



Hebrew Union College—
Jewish Institute of Religion
New York School

A Non-Resident Program of Study
Leading to
the Degree of

Doctor of Hebrew Letters

DOCTOR OF HEBREW LETTERS AT THE NEW YORK SCHOOL

Only rabbinic graduates of HUC-JIR are eligible to apply for admission for entrance into the Doctor of Hebrew Letters (D.H.L.) Program, usually taken in absentia, on the basis of the M.A.H.L. degree earned and the two years of post - M.A.H.L. residency required for rabbinic ordination.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A candidate must propose, in consultation with three members of the faculty, a program of study which includes one major and two minor areas chosen from the list which follows:

Bible and Non-Canonical Literature
Contemporary Jewish Studies
Hebrew Language and Literature
Human Relations
Jewish Religious Education (minor field only)
Jewish History
Jewish Liturgy and Worship
Jewish Philosophy and Ethics
Jewish Theology
Medieval Biblical Exegesis
Midrashic and Homiletic Literature
Rabbinic Backgrounds of the New Testament
Talmud and Rabbinic Literature

Either the major or both minors must utilize Hebrew texts.

A detailed program of study (outlined below) for each area must be approved in writing by the faculty advisors. The proposed program of study and the faculty are then submitted to the Administrator of the program for presentation and endorsement by the Committee of Graduate Studies. All requirements for the D.H.L. degree must be completed within seven years from the date of formal approval of the candidate's program.

After communicating with the D.H.L. Program Administrator, the prospective candidate should consult with members of the faculty, soliciting guidance for a major and two minors. While members of the faculty will respond with suggestions for both general and specific areas of study, it is highly preferable for the

candidate to initiate proposals in terms of the candidate's own particular interests. Ordinarily, the same professor does not serve in more than one capacity.

The candidate works out a specific assignment to be undertaken (see samples below) with each of the three professors. The specific assignment is then to be transmitted in writing to the professor for his written approval and then sent to the D.H.L. Program Administrator. The total program is presented to the Graduate Studies Committee for its formal approval.

It is anticipated that there be a relationship between the three areas selected for study.

PROPOSAL FOR MAJOR SUBJECT

The proposal for your major subject area should include the specific subject area to be studied, as well as the (advisor-approved) method of studying the subject matter. Details of primary and secondary source material which will be used should be included in the proposal. Though this proposal should not include the dissertation proposal, indication should be made as to the direction of research which will lead toward the selection of a dissertation topic (to be submitted following the completion of study in your minor and major subjects.) This proposal must be duly signed and dated before it is presented to the Graduate Studies Committee for review and approval. Following the completion of requirements in the major subject area, the advisor will submit a letter of confirmation to the Registrar, confirming that the agreed-upon requirements have been met. Arrangements for oral examinations cannot be made until this letter is on file.

PROPOSAL FOR MINOR SUBJECT

Each proposal for minor subject areas should include the specific subject area to be studied, as well as the (advisor-approved) method of studying the subject matter. Major primary and secondary source material which will be used should be included in the proposal. Details for a culminating project or written examination (in the minor area) -- not to take the place of the oral examination -- should be included in the proposal as well. The proposal must be duly signed and dated before it is presented to the Graduate Studies Committee for review and approval. Following the completion of requirements in each individual minor area of study, the advisor will submit a letter of confirmation to the Registrar, confirming that the agreed-upon requirements have been met. Arrangements for oral examination cannot be made until this letter is on file.

PROPOSAL FOR D.H.L. DISSERTATION

The proposal for your dissertation should include your major subject area, as well as the specific subject you intend to research in order to prepare the dissertation. The hypothesis and method of study must be fully described and a full list of primary and secondary source material should be included as well. This proposal must be duly signed by the advisor for your major area of study, as well as a second reader, before it is presented for review and approval.

The doctoral dissertation must give evidence of original research, a new and worthy contribution to the field of study, and be deemed by the faculty worthy of publication. Two copies of the dissertation are to be presented no later than February 1 if the degree is to be awarded at the Graduation exercises in June of the same year.

D.H.L. EXAMINATION

There are three components to the D.H.L. examinations. All examinations are oral and must take place at HUC-JIR. One half hour is devoted to each minor area and one hour is devoted to the major area of study. Though the presence of your advisors is required, all faculty are invited to attend the examinations. The date for these examinations is established in consultation with the Registrar once the approved candidate considers himself/herself prepared to take these examinations. Though the exams may be taken individually at any time during the course of study, it is recommended that the three exams be taken together following the completion of all requirements, except for the completion of the dissertation.

The content of the examination is based upon the reading lists distributed by the advisor to the student in the minor and major areas of study. It must be taken at least one month in advance of the date announced for graduation.

SAMPLE DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

This is a selection of sample requirements from various disciplines. They represent the general scope of majors and minors in various departments. Specific assignments and matters of detail must be worked out between the candidate and his/her advisor.

• BIBLE

Major

1. A general knowledge of biblical literature and its history.
2. A detailed knowledge and understanding of a type or section of biblical literature, (e.g., law, historiography, prophetic literature, poetry).
3. An area of biblical literature for specialized study related to the subject of the dissertation.

Minor

1. To possess the knowledge that may be obtained in the following:
 - a. The Hebrew Bible
 - b. S.R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, (9th ed.) or O. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction (translated from 3rd German Ed. by P. Ackroyd; 1965)
 - c. G.E. Wright-F.V. Filson, The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible or G.E. Wright, Biblical Archaeology, (larger ed.)
 - d. H.M. Orlinsky, Ancient Israel (hardcover ed.) or H.M. Orlinsky, Understanding the Bible Through History and Archaeology
 - e. J. Bright, A History of Israel
 - f. B.J. Roberts, The Old Testament Text and Versions

2. To prepare an essay on a subject to be selected, e.g., covenant; canonization; nationalism-universalism; vicariousness and suffering; archaeology and the Bible; seer, priest, and prophet; translations and versions of the Bible; social structure. (See, e.g., H.M. Orlinsky, Essays in Biblical Culture and Bible Translation.)

• TALMUD

Major

1. A thorough knowledge of about 200 folios of Talmud, including commentaries.
2. Ability to read at sight an average Talmudic passage.
3. A general knowledge of the Talmud as presented in the Introductions of Strack or Mielziner.
4. A detailed knowledge of a particular field of Talmud research (e.g., History of the Halakha, the Redaction of the Talmud) based on readings in the basic literature of the Talmud.

Minor

1. A thorough knowledge of 60-70 folios of the Talmud, including Rashi.
2. A general knowledge of the Talmud as presented in the Introductions of Strack or Mielziner.

● RABBINIC LITERATURE

Major

1. A thorough knowledge of responsa material equivalent to 200 folios of Talmud.
2. A general knowledge of the Talmud as presented in the Introductions of Strack or Mielziner.

Minor

1. A thorough knowledge of 60-70 folios of the Talmud, including Rashi.
2. A general knowledge of the Talmud as presented in the Introductions of Strack or Mielziner.

● MIDRASH AND HOMILETIC LITERATURE

Major

1. Mastery of specific segments of midrash from various collections which include:
Tannaitic, Homiletic, Ethical and Historical,
Minor and Mystical, as well as Aggadah from
the Talmuds.
2. Knowledge of the range of the literature, including the existing editions of midrashic works.
3. Knowledge of major secondary literature extant in the field.
4. A thorough knowledge of Die Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden or similar materials.
5. A thorough knowledge of those portions of Dor Dor we-Dorshav which deal with Midrash, Aggadah, and early rabbinic literature.
6. A number of designated chapters in Schürer's History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ.
7. A thorough knowledge of Batten's Studies in Jewish Preaching.
8. Knowledge of the history of the period.
9. Familiarity with parallel literatures: Philo, Josephus, Apocryphal literature, New Testament and Patristics, Targumim and Halakhic literature.
10. Familiarity with the historic development of Halakha and Aggadah.
11. A thorough acquaintance with the literary sources underlying the thesis.

Minor

1. Mastery of one significant volume of midrash, including a summary research paper.
2. Knowledge of a limited number of selections from the various types of midrashic compilations.
3. Knowledge of the history of the period.
4. Familiarity with the range of the literature -- collections, types, and forms, editions and secondary literature.
5. Familiarity with parallel literatures.
6. Familiarity with the history of the development of the Halakha and Aggadah.

● TRADITIONAL JEWISH COMMENTARIES

Minor

1. Rashi's Commentary on the Torah.
2. Ibn Ezra and either Ramban or Sforno:
 - a. The introduction to their commentaries
 - b. Exodus 20 (Decalogue)
 - c. Exodus 34 (Golden Calf)
 - d. Deuteronomy 33 (Moses' Blessing)
3. Radak on Isaiah, 40-41.
4. Such articles as A. Marx's, I. Elbogen's, B.D. Weinryb's, S.W. Baron's, and H. Hailperin's in Rashi Anniversary Volume (Amer. Acad. for Jew. Res., 1941) and E. Shereshevsky's in JQR, LIV (1963-64), LVII (1966-67), 200-211.
5. Sketches of Rashi, Rashbam, Radak, Ramban, Rabbag, Abravanel, Shadal, Malbim, and the like, in Jewish Encyclopedia.
6. Additional readings and/or an essay may be required.

● JEWISH HISTORY

Major

1. A sound general knowledge of Jewish history.
2. A thorough knowledge of the specific historical period in which the subject of the dissertation falls.

Minor

1. A good general knowledge of Jewish history.
2. A thorough knowledge of a specific period of Jewish history.
3. A paper dealing with some aspects of this period which demonstrates the capacity of the candidate to do original scientific work in the field of Jewish history.

● HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Major

1. A mastery of the history of modern Hebrew literature.
2. A thorough mastery of the writings of several Hebrew authors of one period giving evidence of independent research.

Minor

1. A mastery of the history of modern Hebrew literature.
2. A thorough mastery of the writings of a specific Hebrew author giving evidence of independent research.

● JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Major

1. A thorough knowledge of the history of Jewish ideas and of the works of Maimonides and Crescas.
2. An adequate knowledge of the philosophy of the period dealt with in the thesis.
3. A mastery of classical texts from the same period.

Minor

1. An adequate knowledge of the various trends of Jewish philosophical thought.
2. A thorough knowledge of certain classical works of thinkers such as Maimonides and Halevi.

● JEWISH THEOLOGY

Major

1. A systematic and thorough study of subjects such as the following:
 - a. Rabbinic Theology
 - b. Jewish Christian controversies and polemics
 - c. Hassidism
 - d. Post-Mendelssohnian theologies of Reform, Conservative, and Neo-Orthodox movements

Minor

1. A systematic and thorough study of subjects such as the following:
 - a. Jewish dogmatics
 - b. The Reform Movement in Judaism
 - c. Haskalah and Reform