities for hands-on research through digital projects as well as in-field archaeological work. Alumni succeed in careers in a variety of fields such as public service, education, law, business and entrepreneurship, and medicine.

Additional Information on Ancient Languages

After only two quarters of study, students taking biblical Hebrew are able to read from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Students who take the entire elementary and intermediate Hebrew sequence typically devote the final quarter of their second year of major studies to biblical Aramaic.

We periodically offer courses on hieroglyphic Egyptian, Ugaritic, and Akkadian. The latter two are offered for students who have had at least two years of biblical Hebrew. To see our full course offerings, visit our upcoming courses listings.

Admissions, Advising & Student Resources

Please see our Undergraduate Programs section for information about applying to the program, career paths, scholarships, and other student resources.

Degree Requirements

Elementary Biblical Hebrew I is available only in the fall in alternate years, so students interested in the major should carefully plan their schedules. See the current biblical Hebrew course sequence schedule.

Note: Courses cannot be duplicated and used in multiple areas of the degree. Twenty-two (22) credits must be taken in-residence at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization.

Degree Plan Worksheet (PDF)

The degree totals 72 credits and requires:

1. Gateway to the Near East (NEAR E 101)
2. Two NEAR E Courses:
a. Introduction to the Ancient Near East (NEAR E 201)
b. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (NEAR E 202)

3. Two years, or its equivalent as evidenced by examination, of Biblical Hebrew coursework at the 100- and 200-levels. 15 credits at each level for a total of 30 credits

4. Senior Seminar (NEAR E 491). All seniors are required to take a Senior Seminar class during their final Autumn quarter

5. Twenty-five (25) credits of supporting coursework from the following categories:
   a. Advanced literature: 300- or 400-level courses from NEAR E or language prefixes
   b. Other language courses such as Ugaritic or Egyptian (must not exceed 15 credits)
   c. Approved relevant exceptions (must not exceed 15 credits)

Note: NEAR E 498 (Senior Essay, 5 credits) can be used here if the student prefers.

Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization
University of Washington
Denny Hall 220-D
Box 353120
Seattle, WA 98195-3120

Phone: (206) 543-6033
Fax: (206) 685-7936
neareast@uw.edu

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