



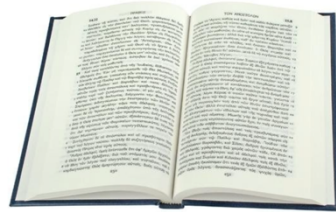
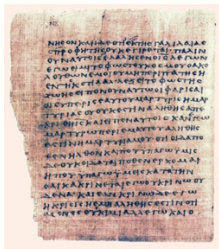
McMaster Divinity  
College

# GREEK SYNTAX: MINING FOR MEANING

NT 2E03

McMaster Divinity College  
Dr. Christopher D. Land  
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Fall 2023 (Online Asynchronous)  
Optional Zoom Tutorials: Wed 1:00–2:50pm



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today, it is possible for preachers and teachers to examine the Greek New Testament using software tools or online resources. But users of these tools still need an understanding of Greek grammar, including not just the morphology of individual words but also the syntax that makes Greek sentences meaningful. For this reason, learning syntax is essential for a wide range of students, including not only those who hope to sight-read Greek but also those who do not anticipate learning to sight-read but who want to be able to use language-related resources responsibly.

The course is structured as a sequence of asynchronous online modules to be completed within Avenue to Learn (A2L). Each module will begin with an intro video and some assigned reading. These will introduce you to Greek syntax. You will then complete some exercises on A2L. These exercises will test both your introductory Greek (i.e. vocabulary and parsing) and your emerging understanding of Greek syntax. They will also force you to find and discuss some examples of the week's grammar topics, so that you can practice learning to recognize and interpret different types of wordings. Each week, there will be an optional synchronous tutorial via Zoom, in which we will review the week's grammar topics and take up any questions pertaining to the exercises.

Throughout the course, we will be working with John 9 (narrative) and 1 John (non-narrative), so that by the end of the semester you will be able to read through these texts and appreciate how their sentences have been constructed and how they mean what they mean.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation in this course, students will:

## KNOWING

- Know some of the most frequent inflections in the New Testament;
- Know how individual words combine in order to make meaningful units;
- Know the main grammatical choices that enable the construction of Greek wordings;

## BEING

- Become self-aware as a modern reader of the Bible, recognizing the antiquity of the texts;
- Dispense with over-confidence (or lack of confidence) concerning knowledge of the biblical languages, adopting instead an attitude of life-long learning;

## DOING

- Be able to talk intelligently about the structure of a specific wording by invoking alternative wordings (i.e. explain both *what* the wording means and *how* it means what it means);
- Be able to move cautiously from an analysis of Greek grammar to a preliminary understanding of an actual passage of scripture.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: You are required to complete all of the following assignments. No unfinished assignments are permitted. *Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn either as Word documents (.doc, .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). A penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments, including assignments submitted in incorrect file formats. Assignments cannot be submitted after December 8<sup>th</sup> without written permission from the Office of Registrar ([mdcreg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mdcreg@mcmaster.ca)).*

## MODULE MATERIALS AND DISCUSSIONS (10%)

Each week, a video will be posted on A2L along with an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *How Sentences Make Meaning*. **You will review these early in the week (Monday—Wednesday)**, leaving questions and comments about anything that is unclear. In addition to the asynchronous discussions that will emerge from these questions and comments, we can discuss the assigned materials during the optional synchronous tutorial. Weekly tutorials will be at 1:00pm each Wednesday via Zoom.

## EXERCISES (10 x 8% = 80%)

Throughout the semester, there will be ten online modules. **The exercises must be completed on A2L prior to the weekly deadlines listed below.** Each module will include a vocabulary and parsing component, in which you will parse and/or define twenty (20) words drawn from the most common inflected forms in John 9 and 1 John (flashcard sets will be available on A2L). Following this, you will be asked some questions pertaining to the grammar topic(s) for the week, as well as some questions that review topics from previous weeks. Some questions will be of a general nature, inviting you to discuss how the Greek language makes meaning; others will require you to engage with the Greek of John 9 and 1 John. The goal of these exercises is to cultivate two skills: (1) the ability to identify particular kinds of wording; and (2) the ability to discuss with clarity what that particular kind of wording can contribute to

the meaning of a text. If you have questions about a particular exercise, please email me or bring your question to the weekly tutorial.

### FINAL EXAM (10%)

For the final “open book” examination, you will be given a passage of Greek and some questions like the ones in the exercises. You may consult academic resources to answer the exam questions, provided you cite any sources that discuss the specific Greek text in view (you need not cite general information regarding the Greek language, whether from the class readings or other general resources). The exam is designed to ensure that you can recognize important grammatical constructions as well as explain how they are meaningful. **The take-home exam must be uploaded to A2L prior to the due date in the schedule below.**

## GRADING SUMMARY

|                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Module Materials & Discussions | 10%  |
| Module Exercises               | 80%  |
| Final Exam                     | 10%  |
| Total                          | 100% |

## TEXTBOOKS

All students are required to possess (or have access to) the following:

A standard edition of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th–28th ed.) or the UBS *Greek New Testament* (4th–5th ed.).

Land, Christopher D. *How Sentences Make Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, forthcoming.  
[Draft chapters to be disseminated via A2L]

All students are recommended to possess one of the following:

Mathewson, David, and Elodie Ballantine Emig. *Intermediate Greek Grammar: Syntax for Students of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016.

Porter, Stanley E. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE

| Module Dates  | Topics                           | Reading    |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| Sept 11–17    | Introduction to Syntax           | Chs. 1-2   |
| Sept 18–24    | Greek Sentences (Part 1)         | Chs. 3–4   |
| Sept 25–Oct 1 | Noun Phrases (Part 1)            | Chs. 5–8   |
| Oct 2–8       | Noun Phrases (Part 2)            | Chs. 9–12  |
| Oct 9–15      | Reading Week (No Module)         |            |
| Oct 16–22     | Verb Phrases (Part 1)            | Chs. 13–15 |
| Oct 23–29     | Verb Phrases (Part 2)            | Chs. 16–17 |
| Oct 30–Nov 5  | Embedded Clauses                 | Chs. 18–20 |
| Nov 6–12      | Adjuncts (aka “Adverbials”)      | Chs. 21–23 |
| Nov 13–19     | Apposition & Coordination        | Chs. 24–25 |
| Nov 20–26     | Greek Sentences (Part 2)         | Chs. 26–27 |
| Nov 27–Dec 3  | Ordering & Information Structure | Chs. 28–29 |
| Dec 4–8       | Exam Week (No Module)            |            |

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at:

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection and the student’s continuation in the course represents his or her consent to the use of this service. If a student has objections to the use of this service, alternate arrangements for assignment submission must be made with the professor in advance of the assignment deadlines.

A useful guide to avoiding plagiarism is the Harvard Guide to Using Sources:

<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

## AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

## STYLE

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the latest edition of the McMaster Divinity College *Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*:

<https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

## GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

**This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.**