



HB 501 Biblical Hebrew I

Fall 2011

Due West: Tuesdays 8:00-11:00 AM

3 Credit Hours

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Office Hours for Fall 2011

TBA. My normal office hours will be printed in the August update of this syllabus. I will make every reasonable effort to be in my office during these hours. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may abruptly change (in which case I will attempt to leave a note on my door). If you need to see me, I strongly recommend that you call or e-mail to schedule an appointment. Other times by appointment only. Breakfast or lunch discussions are also encouraged. ☺ Scheduling appointments is strongly recommended and may be advantageous for those traveling a distance.

Course Description

A study of the fundamentals of classical Hebrew grammar, syntax and vocabulary, this course prepares the student for Old Testament interpretation.

Students *taking the Biblical languages must complete this course and HB502 prior to taking their Hebrew exegesis course. Elective. Offered annually. Three hours.*

Course Purpose

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian church. As one key component of preparing for that mission, training in Biblical Hebrew is a powerful resource for Gospel teaching, preaching, and ministry. As William Style once said, “It takes a whole Bible to make a whole Christian.” The ability to begin to read Biblical Hebrew (with the help of a dictionary), which makes up 76% of the Bible, opens a door to a nuanced, fuller, more accurate and deeper understanding of Scripture. Commitment to the centrality of the Bible and increased ability to read, understand, and faithfully appropriate the Old Testament for ministry will be strengthened by this course.

Course Objectives

Mastery of the Hebrew alphabet and vowel system.

Gain the increasing ability to accurately pronounce and read Hebrew orally¹.

Mastery of required Hebrew vocabulary, morphology, syntax and methodology.

Mastery of the first half of the Garrett-DeRouchie Hebrew grammar (e.g., nouns, pronouns, definite article, adjective, Qal Perfect, Qal Imperfect and Qal Infinitives, some irregular verbs).

Gain the ability to read, understand and translate simpler Biblical Hebrew verses.

To begin to value the increasing ability to read and comprehend the Bible *directly* and *without English language mediation* in Hebrew and to not be limited by the hundreds of thousands of translation decisions and choices English translators have made for you and instead of you.

To begin to be able to both comprehend and to thoughtfully evaluate discussions, arguments and conclusions made about Hebrew in articles, books, commentaries, sermons, etc.

To gain the desire to begin and increasingly use your Hebrew Bible as an *indispensable* resource in *all* ministerial contexts, including your devotional life. ☺

¹ To begin to work on developing a good ear for Hebrew (which is another way to realize that Hebrew is a real language and not a code to be broken) go to http://www.aol.org/hebrew_audiobible.htm which is free for the hearing (although they would accept a donation). Abraham Shmuelof's pronunciation will slightly diverge from the pronunciation we will use in class but it is one of the two best audio reading of Biblical Hebrew available. The other is done by Shlomo Bertonov who for decades was the Hebrew reader for the radio station Kol Yisrael in Israel (and who will also slightly diverge from the pronunciation we will use in class) http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Online_Store/Audio/Bertonov/bertonov.html which is not free.

Gain the ability to increasingly see the exegetical, interpretive, theological and ministerial value of the Hebrew Bible and the Gospel Minister. The final goal here is that by the time your formal Hebrew instruction in Seminary is over you will be able to be self-training with and continually improving in Hebrew the rest of your life and competent and motivated to use the *very best* dictionaries, grammars, tools and commentaries in a discerning and critical way in order to enable you to value and use Hebrew as a core skill and irreplaceable component of your Gospel ministry. Brothers and sisters, don't settle in ministry in riding a three wheeled tricycle when you can learn to handle a Harley! ☺

Begin to understand Hebrew is an actual Semitic (rather than Western) language that can be comprehended and accurately understood, and not to incorrectly view it as a code to be mechanically, shallowly and often inaccurately deciphered. This involves beginning to become comfortable with how Hebrew is its own unique and beautiful language and is significantly different than English.

Required Textbooks²

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

David J A Clines, *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, Sheffield Phoenix Press Ltd (October 22, 2009), paperback ISBN 978-1906055790, hardbound ISBN 978-1906055783.

Duane A. Garrett and Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Hardcover), Broadman and Holman Academic, July 1, 2009 ISBN 978-0805449624.

Duane A. Garrett and Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew Workbook*, (paperback), Broadman and Holman Academic, July 1, 2009 ISBN 978-0805449631.

Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. American Bible Society. This comes in three *recommended* choices: Hardcover Large Format 1987 ISBN 978-3438052186; Hardcover Small Format 1987 ISBN 978-3438052193; Hardcover Wide Margin Edition 2007 ISBN 978-1598561999. My best recommendation is if you have relatively young/strong eyes get the Hardcover Wide Margin Edition 2007, if you have older/less strong eyes get the Hardcover

² The only additional book for Hebrew 2 will be Constantine R Campbell, *Keep Your Greek: Strategies for Busy People*, Zondervan, November 2010, ISBN 978-0310329077. We will use all of these Hebrew 1 books all year. ☺

Large Format 1987. ☺ (There is also a paperback version available 978-1598561623 but I do not recommend it. I am not impressed at all with its durability and longevity. Buy a Hebrew Bible for yourself that will last twenty years or more or until you wear it out!) ☺

J. Michael Thigpen and David M. Hoffeditz, iVocab Biblical Hebrew 2.0: Vocabulary for Eight Beginning Grammars (DVD-ROM) ISBN 978-0825427442. Be sure to get this *second edition* and not the first edition! When you install it follow the clear (but tedious) instructions and install the files for the Garrett-DeRouchie grammar (and not any of the other grammars). This will allow you to not only work on your pronunciation since it has audio as well as text information, you can have it track your accuracy in vocabulary acquisition and it can quiz you more often on those vocabulary you have not yet completely mastered! ☺

Strongly Recommended

Peter James Silzer and Thomas John Finley, *How Biblical Languages Work: A Student's Guide to Learning Hebrew and Greek*, 2004, Kregel Academic and Professional, ISBN 978-0825426445.

Preparing for and Succeeding in Hebrew One

I want to share with you a few thoughts coming from someone who cares about you and wants to see you succeed in this class and graduate from Seminary well-equipped to have a Gospel ministry fueled by the ability to careful, faithful, accurate interpretation in the Hebrew Bible to help equip you for faithful ministry in the church.³ This advice comes from someone who has taught Hebrew for thirty-three years.

Language courses demand sustained, consistent hard work in order to master the language. Competent language learning requires an approach that is very different than other kinds of learning for other disciplines and courses. This class will require a significant portion of your time and energy this year. Work spread out consistently during the week in preparation for class is much more effective (and much more remembered ☺) than too much work done the day or two before the next class session. For a student with average language skills you should plan on spending at least two hours a day, six days a week to review previous material, memorize new vocabulary and paradigms, review the older vocabulary and paradigms, and carefully prepare for the new material⁴. This involves studying the grammar, memorizing vocabulary, and paradigms, carefully preparing your homework assignments to be turned in (which is not busy work), and practicing accurate orally reading biblical Hebrew texts to improve pronunciation, aural skills and increasing accurate perception of the Hebrew language.

³ If you want to begin to think about how faithful and competent handling of the Word of God positively affects every dimension of Gospel ministry I encourage you to read this book and to reread the following book when you need motivation. The book is William Still, *The Work of the Pastor, Revised Edition*, Christian Focus; Revised edition (July 12, 2010), ISBN 978-1845505738.

⁴ Remember that on average in all of your Seminary classes you are expected to spend at least three hours outside of class for every hour in class. Language classes require *more* time on average (for an average language student) and a *different kind of learning* than is typical of your other classes.

Moreover, you should pick your hours spent on Hebrew *at your best hours* for studying carefully, thinking hard and memorizing, and not your poorest times. You may find it to be more effective to break up the two hours a day into two or three blocks of time (depending on your learning style and degree of concentration). I also strongly urge you to *make this time distraction free*. Remember that all language work builds off of the previous work and that the details and complexity of the language increases exponentially.

Before each new class read the new materials carefully and more than once. Try to understand the concepts being communicated. Make notes where you don't understand the concepts or where you need further clarity or would like it to be formulated in a different way. This will improve the quality of the next class significantly. It will also increase the efficiency of what we will do, because the less time we need to spend together grasping the initial concepts the more time we can spend on *discussing the significance* of the material and then *seeing the applications and payoff* of what we are learning in comprehending and using the Hebrew Bible more accurately and ministerially effectively. ☺ Class time is most effective when it is spent dealing with things other than those you can do on your own.

After each class carefully review the grammatical discussion, paradigms and vocabulary in the chapter *before* you write out the homework assignments. Make sure in your review that you *understand* the concepts, explanations and exercises. Never confuse mere memorization or homework completion with *comprehension!* Write down any questions or uncertainties you have so that they can be clarified in the next class session. Take the opportunity to meet with the tutor before the next class session to deal with the need for these clarifications. Take the opportunity to participate in the online chat every week. When other students ask questions in class, instead of zoning out, try to answer the question in your own mind as fully and accurately as you can. Review the chapters assigned for that week again repeatedly after the class session to help move the material from short term memory into long term memory. And don't forget to include time each week for review of earlier materials, this is also key in effectively moving information from short term into your long term memory! ☺ (If you use a computer in class then I ask that you not use it for any other purpose than taking classroom notes, both for your sake and for those around you. Surfing and reading email is a waste of your precious time in class and a distraction and possible temptation for others.)

You also need to find preparation strategies that work well with your own learning style. One book that discusses choosing accurate and effective learning strategies that work well for each of you is chapter eight in Peter James Silzer and Thomas John Finley, *How Biblical Languages Work: A Student's Guide to Learning Hebrew and Greek*, 2004, Kregel Academic and Professional, ISBN 082542638. This book can be of great help in both perceiving your strengths and weaknesses and then learning to effectively use your learning style strengths and compensate for your learning style weaknesses. I want each of you read that chapter this summer, correctly identify the strengths and weaknesses of your learning type and begin to form a personal strategy. I will ask you on the first day of class to turn in a report on this chapter where you show that you have read it thoughtfully, have identified your learning style (or styles), your learning style strengths and weaknesses *and have an initial plan as to how you will approach Hebrew given your own learning style*. This is not intended as busywork but to help

you each in having a personal game plan and for me in more quickly and accurately identifying each learning style in class. 😊

Our Hebrew classes here can equip you in beginning a lifetime of reading the Hebrew Bible with more accuracy, insight and lifelong ministerial benefit every year. The Hebrew Bible makes up 76% of the Word of God and contains deep treasures of wisdom and knowledge that can mold you and remake you into an even more effective minister or teacher, more clearly and accurately discerning what the Scriptures actually say every year of your ministry. It will enable you to *directly* handle the Word of God, allowing you to use superior and more insightful tools and giving you increasing discernment to evaluate commentaries and disagree with them when they are wrong or mutually contradictory! I wish to see each of you succeed and will do whatever I can to help you. The same is true for your class tutor John Paul Marr who is an amazing and effective tutor and encourager. Please never hesitate to ask for assistance from either or both of us. 😊

Last of all, and from my heart and desire to see you succeed, there are two types of students reading this in the syllabus and hearing it the first day of class. There are those who will take it to heart and put it into practice and give thanks to God on the midterm and final exams and who will go into Hebrew Two well equipped, ready and eager to learn more and to become even more ministerially competent and accurate in their direct reading of Scripture. Then there are those who will ignore this, or wait a long time to begin to implement this and who on the midterm and final exams will wish that they had heeded this caring advice or that reliable time travel technology existed so you could go back and start over. Brothers and sisters, since we do not have time travel technology, each of you commit yourself to being in category one! 😊

Your Hebrew Tutor's Suggested Study Calendar

- **TUESDAY** (3 hours class time & 1.5 hours with a Hebrew Study Group &/or 1 hour solo):
 - Re-Read the chapter(s) covered during class – focusing on how best to prepare the material for studying (30 minutes)
 - Review all former Hebrew Vocabulary (30 minutes)

- **WEDNESDAY** (1 - 1.5 hours):
 - Make Vocabulary cards for new chapter and begin memorizing (30 minutes)
 - Review Former Grammar [Cards] and note needed clarifications from former chapters (30-60 minutes)

- **THURSDAY** (1.5 - 2 hours):
 - Make Grammar Cards for chapter(s) covered in class (30 minutes)
 - Do 1/3 of homework (1-1.5 hours)

- Hebrew I Chat Room (8pm-9pm) – ask tutor questions
- **FRIDAY** (1.5 –2 hours):
- Review new Vocabulary and Grammar Cards (30 minutes)
 - Continue working on homework (1- 1.5 hours)
- **SATURDAY** (1.5-2 hours)
- Read the upcoming chapter(s) for basic understanding of where class is headed (30 minutes)
 - Complete homework (1 - 1.5 hours)
- **MONDAY** (2+ hours):
- Read and Study chapter(s) for quiz (30 minutes)
 - Read Motivational Article (15 minutes)
 - Review New Vocabulary and Grammar Cards for quiz (1-2 hours)

Rules of Engagement in Class Discussion⁵

You are invited and encouraged to intellectually engage one another and your professor in this class! Thoughtful and vigorous discussion is crucial to this class. Learning Biblical Hebrew involves thoughtful and disciplined inquiry about the language in which 76% of Scripture was written. Such learning and inquiry is best done in community, and there is no greater potential for productive interaction – interaction that is mutually beneficial and productive of real, valid, and worthwhile answers – than in a community of Christian scholarship. Recognizing that together we form a small community of truth-seekers devoted to Christ, his Kingdom and Scripture, let us commit ourselves to work together in a spirit of mutual respect, encouragement and love. The following guidelines are proposed as some ground rules, or “rules of engagement,” for our class discussions and interaction:

- Effectively learning a new language requires being willing to make mistakes in learning the language. Try to remember this and relax. 😊
- Be humble, courteous, and respectful.
- Work hard to correctly understand the day’s assignments and one another.
- Try to articulate your thoughts as clearly as possible.
- Avoid personal attacks.
- Keep clearly in mind that our mutual goal is Truth, not personal gain or ego.
- Avoid monopolizing the conversation.

⁵ These rules represent a slightly modified version of Dr. John Wingard’s rules. I’d like to thank my generous friend and former colleague for sharing them with me and allowing me to use and adapt them.

- Try to stay on topic.
- Welcome criticism and questions.
- Expect disagreement at times, and deal with it constructively and Christianly when it arises.
- Be quick to apologize if you offend someone.
- Be equally quick to forgive if you are offended by someone.

Grading Policy:

Percentage of Work: eleven⁶ weekly online comprehensive quizzes (which will be online this year and must be taken *before* class in order to receive credit for them⁷) 30%, one comprehensive midterm exam 25%; one comprehensive final exam 25%, homework 10%, informed and thoughtful class participation 10%. All quizzes and exams will come with an honor pledge to be typed in/signed (if you can do it with integrity) as the last thing you do after taking the quiz or exam before you submit it/ turn it in.

Grading Scale

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C	69-0	F
92-91	B+	79-78	C-		
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

Important Semester Dates

Classes begin	August 29
Final Drop/Add Day	September 5

⁶ I will drop the lowest quiz of the semester. ☺

⁷ These online quizzes will allow the use of no materials in taking them and all work done on the quiz must be completely your own work. Each quiz will begin with asking you how many total hours you studied Hebrew outside of class for the previous week (you can include tutoring hours with John Paul Marr here ☺). The quiz will end with an integrity pledge that must be signed (if it can be done with integrity) as the last act in taking the quiz. The following is an articulation of the class policy on cheating. Cheating on a quiz or on any exam will result in removal from the course, a grade of an F, a notation of cheating recorded with the grade and a letter submitted by the professor to the Academic Dean for your file. Since cheating can also involve plagiarism also see the Seminary policy on Plagiarism for additional penalties. Let's commit ourselves to this never occurring in our classes or in our lives together before the Living God, my brothers and sisters. *Corum Deo!*

Registration deadline for January Term 2012	October 31
Registration deadline for Spring Semester 2012	December 9
Thanksgiving Break	November 19-27
Classes end on campus	December 2
Exam week on campus	December 5-9

Seminary Policies Link for Students:

Click this link and read carefully as a part of this course syllabus contract:

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf

Class Schedule

Dear class,

We will be using a new and excellent Grammar and Workbook for Hebrew One and Two this year. This new grammar, among other things, will get us reading the actual Hebrew Bible much earlier than the Futato grammar I used to use. When I provide the complete weekly schedule for the first semester here in August, but I want to mention that it represents a judgment call on my part and may require some wiggle room. I look forward to Hebrew together. ☺

Beginning with week two of the semester there will be two additional components. First, a Motivation Reading on the value of Biblical Languages (Greek and Hebrew) in Gospel ministry to be read and thought through by you before class that we will then briefly discuss in class spending no more than ten minutes. Second, a brief section each week called The Hebrew Bible and the Gospel Minister that will deal with specific texts, vocabulary, grammar or syntax, showing the exegetical, theological and ministerial value of Hebrew in your own life and in the life of the church.

As indicated above, my lectures and our discussion assume *that you have read the textbook assignments carefully before class and attempt to initially understand the material on your own.* As you do this, make notes regarding what you don't understand or are not sure that you fully understand. The more carefully you prepare for class the less time we can spend in class on clearer or simpler issues and the more time we can spend on the more difficult materials and then *applying* what we are learning and improving our comprehension of Hebrew as a language. Do the assigned homework in Workbook after class and turn in the beginning of the next class. Be sure to write your name on your homework and staple the pages together. ☺ Unstapled and unsigned homework will not be graded!

The rest of the weekly assignments will appear in the August version of this syllabus. The addition of all of the weekly assignments will be the only changes in that version.

Week One

Hebrew Alphabet and Vowels,

Grammar Chapter 1 pages v-vii, 1-11

Goal in coming to today's class—1) Turn in the Class Questionnaire; 2) Turn in your own assessment of your learning style: 3) Do your best to have memorized the Hebrew alphabet and the Hebrew vowels.

After class—Do the Workbook for Chapter One all sections to be turned in at the beginning of next week's class.

Week Seven October 11

Midterm Exam