



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Middle Mongolian - 46031

Last update 25-09-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Asian Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Ilya Gruntov

Coordinator Email: altaica@ya.ru

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Ilya Gruntov

Course/Module description:

Step back into the world of the Mongol Empire and discover the language spoken by Genghis Khan and his descendants. This course offers an immersive exploration of Middle Mongolian, the language that thrived among the Mongols from the 13th to the 16th centuries.

Middle Mongolian is a linguistic treasure, structurally similar to Turkish, Korean, Japanese, and Manchu. Students will delve into remarkable texts, including *The Secret History of the Mongols*, diplomatic letters from the Ilkhans of Persia to the Popes of Rome, birch bark manuscripts, and much more. These texts are invaluable to linguists, ethnographers, historians, anthropologists, cultural scholars, and anyone intrigued by the vast tapestry of Mongol culture.

One of the most captivating aspects of Middle Mongolian is the variety of scripts used to record it. Students will explore the Uyghur vertical script, Phagspa script, Chinese characters, Arabic and Persian scripts, as well as Armenian and Georgian alphabets. This course not only offers a linguistic journey but also a deep dive into the diverse cultural influences that shaped the Mongol Empire.

No prior knowledge of modern Mongolian or its writing systems is required, making this course accessible to all students eager to explore a truly unique language and culture. Join us for an adventure into medieval Mongolia and gain insights into one of history's most influential civilizations through its language and literature.

Course/Module aims:

Course Objectives:

To introduce students to the language and culture of the medieval Mongols. Students will learn to understand the structure of the Middle Mongolian language (13th–16th centuries) and develop the ability to read texts written in this language from various regions of the Mongol world, including China, Mongolia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1) reading of Middle Mongolian texts with a glossary
- 2) Understand grammatical structure and basic vocabulary of Middle Mongolian
- 3) understanding of cultural influences between different parts of Pax Mongolica

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures, practical reading

Course/Module Content:

Introduction to Medieval Mongolian culture and language. Middle Mongolian among other Mongolic languages.

Main written monuments of Middle Mongolic. Western and Eastern dialects.

Types of scripts used for documenting Middle Mongolian (Uighuric, hPags-pa [square script], Sino-Mongolic, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Georgian, Latin ...). Their feasibility for reflecting Mongolian sounds.

Basic grammar of Middle Mongolian

Pre-classical Mongolian: letters of Mongolian Il-Khans of Persia to Rome Popes and French kings.

Sino-Mongolian: The great epic "Secret History of the Mongols". One of the most interesting and fascinating pieces of Mongolian literature.

hPags-pa script: Edicts of Mongolian khans.

Arabic script: Mongolian-Turkic-Arabian dictionaries.

Mongolian documents in other scripts.

Required Reading:

Introduction to Altaic philology: Turkic, Mongolian, Manchu / by Igor de Rachewiltz and Volker Rybatzki; with the collaboration of Hung Chin-fu. p. cm. — (Handbook of Oriental Studies & Handbuch der Orientalistik. Section 8, Central Asia; 20). — Leiden; Boston, 2010. — 534 p.

Poppe N. Introduction to Mongolian comparative studies. 1987

Street J. C. The Language of the Secret History of the Mongols. New Haven Connecticut, 1957.

Additional Reading Material:

D.Tumurtoogoo eds. Mongolian Monuments in Uighur-Mongolian Script // (XIII-XIV centuries). Institute of linguistics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan 2006

Rachewiltz Igor de. The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century. Translated with a Historical and Philological Commentary. Vol. I—II. Leiden-Boston, 2004.

Grading Scheme:

Written Exam % 50

Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports

/ Forum / Simulation / others 30 %
Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 10 %

Additional information: