

THEO3217/THEO5301 Biblical Hebrew I

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2024-2025 1st Term

Mon 9:30 am - 12:15 pm (CCT T31)

Course Description

This course, and the sequel THEO3218/THEO5302 Biblical Hebrew II in the next term, are designed to enable students to read Biblical Hebrew. In this course, Biblical Hebrew I, students learn starting from the alphabets to the basic forms of Hebrew sentences. Students not only learn how to read simple sentences from the Hebrew bible, but also pronounce the words. Students will also learn some Hebrew songs which accompany the lessons. This course follows closely to its textbook (hereafter: D), *Learn Biblical Hebrew* by John H. Dobson (2005). Biblical Hebrew I will cover Lessons 1-13 and the rest of the book will be covered in Biblical Hebrew II.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Outcomes

- (1) pronounce and read Hebrew words
 - (2) recite from memory Genesis 1:1 (D 1.13 p. 18); Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (D 5.6 p. 55); the songs We welcome you (D 1.13 Q5 p. 16) and Blessed are You (D 5.9 Q6 p. 58)
 - (3) memorize at least 300 Hebrew words by the end of the course
 - (4) recognize words, identify and parse them, **by the assistance of available resources**, correctly as nouns, verbs, prepositions, constructs, suffixes, adjectives, infinitives or participles.
 - (5) identify the forms of questions, commands and requests.
 - (6a) explain the usage of adjectives, participles, infinitives, prefix and suffix conjugations, as well as concepts of narrative, perfective, and non-perfective forms.
- Especially for THEO5301, (6b) also deduce the functions of the above in a Hebrew sentence and able to explain basic grammar and linguistics implications in simple Hebrew sentences or phrases.

Attitude Outcomes

- (1) develop an interest and respect for the historical and cultural development of the Hebrew language from its paleo-Hebrew script until its Aramaic script, and the modern form of Hebrew language.
- (2) appreciate the distinctiveness of the language.
- (3) cultivate an interest to read Biblical texts in its original languages.

List of Topics

Topics	Contents and Concepts
1. The Hebrew Alphabets and Vowels	The Development of the Biblical Hebrew language. 1. The Paleo-Hebrew script and Aramaic square script; 2. The Dead Sea Scrolls and non-vowels manuscripts; 3. The Masoretic Scribes, the transmission of Biblical Hebrew and vowel system and the Hebrew Bible.
2. Word Order in Sentences	1. Right to left orientation. 2. Hebrew phrasal and sentence structure. 3. Verb-less clauses.
3. The Pronominal Suffixes and Pronouns	1. The pronominal suffixes as characteristic feature in Biblical Hebrew. 2. The introduction of persons, gender and number in Biblical Hebrew grammar. 3. The sufformatives. 4. The Definite Article.
4. The Narrative and Completed Action	1. Basic concepts of verbs in Biblical Hebrew in comparison to English and Chinese. 2. Concepts related to root words of verbs. 3. Concepts of the waPC (waw Prefix Conjugation) verbs – how Biblical Hebrew grammar expresses the next stage in a narrative; the significance of the Suffix Conjugation forms interrupting the waPC verbs in a narrative. 4. The general uses of the Suffix Conjugation.
5. Parsing	Basic steps when analyzing Biblical Hebrew words: recognition of words – distinguishing verbs, nouns, prepositions and particles and the pronominal suffixes; and determining persons, gender and number.
6. The Adjectives	1. Definition of adjectives and how Biblical Hebrew expresses the relation between the adjectives and nouns they describe. 2. The significance in gender and number. 3. The sufformatives. 4. Learning the four functions of adjectives: the attributive, predicative, substantive, comparative (and superlative). 5. Definiteness and the Definite Article and the Demonstrative Pronouns
7. Absolute and Construct Nouns	1. Distinguishing nouns according to gender and number; absolute and construct forms. 2. The construct and the sufformatives. 3. Functions of absolute and construct nouns.
8. The Continuing Action	1. Recognize the Preformatives to the Root words. 2. The general uses of the Prefix Conjugation.
9. The Previous and Future Action	1. Revision of the basic concepts of the 3 Conjugations in verbs. 2. The waPC and the SC. 3. The wSC form and functions. 4. The interrupted wSC forms and resuming the aspect.
10. Possession and Question Tags	1. Biblical Hebrew expressions of possessives: prepositions, particles and verbs. 2. The Interrogative particles and functions.
11. Commands and Requests	1. The Imperative forms. 2. The types and functions of imperatives. 3. The wSC in Imperatives.

12. Participles	1. The Participle forms and sufformatives. 2. The functions of Active and Passive participles.
13. Infinitives	1. The Infinitive forms. 2. Distinguishing the Absolute and Construct Infinitives. 3. The types and functions of the Absolute and Construct Infinitives.
14. Numbers	1. The Cardinal Numbers in gender. 2. The cardinal numbers above hundreds. 3. The ordinal numbers and functions. 3. Expressions of weights and measures.
15. Discourse Analysis	Also know as Text-linguistics: To explore how Biblical Hebrew functions in a text/discourse.

Course Structure, Assessment Scheme and Requirements

Course Components

The course consists of lectures, oral drills, written assignments and a lot of memorization, self and group revisions. The time allocation (on average per week) of the learning activities is as follows:									
Lecture		Class interaction		Excursion/ Web-based repor		Reading and research		Written assignments	
In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class
1.2 hrs	NA	1 hr	NA	NA	0.5 hrs	NA	1 hrs	0.5	2 hrs
M		M		M		M		M	
M: Mandatory activity in the course					O: Optional activity				

Course Textbook

John H. Dobson, *Learn Biblical Hebrew* (2nd ed.; with Audio CD-Rom; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

Assessment Scheme (including Requirements)

Task Nature and Weightage	Purpose and Rationale	Learning Outcomes
<p>1. <u>Compulsory Attendance and Active Participation (10%)</u> A penalization of 0.5% of this grade for each missed period of tutorial/lecture. If students have valid reasons to miss lectures and tutorial sessions for 10 class periods, students are expected to withdraw from the course asap. Otherwise, a full penalization of 30% of the final grade applies. Penalization of this grade applies regardless of valid or invalid reasons.</p> <p>Students must participate <i>proactively</i> in class as required: <i>Pro-active</i> refers to learning activities where students are expected to verbalize pronunciation of words learned, sing, recite verbally – all in audible volume to their partners, or instructor or to keep pace with the whole class. There will be penalization of the full 10% from this course if students do not engage pro-actively. Students will be pre-warned of this possibility as the class progresses.</p>	<p>Language courses require constant drilling, and due to the fact that Biblical Hebrew is a dead language, absence from any period will result in difficulties to catch up for each class period.</p> <p>1. Students will follow the smooth progress of building upon each topic as the language is taught. 2. Students get immediate reinforcements for each new word or concept learned.</p>	<p>1. Students can follow the progress of each topic smoothly. 2. Students build upon each new concept of the language based on the previous one. 3. Students can reinforce the learning through active use of the language. 4. Student learns to reinforce their own understanding with co learners and the instructor.</p>

<p><u>2. 8 Online Quizzes (32%)</u> Q1: The Basics of Biblical Hebrew (Alphabets, vowels and/or transliteration). Q2: Paradigm for preposition ך + pronominal suffixes (D 3.10; p. 31) and Vocabulary D 2.7 Q3: Vocabulary D 3.1 (columns 1 and 3) D 3.3 (columns 1 and 3); and D 4.1 (column 2) Q4: Paradigm for Pronouns (D 4.8; p. 46 column 1) and Paradigm for Suffix Conjugation (SC verbs) (D 4.8; p. 46 table and column 2) Q5: Vocabularies D 5.1 (column 1); D 5.5 and parsing questions. Q6: Vocabularies (D 6.1; p. 60 column 1; D 6.4; p. 63 column 1) and parsing questions. Q7: Paradigm for Prefix Conjugation verbs (PC verbs) p. 354; and Demonstrative Pronouns D7.10 (plus notes) and parsing questions. Q8: Vocabularies (D 8.1; p. 89).</p>	<p>The quizzes are to reinforce the accumulation of the foundational vocabularies and paradigms. Quizzes will be conducted in online platform. Some Quizzes will be interactive or oral in form.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students’ memorization of the vocabularies will aid the learning progress when examples are based on these foundational words. 2. Students’ memorization of the paradigms will aid the learning progress of grammar concepts foundational to the language. 3. Students will be able to read and understand simple sentences from the Hebrew Bible. 4. Students will be able to parse phrases as they read and will be able to process the meanings of the words automatically with more practice.
<p><u>3. Written Assignments (18%)</u> The instructor will assign written assignments where students are required to finished them as homework. Students are expected to follow these instructions and attempt to complete them.</p>	<p>To grasp Biblical Hebrew fully, the written form is quintessential. It aids recognition and reinforces memory. Writing out the assignments retains the learning in concrete form.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students reinforce the concepts by active application of the language through these written assignments. 2. Students get the opportunity for immediate reinforcements through these assignments

<p>4. Oral Test (10%) Students memorize 2 songs: We welcome you (D 1.13 Q5; p. 16) and Blessed are You (D 5.9 Q6; p. 58); and 2 scripture texts: Genesis 1:1 (D 2.4; p. 18); Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (D 5.6; p. 55).</p>	<p>Biblical Hebrew is the language of the Torah, the scripture of Judeo-Christian religion, memorization of core scripture and songs for worship enhance the purpose for learning of the language – which is to read the Torah or Hebrew Bible. The test will be conducted via online platform.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students learn to appreciate the religious practice of scripture memorization. 2. Students learn to sing from memory as part of religious worship and prayer. 3. Students appreciate the Jewish religious cultural practices based on scripture. 4. Students build confidence to verbalize the Hebrew words through scripture and songs.
<p>4. Final Quiz (30%) This quiz comprises of the contents of the final 4 topics; and the general accumulation of learning basic grammar sentences, and parsing.</p>	<p>A final quiz wraps up the end of the basics of the course. This final quiz will be online or take-home, depending on the class circumstances.</p>	<p>Same as Task #2.</p>

In Summary:

10% Attendance

18% Written Assignments

32% 8 Quizzes

10% Oral Test

30% Final Quiz

Learning Activities

We will use **inductive method** to explore the grammatic features of the Biblical Hebrew. An inductive method of learning a language requires the student reads and observes how the language works and then induces the grammar rules. That means the students are the master of their learning and not just passively memorizing vocabulary and grammatic rules. They need to put in effort to read the original biblical text constantly without full knowledge of the language and ask questions on grammar and induce the grammar of the language by consulting the resources that the course (the teacher, the textbook or grammar books) provided. Eventually the student can interpret/translate the text by their own. Yet there will be reinforcements by drilling exercises through different forms: in songs, oral recitation, oral exercises, dialogue and writing exercises and through one to one and small group interactions throughout the course.

	Week 1
2 Sept	Introduction: Basic Grammar and Biblical Hebrew (Parts of Speech): Exo 6:1-3 Lesson 1A & 2A: Learning Vowels and Alphabets; Songs: Alphabet song and We Welcome You.
	Week 2
9 Sept	Lesson 1B & 2B: Rules on Dagesh (D 1.8), Shewa (D 1.10), Hebrew Clause and sentence order: Reading Gen 1:1 Lesson 3A: Pronominal Suffix
	Week 3
16 Sept	Lesson 3B: Pronouns and SC Verbs. Quiz 1 ; Revision and Learn Parsing
	Week 4
23 Sept	Introduction to Lesson 4-6; Lesson 4: Narrative and Completed Action Quiz 2 ; <i>Written Assignments</i> ;
	Week 5
30 Sept	Lesson 5A: Adjectives; Parsing Drills and <i>Written Assignments</i> Quiz 3 ; Memorize Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (D 5.6; p. 55)
	Week 6
7 Oct	Lesson 5B and 6 Continuing Action Learn Song: Blessed are you (D p. 58) Quiz 4 ; <i>Written Assignment on Gen 24:1-10</i>
	Week 7
14 Oct	Introduction to Lesson 7-8; Lesson 7: Absolute and Construct Noun Quiz 5 ; Introduction to Lesson 9-13
	Week 8
21 Oct	Lesson 8 and 9: Previous and Future Action Quiz 6 ; <i>Written Assignment on Jon 1:1-3/3:1-4</i>
	Week 9
28 Oct	Lesson 10: Command and Requests Quiz 7 and Drills
	Week 10
4 Nov	Lesson 12: Infinitives Quiz 8 and Drills
	Week 11
11 Nov	Lesson 13: Participles and <i>Written Assignment on 1 Kings 21:1-7</i> Revision and Drills; Lesson 11
	Week 12
18 Nov	Revision for final Test Oral Test
	Week 13
25 Nov	Final Test Go through Answers for Final Test

Feedback for Evaluation

Two course evaluations will be conducted. The first will be done midway through the course which is tailored to facilitate better progress through the course. The second will be conducted by the university wide exercise.

Recommended Learning Resources:

- Kutz, Karl V., and Rebekah L. Josberger. 2018. *Learning Biblical Hebrew: Reading for Comprehension: An Introductory Grammar*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018.
- Page, Kelley H. *Biblical Hebrew: An Introduction Grammar*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992. (2nd Edition revised by Timothy G. Crawford, 2018)
- Kahn, Lily. *The Routledge Introductory Course in Biblical Hebrew*. NY: Routledge, 2014.
- Pratico, Gary D. and Miles V. van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001. (2nd Edition, 2014)
- Webster, Brian. *The Cambridge Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. Cambridge/NY: Cambridge University, 2009.

The following books will be also reserved in CC Library:

- Bergman, Nava. *The Cambridge Biblical Hebrew Workbook: Introductory Level*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Cook, J.A. and Holmstedt, R.D. *Beginning Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013.
- Green, Jennifer S., G. Brooke Lester, Joseph F. Scrivner. *Handbook to a Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- Ross, Allen P. *Introducing Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Seow, Choon-Leong. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Rev. ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- Van Der Merwe, Naudé, Kroeze, Naudé, J. A., and Kroeze, Jan. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. Second ed; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.
- Yeung, Philip. *Functional Hebrew: Lecture Notes with Exercises*. Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1986.

Internet resources:

Online Study tools for Biblical languages:

<https://thebible.org/gt/index>

<https://netbible.org/>

<https://biblehub.com/>

Online Chinese resources for learning Biblical Hebrew

<http://www.chioulaoshi.org/BH/index.html>

Introduction to resources over internet

<http://ehbrew.net/learn-ancient-hebrew/>

<https://ehbrew.net/free-online-hebrew-resources/>

<http://blogs.shu.edu/lawrencefrizzell/research/hebrewresources/>

<https://dailydoseofhebrew.com/hebrew-resources/#Online-Tools>

https://sites.ualberta.ca/~ebenzvi/Assist/Hebrew_Bible/hebrewbibstudy.html

<https://sites.google.com/site/biblicalhebrewnz/free-biblical-hebrew-resources2>

<http://www.biblicalhebrew.com/>

animated hebrew (cartoon)

<http://www.animatedhebrew.com/>

eteacher biblical hebrew (free lesson)

<http://eteacherbiblical.com/free-lessons>