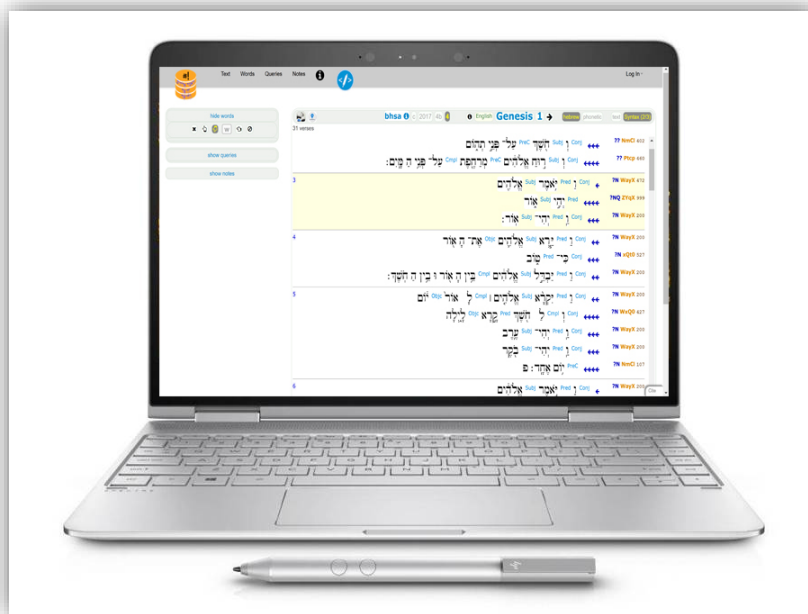




## MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE COURSE SYLLABUS WINTER 2018

### MINING FOR MEANING: PRACTICAL WAYS TO ANALYZE THE HEBREW BIBLE (OT 2L03)



#### INSTRUCTOR:

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Wednesdays, from 9:00 am–  
10:50 am

There will be a course web  
page on [Avenue to Learn](#)  
(A2L).

#### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Computers have revolutionized many human practices, including the study of ancient texts. Today, it is common for preachers and teachers to examine the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible using software tools or online resources. This course will demonstrate how free online web resources can be used effectively in order to analyze a passage “in the original Hebrew” so that interpretations and applications can rely upon a careful consideration of what the Hebrew actually says and how it says it.

**Note: Students must have basic computer skills and must bring their laptop to all classes.**

This course will appeal to:




1. Those who have already taken A Guide to Biblical Languages or Introductory Hebrew 1 and/or 2. **Note:** We will review the Hebrew grammar that was introduced in A Guide to Biblical Languages (NT/OT 1L03) for the benefit of those who did not take this course, and to refresh that learning for those who did.

2. Those who want to be able to use online language resources effectively and learn how to interpret the biblical text responsibly, regardless of whether they intend to learn to sight read Hebrew.

**OT/NT 1L03 MDiv/MTS Specializations:** (BS/PS) Biblical Studies, Pastoral Studies (See [http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdiv-mts\\_specializations\\_and\\_outcomes.pdf](http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdiv-mts_specializations_and_outcomes.pdf))

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES



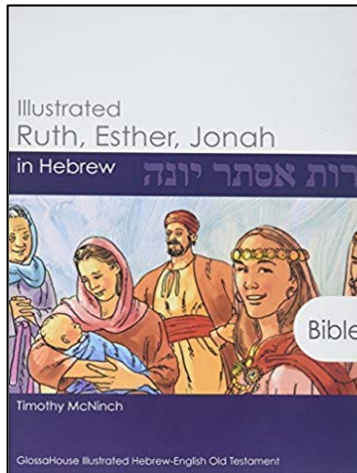
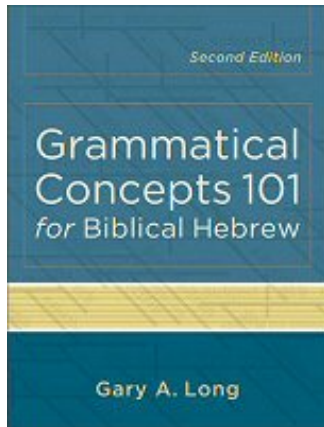
- a.  Knowing
  - To understand the metafunctions of language
  - To understand the reasons for variation in language: cultural, historical, situational, personal, social, etc.
  - To know some of the most frequent words in the Old Testament
  - To know the major grammatical forms in Hebrew and their syntactical relationships to each other (nominals, verbals, adverbials, phrases, clauses, etc.)
  - To understand Hebrew language units and their ranking
  - To know what is involved in moving from grammatical analysis to interpretation and application
- b.  Being
  - To address over-confidence—or lack of confidence—concerning knowledge of the Bible, adopting instead an attitude of life-long learning
  - “To present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (2 Tim 2:15)
  - To be a mature and responsible interpreter of Scripture as taught by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:6–16)
  - To allow the Scripture to motivate, form, and transform our faith, worship, and Christian way of life
- c.  Doing
  - To develop the ability to talk intelligently about what the available linguistic information reveals about specific wordings (i.e. to explain both what a wording means and why it means what it means)
  - To develop the ability to move cautiously from the available linguistic information to a preliminary understanding of an actual passage of scripture
  - To be able to interpret Scripture more effectively with attention to the cultural, historical, and situational context
  - To be able to use quality online Hebrew resources critically and effectively

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS AND RESOURCES

McNinch, Timothy. *Illustrated Ruth, Esther, Jonah in Hebrew. GlossaHouse Illustrated Hebrew-English Old Testament. Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2017.*

Long, Gary A. *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.* (Students who have taken A Guide to Biblical Languages NT/OT 1L03 will already possess this text.)



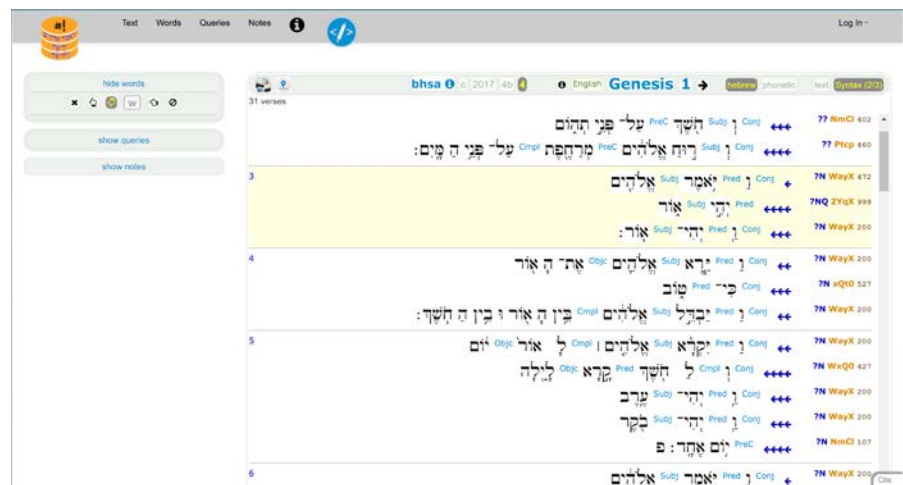
Online Lexicon: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon Online  
<https://archive.org/details/BDBHebrewLexicon> (Free site)



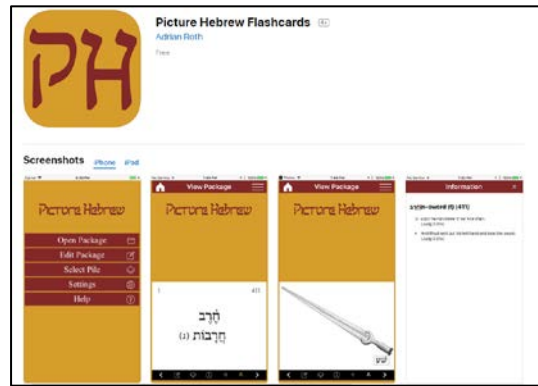
**Website: Animated Hebrew Jonah** [http://www.animatedhebrew.com/jonah/jonah\\_01.html](http://www.animatedhebrew.com/jonah/jonah_01.html)  
(Free site)



**Website: Bible Online Learner** <https://bibleol.3bmoodle.dk/> (Free site)



**App: Picture Hebrew Flashcards: Internalize the Language of Scripture** (The app is free, but you must pay for the flashcard download within the app)



Available from Google Play:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nobrainrapps.flashcardsphv2>

and the App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/picture-hebrew-flashcards/id1393168774?ls=1&mt=8>

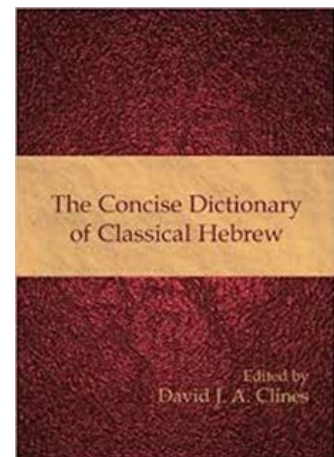
**Note:** All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, R.E.A.D. On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College, or contact R.E.A.D. On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd., Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3. Phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Website:

<http://webhome.idirect.com/~readon/bookstore.html#XBkEducation>. Texts may be ordered ahead and sent to your home or purchased at the college. You may also order the texts from online sources.

## B. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. This print paperback dictionary is far more up to date and reliable than the online BDB:

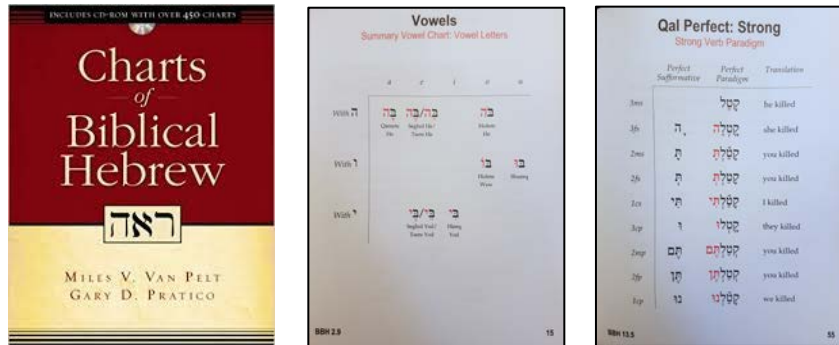
**Clines, David J. A., David M. Stec, and Jacqueline C. R. De Roo. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.**





2. This resource consists of easy to read, color coded charts summarizing all the Hebrew form variations, and a supplementary disc with even more:

**Van Pelt, Miles V., and Gary Davis Pratico. *Charts of Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.**



3. Those who plan to continue their study of Hebrew may wish to purchase this introductory Hebrew text, which gives more detailed descriptions of morphology:

**Pratico, Gary D., and Miles V. Van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.**

Or, this Hebrew grammar, which gives information on morphology, plus much more information on syntax: how the elements of language work together to make meaning:

**Van der Merwe, C. H. J., J. A. Naudé, and Jan Kroeze. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. Second ed. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.**

### C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
Grammar Quizzes	15%
Analysis 1: Jonah	15%
Analysis 2: Ruth	25%
Oral Reading (Jonah)	5%
Exam	30%
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Assignment Details:

**Note: All written assignments must be submitted to A2L as PDF documents only.**

**1. Assignment 1: Vocabulary Quizzes 10%.** See course schedule.

There will be five in class vocabulary quizzes testing your knowledge of common Hebrew words. You will learn the 120 most common words in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible on a cumulative basis. Rather than memorizing narrow meanings, you will be matching Hebrew words with pictures that represent a range of meanings. The **Picture Hebrew Flashcards** are based on this idea.

**2. Assignment 2: Grammar Quizzes 15%.** See course schedule.

There will be 3 in class grammar quizzes will test your ability to explain (in your own words) how the Hebrew language makes meaning. Because this will be the focus of the class handouts, lectures, and discussions, the quizzes will be testing whether you are paying attention and whether you are understanding the basic workings of the language. Note that these quizzes do not require formal parsing and translation, but an understanding of how the words relate to one another and how the linguistic signals relate to the meaning of the text. Each quiz will be based on a passage from the Old Testament with a printed quiz sheet supplying the same linguistic information that is being accessed digitally throughout the course (i.e. English glosses, parsing information, syntactic information, etc.). Given this information, students be able to write out brief answers that explain what the passage means and why it means this.

**3. Assignment 3: Analysis 1: Jonah 15%.** Due on Wednesday, February 27 by 11:30 pm

Students will choose one passage from the book of Jonah of 5 to 8 verses and explain the significant lexical/grammatical/syntactical components and how they contribute to meaning in a response of 6 to 8 pages. You will be guided by a pre-determined list of interpretive questions related to the wording of a passage. In addition to the online resources used throughout the course, you are expected to cite at least ten appropriate reference works that discuss your passage and/or its wording (i.e. the major biblical commentaries and Hebrew reference books). Detailed instructions will be given in class and on A2L.

**4. Assignment 4: Analysis 2: Ruth 25%.** Due on Wednesday, April 3 by 11:30 pm

Students will choose one passage from the book of Ruth of 5 to 8 verses and explain the significant lexical/grammatical/syntactical components and how they contribute to meaning in a response of 10 to 12 pages. You will be guided by a pre-determined list of interpretive questions related to the wording of a passage that will incorporate the learning used in your first analysis but also include the concepts learned since. In addition to the online resources used throughout the course, you are expected to cite at least ten appropriate reference works that discuss your passage and/or its wording (i.e. the major biblical commentaries and Hebrew reference books). Detailed instructions will be given in class and on A2L.

**5. Assignment 5: Oral Reading: Jonah 5%.** Due Wednesday, March 6 by 11:30 pm

Students will use the website **Animated Hebrew Jonah**

([http://www.animatedhebrew.com/jonah/jonah\\_01.html](http://www.animatedhebrew.com/jonah/jonah_01.html))

to practice pronouncing and reading the passage from the book of Jonah that they used for Analysis 1. They will video record themselves on A2L reading the passage.

**6. Assignment 6: Exam 30%.** Wednesday, April 10

For the final examination, you will be given a passage from the Hebrew Bible and a few of the questions that were asked in the main written assignments (see above). You will be allowed to use the online resources in order to answer these questions, explaining what (linguistically speaking) the passage means and why (linguistically speaking) it means this. There will also be a vocabulary component to the exam, involving the 120 most common words in the Hebrew Bible. A concluding question on the exam will ask you to provide

some remarks about interpretive issues that are important for understanding the passage but that are not answered by the wording of the passage itself.

**Policy for Late Assignments:**

Marks will be deducted for late assignments if there is no valid reason, such as illness (a doctor’s note may be required) or serious family crisis. The deduction will be 3% per day. Extensions must be approved before the due date.

**IV. COURSE SCHEDULE**

Wk	Date	Bible Resources <sup>1</sup>	Content	Assignments/Quizzes
1	Jan 9	---	• Introduction and Syllabus • Hebrew Alphabet, Vowels	---
2	Jan 16	Selected verses	• Metafunctions of Language • Variations in Language • Using a Lexicon	---
3	Jan 23	Jonah 1	• Parts of Speech, Word Order • General Hebrew Morphology • Nominals: Form and Function 1 (Nouns)	---
4	Jan 30	Jonah 2	• Nominals: Form and Function 2 (Adjectives, Pronouns)	Vocabulary Quiz 1 (20 words)
5	Feb 6	Jonah 3	• Verbal Systems: Stems, Conjugations 1 (TAM, Stems, Perfect/Imperfect)	Grammar Quiz 1
6	Feb 13	Jonah 4	• Verbal Systems: Stems, Conjugations 2 (Volitionals)	Vocabulary Quiz 2 (40 words)
7	Feb 20	Family Day/Reading Week		
8	Feb 27	Ruth 1	• Verbal Systems: Stems, Conjugations 3: Participles, Infinitives	Analysis 1: Jonah
9	Mar 6	Ruth 2	• Phrases and Clauses 1 (Prepositions, Conjunctions)	Vocabulary Quiz 3 (60 words) Oral Reading Assignment
10	Mar 13	Ruth 3	• Phrases and Clauses 2 (Rank, Relationships)	Grammar Quiz 2
11	Mar 20	Ruth 4	• Syntax: Variations and Meaning	Vocabulary Quiz 4 (80 words)

<sup>1</sup> McNinch, Timothy. *Illustrated Ruth, Esther, Jonah in Hebrew*. We will be using examples from these narratives to illustrate the concepts learned during the classes.



12	Mar 27	Judges Selections	• Hebrew Discourse 1 (Verb Constellations, Markers, Comments)	Grammar Quiz 3
13	Apr 3	Judges Selections	• Hebrew Discourse 2 (Dialogue, Participants, Narrative Perspective)	Vocabulary Quiz 5 (100 words) Analysis 2: Ruth
14	Apr 10	---	---	Exam (120 vocab words)

## V. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

- Students are expected to attend all classes. Missing a class in order to work on other assignments is a consequence of poor planning and is unacceptable. If you are genuinely ill, and possibly contagious, your absence is acceptable.
- Students are expected to be on time for class. Admittedly, unavoidable delays do occasionally happen. If you arrive late, please enter as quietly as possible and give an explanation to the professor after class.
- Students are also expected to stay for the entire class session.
- Computers and tablets should only be used for class related purposes, not for social networking and the like.
- All thoughtful student participation is welcome. There are no “dumb questions” or “stupid answers.” Students will respect the contributions of other students, although they may disagree, and respond to them without ridicule or scorn.
- Students may eat or drink in class as long as they do so quietly and unobtrusively and clean up afterwards.

## VI. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

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

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

### 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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty

can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. 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>.

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus is the property of the instructors and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.