**Exam in Hebrew Language and Literature**

Gaining proficiency (speed, accuracy, and a moderately large active vocabulary) in reading biblical Hebrew poetry and prose is a primary scholarly skill, which students are expected to cultivate throughout the program. Students should engage in regular preparation for the biblical Hebrew qualifying exam no later than the summer following their first year, with the goal of passing the exam by the beginning of the third year. Faculty will work with students to establish practices that make this goal feasible.

The qualifying exam in Hebrew language and literature is **two-and-a-half hours in length**. Students are allowed to use an unmarked Hebrew Bible (*BHS* in hard copy) only. Dictionaries, reference grammars, digital *BHS*, translation or lexical software, or other translation aids (analog or digital) are not permitted.

Passages are chosen from sections of the Bible that students identify and prepare in advance, in each of these categories:

1. A book of the Pentateuch or the Former Prophets (i.e., a work of standard Hebrew prose) or a continuous section of approximately 30-50 chapters from those books.

2. About 30-40 chapters from the Latter Prophets. Students may combine continuous portions from one of the Major Prophets (e.g., Isaiah 1-12 plus 40-66) or several books of the Minor Prophets.

3. 50 Psalms.

For the exam itself, students are asked to offer a translation that is transparent to the Hebrew while also making sense and reading smoothly in English. For the prose passage, students should expect questions about the morphology and/or syntax of selected words and phrases. Brief answers will suffice. For the poetic passages, students will also be asked to comment succinctly on elements of poetic form and style, as well as specific literary devices (e.g., rhythm, verbal repetition, assonance and alliteration, notable modes of expression). Text-critical questions related to the *BHS* apparatus may be included in all sections.