Introduction to

Classical Hieroglyphic Egyptian Writing and Language

(Middle Egyptian I­–II: EGYT1310 and EGYT1320)

This is a two semester course offering a complete introduction to the most common form of the ancient Egyptian language, the one used in the classical literature of ancient Egypt and the one found on most ancient Egyptian monuments. Semester I introduces the writing system, known as hieroglyphic, the basic parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs, particles, and numbers), and sentences formed from these elements. Semester II is devoted to the verbal system, with readings from actual texts and stories. There are no prerequisites, and enrollment in Semester I does not commit a student to taking Semester II. At the end of the course, students will have the basic knowledge needed to read most Middle Egyptian texts and monuments.

Coursework

Classes consist of discussion of grammatical points and practice in reading hieroglyphic texts. (Since Ancient Egyptian is a dead language, and parts of it are still imperfectly understood, class work involves only translating from Egyptian to English, and not vice-versa.) There are no required textbooks, although the course is based on Allen’s *Middle Egyptian: an Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd edition (Cambridge, 2014), and students may also find it useful to have a copy of Faulkner’s *Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, 1962), both available from Amazon. Classes will also deal with some of the basic concepts and forms of ancient Egyptian civilization that are necessary to understand the ancient texts. After the first few classes, students will be given exercises to work on over the weekend, hand in at the first session of the following week, and discuss in class.

Grading

Grades will be based on class participation (25%); exercises (25%); and two exams, a midterm (20%) and final (30%). For students opting for a letter grade, a cumulative score of 90–100 will merit an A; 80–89, a B; and below 80, a C. Students opting for S/NC grades must have a cumulative score of 75 or higher to earn an S grade. Since there are no required textbooks, regular class attendance is necessary to keep from falling behind. For that reason, students expecting to miss a class should notify the instructor or TA *in advance* and make arrangements with the TA to go over the material covered in the missed class. Only two absences that do not meet these criteria will be accepted; any further absences will result in the deduction of one point from the cumulative score for each class missed.