

# NEJS 101a Elementary Akkadian-Fall 2015 Syllabus

Instructor: Bronson Brown-deVost

Lown 110

**Course Description:** Akkadian is an ancient, long dead, language from the same family as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. It was at home in and around the area of modern-day Iraq, but was also the international language of diplomacy throughout the ancient world in the second and early first millennium BCE. Its corpus contains everything from receipts and legal documents to grand royal inscriptions, literary compositions, and religious texts. Cuneiform, the writing system with which the language was recorded, utilized various groups of wedge-shaped impressions made in clay and stone (as well as a few other materials) to record both sounds and whole words. This course in elementary Akkadian is an introduction to the fundamentals of Old Babylonian grammar and a large number of the commonest Neo-Assyrian cuneiform signs. No prior knowledge of other Semitic languages is required.

## **Books:**

Caplice, Richard. *Introduction to Akkadian*. 4th ed. Rome: Biblical Institute Press / Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2002.

Huehnergard, John. *A Grammar of Akkadian*. 3rd ed. Harvard Semitic Studies 45. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

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## **Contact Information and Office Hours:**

Bronson Brown-deVost

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Office: Lown 110.

Office Hours: TBD, or by appointment.

**Course Requirements:** Course readings and assignments are to be completed before class and will be necessary to get the most out of each class session. Every class session will begin with a short 5–10 minute quiz (either oral or written) on vocabulary, grammar, or cuneiform signs. It will be necessary to be in class on time to take part in these quizzes; accommodations for tardy attendance may rarely be granted on a per case basis (those with difficulty getting to the class room on time should discuss this with me prior to the second class session). You may make arrangements to retake as many as two of these quizzes in the case of an unexpected absence, any missed exam must be completed before the next class session. There will be a short midterm exam and a final exam.

**Academic Integrity:** All of your work for this class is expected to be your own. If you have any questions concerning academic honesty, please see me to discuss the situation.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis University and if you wish to request a reasonable accommodation for this class, please see me immediately. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations can not necessarily be provided retroactively.

**Classroom Restrictions:** No computers or electronic devices shall be used in class and traditional note taking is strongly discouraged. Most of what we discuss in class will be readily available on the Latte website or in your course books; class

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notes would largely be superfluous. It is perfectly admissible to bring food and drink provided that no appreciable distraction is caused. Please wait until after class to consume larger meal items.

**Absences:** Regular attendance will be necessary for successful progress through this course. Thus, students will be afforded only two unexcused absences, any further absences could result in a lower grade of as much as 5% per absence. In the event of an absence, the student is responsible for arranging a make-up tests before the next class session. Excused absences may be granted at the discretion of the instructor, all doctor ordered absences will be respected, though special arrangements will need to be made in the event of any extended absence.

**Passes:** Students will be allowed two passes from class session evaluation. This means that a student may, on two occasions, attend a class session but will not be responsible to answer any questions during the session (this includes the quiz at the beginning of the class).

## **Grade Breakdown:**

Class Quizzes, Participation, and Homework: 15%.

Short Weekly Tests: 25% (2% per test).

Midterm Examination (20 minutes): 20%.

Final Examination (3 hours): 40%.

## **Course Schedule (subject to change):**

Specific exercises will be assigned for each lesson. See LATTE for weekly updates. Readings with asterisks are optional.

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## 1. Thursday, Aug. 27

Introduction to the Akkadian language and literature, and the cuneiform writing system.

## 2. Monday, Aug. 31

Introduction to the Akkadian language and literature, and the cuneiform writing system (continued):

Read: Caplice §2d. \*Christopher Woods, ed. *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*. OIP 32. Oriental Institute Press: Chicago, 2010. Chapters 2 and 3.

Skim: Caplice §4 (Just ignore anything that does not make sense).

## 3. Wednesday, Sept. 2

Caplice Lesson 1:

Read: Caplice §5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 15. Huehnergard §1.1-1.3, and 9.2.

## 4. Thursday, Sept. 3

Caplice Lesson 1 continued:

Read: Caplice §10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. Huehnergard §2.1, 18.3\*, and 28.2-3.

Assignment: Lesson 1.1.

## 5. Wednesday, Sept. 9

Cuneiform Quiz (Ca and Ce signs [number 1 only])

Assignment: Lesson 1.2-4 (All English to Akkadian exercises shall be turned in on your clay tablets written in cuneiform).

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## 6. Thursday, Sept. 10

Caplice Lesson 2:

Read: Caplice Lesson 2. Huehnergard §8.3, and 11.1.

## 7. Wednesday, Sept. 16

Cuneiform Quiz (Ci and Cu signs [number 1 only, but do all three *u* signs])

Assignment: Caplice 2.1-3.

## 8. Thursday, Sept. 17

Caplice Lesson 3:

Read: Caplice §21, 22 (don't worry if this makes little sense), 23-26.

Huehnergard §3.5, 12.2, and 15.3.

## 9. Monday, Sept. 21

Read: Caplice §27-32.

## 10. Thursday, Sept. 24

Assignment: Caplice lesson 3.1 (up to but not including *pa-li-iḫ ì-li*), 3.2 (only preterite and present [durative]), 3.4 (up to but not including “when you arrive”).

## 11. Tuesday, Sept. 29

Caplice Lesson 4:

Read: Caplice lesson 4. Huehnergard §22.1, 33.2, 15.2, and 7.5.

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## **12. Wednesday, Sept. 30**

Cuneiform Quiz (all vC signs [number 1 only])

Assignment: Caplice lesson 4.1-5. Make a list of all double-duty cuneiform signs among those you already know (i.e., signs for which you know two or more phonetic values).

## **13. Thursday, Oct. 1**

Caplice Lesson 5:

Read: Caplice §42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50. Huehnergard §16.4, and 36.3.

## **14. Wednesday, Oct. 7**

Read: Caplice §41, 48, 49.

## **15. Thursday, Oct. 8**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 5.1, 4.

## **16. Monday, Oct. 12**

Cuneiform Quiz (major quiz, all signs learned to date)

Assignment: Caplice lesson 5.2-3.

## **17. Wednesday, Oct. 14**

Caplice Lesson 6:

Read: Caplice lesson 6.

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## **18. Thursday, Oct. 15**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 6.1-4.

## **19. Monday, Oct. 19**

Caplice Lesson 7:

Read: Caplice lesson 7.

## **20. Wednesday, Oct. 21**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 7.1-4. Review previous chapters and exercises for midterm.

## **21. Thursday, Oct. 22**

Midterm Exam

## **22. Monday, Oct. 26**

Caplice Lesson 8:

Read: Caplice lesson 8.

## **23. Wednesday, Oct. 28**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 8.1-4.

## **24. Thursday, Oct. 29**

Caplice Lesson 9:

Read: Caplice lesson 9. Huehnergard §32.2-3, 18.3.

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## **25. Monday, Nov. 2**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 9.1, 4.

## **26. Wednesday, Nov. 4**

Cuneiform Quiz (CvC signs starting with dentals, bilabials, and palatals)

Assignment: Caplice lesson 9.2–3.

## **27. Thursday, Nov. 5**

Caplice Lesson 10:

Read: Caplice lesson 10.

## **28. Monday, Nov. 9**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 10.1-4.

## **29. Wednesday, Nov. 11**

Caplice Lesson 11:

Read: Caplice lesson 11. Huehnergard §30.1, and 23.2.

## **30. Thursday, Nov. 12**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 11.1, 5.

## **31. Monday, Nov. 16**

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Cuneiform Quiz (CvC signs starting with sibilants, nasals, and fricatives and liquids)

Assignment: Caplice lesson 11.2–4.

## **32. Wednesday, Nov. 18**

Caplice Lesson 12:

Read: Caplice lesson 12. Huehnergard §38.1-3, and 26.1.

## **33. Thursday, Nov. 19**

Assignment: Caplice lesson 12.1, 3.

## **34. Monday, Nov. 23**

Cuneiform Quiz (Logogram signs)

Assignment: Caplice lesson 12.2.

## **35. Monday, Nov. 30**

RIM 4.3.6.17

Assignment: Analyze the grammatical structure of the inscription; it is one long sentence.

## **36. Wednesday, Dec. 2**

Assignment: Normalize/transcribe the transliteration of RIM 4.3.6.17.

Prepare and print out your own side-by-side Transliteration and Normalization.

## **37. Thursday, Dec. 3**

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Cuneiform Quiz (Higher numbered signs TBD)

Assignment: Print out a paper with Borger's and Labat's sign numbers for each Sumerogram in RIM 4.3.6.17 (e.g. É=Borger 495, Labat 324).

## **38. Monday, Dec. 7**

Lexical and Grammatical Resources

Assignment: Lookup one of the following words from RIM 4.3.6.17 in both CAD and AHW: HÉ.GAL, *na-bi-ù*, *mi-gi<sub>4</sub>-ir*, SIPAD, *ki-ib-ra-tim ar-ba-im*, *še-er-ra-sí-na*, BARAG-šu, *el-lam*. Prepare a summary (one paragraph) about what you found. Find the discussion of uncontracted vowels in GAG, be prepared to provide an explanation of the phenomenon.

## **39. Wednesday, Dec. 9**

The Development of Cuneiform

Assignment: Lookup three cuneiform signs in Labat and be prepared to discuss how their form changes over time from the earliest cuneiform texts to the latest.

**Final Exam (TBD)**