

COURSE SYLLABUS¹

RELS 6000
Pluriform Multilingual Zechariah
M 6:30-9:20
Dr. John C. Reeves
204B Macy
Office hours: M 5:00-6:15; TR 12:30-1:30; or by appointment
jcreeves@uncc.edu
[Home Page of John C. Reeves](#)

‘The prophecy of Zechariah is exceedingly opaque, for there are contained therein dreamlike visions which are given an interpretation, but we are unable to pronounce definitively regarding its interpretation until the advent of a “true teacher” (מורה צדק).’ – Rashi, introduction to his commentary on Zechariah.

‘Prophetic ability was ebbing and weakening, and this is why the visions of Zechariah are so obscure; it was (in fact) with Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi that prophecy ceased.’ – Radaq *ad* Zech 5:3.

Course description: A collective critical reading and translation of biblical, non-biblical, and postbiblical Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Syriac prose and poetic texts. We will engage in a collaborative production of what could be termed a ‘reception-history commentary’ to the prophet Zechariah in all of his guises. This task will involve, in addition to the reading and translation of the Masoretic textual tradition for Zechariah, the constant consultation and careful consideration of a wide variety of manuscript and exegetical resources pertinent to the historical, literary, and textual background of the biblical book and to all the scriptural and parascriptural characters who bear that name. Each student (in accordance with their abilities and competencies) will bear responsibility for at least one of the ancient or medieval versions or commentaries to the biblical book. Such a procedure will enrich our understanding of the text, and should have the pedagogic virtue of exposing everyone to the wide variety of biblical, parascriptural, and modern critical resources that are available to advanced critical students of the Tanakh and its reception-history.

Required textbooks:

A Zechariah Reader (An instructor-distributed PDF file whose contents appear here).

Supplementary readings and/or exercises will be assigned or distributed by the instructor as needed.

Course requirements:

a. *Diligent attendance and preparation.* Almost perfect attendance is an essential requirement for this course. Each class session builds upon the knowledge gained and skills acquired during previous meetings. Moreover, oral recitation and group study comprises practically the entirety of every class session. The instructor’s assessment of one’s attendance, class preparation, and recitation constitutes 100% of the final course grade.

¹ This specific course requires as its minimum prerequisite: (1) the successful completion at UNC Charlotte of FORL 1201 and 1202, or of LACS 1201 and 1202; i.e., ‘Introduction to Biblical Hebrew I’ and ‘II’; or (2) an equivalent sequence of introductory biblical Hebrew courses at another institution of higher learning; i.e., amounting to two semesters, three quarters, or one year; or (3) the verbal permission of the instructor.

b. *Final class.* A required final class will be held on the date and at the time officially mandated for the final examination for this course by the UNC Charlotte administration. Further details regarding the class will be provided later in the semester.

c. Each student is responsible for all lectures, class discussions, assignments, and announcements, whether or not he/she is present when they occur.

Miscellaneous information:

a. The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

91-95+	A	=	demonstrable mastery of material—outstanding performance
81-90	B	=	satisfactory performance of assignments
71-80	C	=	inadequate and/or faulty understanding of material
0-70	U	=	unacceptable graduate-level work

b. One of the requirements of this course is to complete the work of the course on time. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for late work—an illness or other emergency. ‘Emergency,’ however, does not include your social involvements, travel plans, job schedule, disk and/or printer failures, the state of your love life, your obligations to other courses, or general malaise over the state of the world. The world has been in a mess as long as anyone can remember, and most of the world’s work is done by people whose lives are a mass of futility and discontent. If you haven’t learned yet, you had better learn now to work under the conditions of the world as it is. **Therefore:**

1) All missing work is averaged as a 0 in the computation of the course grade.

2) All written work falls due on the dates scheduled in the syllabus, or on the date announced by the instructor in class (usually the next class meeting). ‘Late’ work will not be accepted from students who were privy to its oral evaluation and discussion (i.e., you were present while we ‘went over it’ but you neglected to do it beforehand). In the event of one’s absence, ‘late’ submissions bear the following penalties: one day late/one letter grade; two days late/two letter grades; three or more days late/U. Please note: these ‘days’ are calendar days, not class meeting days. For accounting purposes, letter grades bear the following values: A=95; A-=92; B+=88; B=85; B-=82; C+=78; C=75; C-=72; U=35. Seminar papers are assessed according to the following formulae: $\sqrt{+} = A$; $\sqrt{=} = B$; $\sqrt{-} = U$. An untyped seminar paper or final project automatically receives the grade U, as do those typed submissions which violate the required parameters or which the instructor deems physically unacceptable and/or grammatically incomprehensible.

3) Since your diligent physical participation is critical for the success of this course, attendance at class meetings will be monitored by the instructor. One absence is regrettable; two absences are the limit of tolerability. Three (3) or more absences will result in an automatic U for the course. Please note that the instructor does not distinguish ‘excused’ from ‘unexcused’ absences. Unsanctioned late arrivals and early departures will be tallied as absences.

4) Policy regarding Audits: the instructor expects auditors (whether formally enrolled as such or not) to meet the same attendance, preparation, and oral participation standards as those students who are taking the course for credit. The instructor does not expect auditors to prepare and submit any written assignments.

c. The [Cuneiform Studies Laboratory](#) (located in Macy 216) houses a number of lexical and grammatical aids (both print and electronic) for the close study of biblical and postbiblical Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Syriac. Please consult with the instructor for access to this learning resource and the regulations regarding its use.

d. Assistance and solicitation of criticism is your right as a member of the class. It is not a privilege to be granted or withheld. Do not hesitate to request it nor wait too late in the course for it to be of help.

RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF ZECHARIAH AND ZECHARIAH TRADITIONS

In addition to the Codex Leningradensis (= *BHS*) edition of the biblical book of Zechariah, we will be giving close attention to the following manuscripts, versions, commentaries, etc.:

1. Old Greek and LXX witnesses to Zechariah, including Rahlfs; the Minor Prophets Scroll (8HevXIIgr) from Qumran (= DJD VIII): 1:1-4, 12-14; 2:2-4, 7-9, 11-12, 16-17 (LXX 1:19-21; 2:3-5, 7-8, 12-13); 3:1-2, 4-7; 8:19-21, 23; 9:1-5; the Swete edition of LXX (so-called 'smaller Cambridge'); and *Codex Sinaiticus*.
2. the Peshitta (Syriac) version of Zechariah. Text follows that of *Codex Ambrosianus* (7a1), critically edited in *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version, Part III, fascicle 4* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 74-93.
3. Targum Jonathan to Zechariah. Text follows what is reproduced in editions of *Miqra'ot gedolot* as well as that of Alexander Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic* (4 vols. in 5; Leiden: Brill, 1959-73), 3:477-99.
4. Hebrew fragments of the book of Zechariah from Qumran: 1:1-4 (MurXII = Mur 88), available in DJD II. 14:18 (4QXII^a); 1:4-6, 9-10, 13-14; 2:10-14; 3:2-10; 4:1-4; 5:8-11; 6:1-5; 8:2-4, 6-7; 12:7-12 (4QXII^c); 10:11-12; 11:1-2; 12:1-3 (4QXII^e), all available in DJD XV. 11:11 *apud* 4QpIsa^c (4Q163); 13:7 *apud* CD 19.7-9; 13:9 *apud* 4QTanhumim (4Q176).
5. Hebrew fragments of Zechariah from the Cairo Geniza.
6. Daniel al-Qūmisī to Zechariah. A ninth-century Karaite commentator, and published in I. D. Markon, ed., *Pitron shenem 'asar* (Jerusalem: Meqitse Nirdamim, 1957), 62-76.
7. Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radaq to Zechariah. As in the standard *Miqra'ot Gedolot*.
8. Isolated quotations from Zechariah in classical and medieval rabbinic sources.
9. Modern Western critical commentaries. I advise consulting these three:
 - (1) Hinckley G. Mitchell, John Merlin Powis Smith, and Julius A. Bewer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah* (ICC 38; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912). The portion on Zechariah comprises pp. 81-357.
 - (2) Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai; Zechariah 1-8* (AB 25B; Garden City: Doubleday, 1987); idem, *Zechariah 9-14* (AB 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993).
 - (3) David L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984); idem, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995).

We will simultaneously give close attention to presumably contemporaneous works as well as the narrative, folkloric, and aggadic traditions about the figure(s) of Zechariah and the components of his prophetic vita which are related in a variety of scriptural and parascriptural sources emanating from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic circles. These will include:

1. Other Second Temple biblical texts presumably pertinent to Zechariah: Isaiah 56-66; Haggai; Malachi; Ezra-Nehemiah; Chronicles; Esther; Daniel; select Psalms.
2. Other Second Temple, Roman, Byzantine, and early Islamic era Jewish texts that mention Zechariah legends or quote from his writings.
3. New Testament traditions (Matt 23:35, Lk 11:51; cf. 2 Chr 24:20-27) or citations (e.g., Matt 27:9-10).
4. Other early Christian and patristic citations or traditions, such as the entries *sub voce* 'Zechariah' in the Greek and Syriac *Lives of the Prophets*.
5. Various rabbinic legends about Zechariah. These are most easily accessible via Louis Ginzburg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1909-38).
6. Zechariah in the Qur'ān: Q 3:37-41; 6:85; 19:2-15; 21:89-90. *N.b.*: Zakariyyā' is here the father of John the Baptist (cf. Lk 1:5ff., 3:2) and arguably a prophet (cf. Q 19:58; 6:89), but this Qur'ānic character is frequently confused and/or conflated in subsequent Islamic traditions with the earlier biblical prophet(s).
7. traditions about Zechariah in *Isrā'īlīyāt* collections as transmitted by tradents like Ibn Qutayba, Ya'qūbī, Ṭabarī, etc.
8. later Muslim 'tales of the prophets' (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) collections.

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ASSESSING 'ZECHARIAH'

- Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968).
- Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (trans. John Bowden; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 2:437-597.
- Elie Assis, "Zechariah 8 as Revision and Digest of Zechariah 1-7," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10 (2010): Article 15. Accessed via www.purl.org/jhs.
- A. A. Barb, "St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr: A Study in Charms and Incantations," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948): 35-67.
- A. Berendts, *Studien über Zacharias-Apokryphen und Zacharias-Legenden* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1895).
- Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
- Sheldon H. Blank, "The Death of Zechariah in Rabbinic Literature," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 12-13 (1937-38): 327-46.
- Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002).
- Mark J. Boda, "From Fasts to Feasts: The Literary Function of Zechariah 7-8," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003): 390-407.
- _____, *Haggai & Zechariah Research: A Bibliographic Survey* (Tools for Biblical Studies series 5; Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2003).
- _____, "Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1:7-6:15," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 3 (2001): Article 10. Accessed via www.purl.org/jhs.
- Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Bringing Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14* (JSOTSup 370; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).
- Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
- R. W. Cowley, "The 'Blood of Zechariah' (Mt. 23:35) in Ethiopian Exegetical Tradition," *Studia Patristica* 18 (ed. E. A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), 293-302.
- Jean-Daniel Dubois, "La mort de Zacharie: Mémoire juive et mémoire chrétienne," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 40(1994): 23-38.
- Amikam Elad, "Miḥrāb Zechariah (Zakariyyā)" and "Zakariyyā" in Islam," in idem, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 117-30.
- Yehoshua M. Grintz, et al., "Zechariah (bk., prophet)," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.
- Baruch Halpern, "The Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 167-90.
- Betsy Halpern Amaru, "The Killing of the Prophets: Unraveling a Midrash," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983): 153-80, esp. 166-70.
- Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).
- Joseph Heinemann, "Zechariah (bib. fig., h. pr.) in the Aggadah," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.
- Bern(h)ard Heller and Andrew Rippin, "Zakariyyā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² 11:405-406.
- Isaac Kalimi, "Murder in Jerusalem Temple: The Chronicler's Story of Zechariah," *Revue biblique* 117 (2010): 200-209.
- _____, "The Story about the Murder of Prophet Zechariah in the Gospels and Its Relation with Chronicles," *Revue biblique* 116 (2009): 246-61.
- E(dward) Lipiński, "Recherches sur le Livre de Zacharie," *Vetus Testamentum* 20 (1970): 25-55.
- David Marshall, "Zechariah," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* 5:574-76.
- Robert North, "Prophecy to Apocalyptic via Zechariah," in *Congress Volume: Uppsala, 1971* (ed. H. S. Nyberg; VTSup 22; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 47-74.
- Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968).

- David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (SVTP 11; Leiden: Brill, 1995).
- Heinrich Schützinger, "Die arabische Legende von Nebukadnezar und Johannes dem Täufer," *Der Islam* 40 (1965): 113-41.
- Anna Maria Schwemer, *Studien zu den frühjüdischen Prophetenlegenden Vitae prophetarum* (TSAJ 49-50; 2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995-96), 2:283-321.
- Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1946). See esp. pp. 44-45, 47.
- Brannon M. Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 291-96.
- Paul Winter, "The Cultural Background of the Narrative in Luke I and II," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (1954-55): 159-67; 230-42.
- _____, "Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954): 111-21.
- Jakob Wöhrle, "The Formation and Intention of the Haggai-Zechariah Corpus," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006): Article 10. Accessed via www.purl.org/jhs.