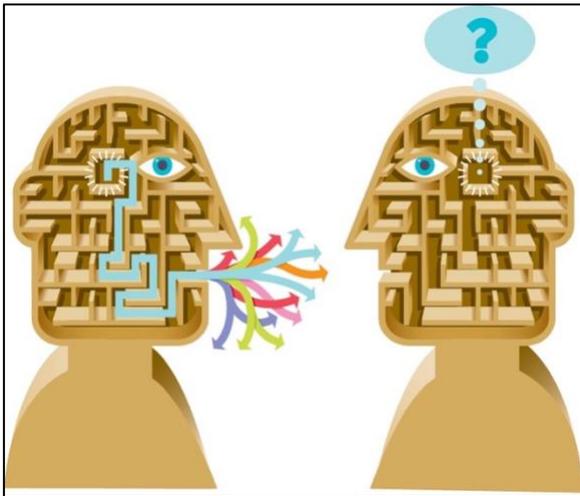




**MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
SPRING 2022**

**HEBREW 1: INTRODUCTION TO HEBREW
(OT 1B03)**



INSTRUCTOR:

Jacob Tomc, MDiv

Email: tomcj@mcmaster.ca

Online Asynchronous/Synchronous: Most of the work is asynchronous. Weekly online synchronous classes/workshops will take place **Tuesdays from 3:00–4:50pm** (subject to change depending on student schedules).

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

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Important Note: This is a condensed course that covers the material of one semester in 8 weeks (May 2–June 24). Students should be prepared to move quickly and are advised not to take another course at the same time. However, many students have successfully learned Hebrew with us in this format. The secret of success is working on the material regularly every day.

Note: This is an online course. Students must have a basic familiarity with computers in order to participate, including the ability to navigate web sites and make and upload PDFs of assignments (from Word: File > Save as PDF). Simple instructions for using Zoom will be provided on A2L.

People like to talk about what the Bible means, sometimes even with reference to “the original Hebrew.” However, for readers and teachers of the Bible to access useful resources and make insightful observations about the meaning of a text without making regrettable errors, they need to understand how languages make meaning—and how Hebrew makes meaning. This course explores the world of human language: language theory and how it applies to understanding texts. It will also review English grammar—which many students were never taught—as a basis for understanding Hebrew grammar.

This will enable students to be better prepared to engage with our main task: learning the basics of Hebrew, focusing on how the linguistic elements lead to meaningful and accurate interpretation. There will necessarily be some memorization of vocabulary and three main paradigms, but this course will also significantly reduce the amount of memorization usually required in language learning, since the focus is on understanding and application.

This course will appeal to two types of students:

1. Those who want to begin the process of learning biblical languages, especially those who plan on doing more advanced learning. Subsequent courses will teach the intelligent use of Hebrew resources as well as a more detailed knowledge of the language and application to the biblical text.
2. Those who do not plan to study biblical languages in depth (or those who are not sure whether they do) but want to understand how languages work, how to move from one language to another, and how to interpret the biblical text responsibly.

OT 1B03 MDiv/MTS Specializations: (BS/PS) Biblical Studies, Pastoral Studies (See <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/apply/specializations>)

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES



- a.  Knowing
 - To know the major grammatical categories in English and Hebrew
 - To understand how language makes meaning(s)
 - To understand the functions of language such as the interpersonal, experiential, and textual
 - To understand what constitutes a legitimate “word study”
 - To recognize and understand key biblical vocabulary in Hebrew
 - To begin to learn the grammatical forms/paradigms in Hebrew
- b.  Being
 - “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 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 describe how choices in language affect the meaning of the biblical text
 - To describe the functions of the basic grammatical forms in Hebrew and use them in interpretation
 - To begin to read and translate Hebrew texts
 - To interpret the biblical text meaningfully without committing common mistakes

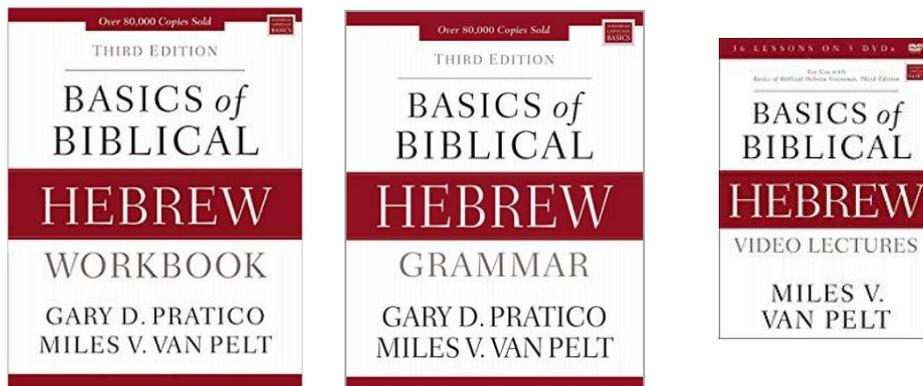
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. TEXTS AND RESOURCES

NOTE: This course will be conducted as a “flipped classroom.” Students will read the textbook, watch the video lectures, and then complete workbook exercises **before** weekly workshop meetings. The weekly online classroom/workshop time (via Zoom, see below) will be dedicated to answering questions, clarifying concepts, consolidating learning, discussing interpretation, and practicing skills. Online synchronous workshops will be arranged at a time that is mutually convenient for the students and professor.

1. Workbook (required)

Pratico, Gary D., and Miles Van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Workbook*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. ISBN: 978-0310533559

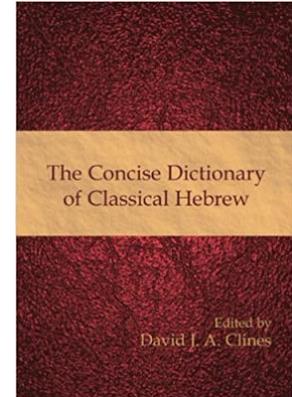


2. Grammar Text (required)

Pratico, Gary D., and Miles Van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. ISBN: 978-0310533498

3. Lexicon (required)

The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew. Edited by David J. A. Clines et al. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009. ISBN: 978-1906055790



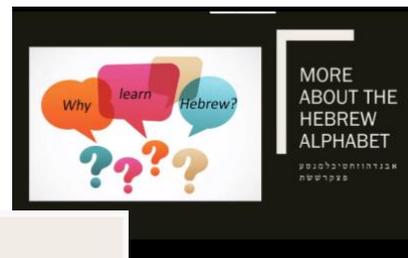
4. BBH Video Lectures (optional, but highly recommended)¹

Van Pelt, Miles. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Video Lectures*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. ASIN: 0310538602

NOTE: Some students say that they prefer learning just from the textbook rather than the BBH video lectures. However, many visual/aural learners find them very helpful. Learning styles differ, and you know yourself best. A sample lecture is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76lyeFx9jXs>. The PPT slides used in these videos will be posted free online. If you do not think the BBH videos will be helpful, you may choose not to use them. You may find that the MDC videos, which are required, are enough.

5. MDC Video Lectures (required)

A series of video lectures has been prepared specifically for this course, focusing on language theory and interpretation. They also review and expand textbook concepts. They are free and available on A2L.



¹ These video lectures will also be useful for the subsequent online course, Hebrew 2 Morphology OT 2C03. The video lectures are not available in our bookstore. They may be purchased online from Amazon or Chapters-Indigo as a set of discs that covers both Hebrew 1 and 2, or purchased for download from <https://vimeo.com/search?q=basics%20of%20biblical%20hebrew>. For the download option there is “instant delivery.” They may also be available from other sources.

6. Bible Software (optional)

Logos: The Academic Basic package is available free from <https://www.logos.com/academic-basic>.

Accordance: You may compare the various available packages here <https://accordancebible.com/collections-comparison/>.

Bible software is an exceptionally helpful tool. However, it can easily become a crutch when first learning biblical languages. For that reason, it is recommended that you use it sparingly while you learn the fundamentals of the Hebrew language. We will discuss how to use these resources effectively without becoming dependent on them. For now, do some research on the two options listed above, and we will discuss your questions in the workshops.

Note: While infrequent, all discussion of software in the weekly required lecture videos favours Logos. That being said, the instructor for this course uses Accordance. As mentioned, we can discuss the differences in the workshops before you make any decisions.

Textbook Purchase: All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. SUGGESTED RESOURCES

This is a helpful resource for Hebrew students unfamiliar with English grammar:

Van Pelt, Miles V. *English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

This is an excellent resource for doing appropriate word studies:

Baxter, Benjamin J. *"In the Original Text It Says": Word-Study Fallacies and How to Avoid Them*. Critical Christian Issues. Gonzalez, FL: Energion, 2012.

This is a helpful resource for using language in argumentation:

Hardy, H. H. II. *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Hebrew: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019. [Available on the Digital Theological Library]

Vocabulary Resources (keyed to the text):

Pratico, Gary D., and Miles Van Pelt. *Old Testament Hebrew Vocabulary Cards*. ISBN: 978-0310534181.

Van Pelt, Miles. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary Audio*. Audible Audiobook. ASIN: B07LCSPFNT.

(A number of other vocabulary and supplemental resources are given on A2L.)

Online Resources:

Course Website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/> Log in with your MAC ID.

Animated Hebrew Jonah: http://www.animatedhebrew.com/jonah/jonah_01.html This free site is very helpful in learning how to pronounce Hebrew.

C. PROCTORING

This is an online course. All tests and exams will be proctored remotely using Zoom (the same program that we will use for online workshops). This program is free for students to use. Instructions will be given on A2L and in the workshops.

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

(1) Workbook Exercises	30%
(2) Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
(3) Participation	5%
(4) Term Test	15%
(5) Sermon or Commentary Analysis	20%
(6) Exam	20%
Total Grade	100%

Assignment Details:

Note: All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate Assignment Box on Avenue to Learn (A2L) in PDF format only.

(1) Workbook Exercises 30%. Due on May 13, May 27, June 10, June 24 by 11:59 pm. Marked on the schedule with *.

Students will complete weekly exercises from the BBH Workbook requiring application of the material covered in the BBH Text/Videos. The online workshops will focus on discussing and answering questions about these exercises to help you learn. We will work through examples together. Students are required to complete at least the alternate questions in each section (1, 3, 5, etc. or a, b, c etc.). You may choose to do more for extra practice. These exercises will be collected and graded on four different dates.

May 13: Chs. 1–5

May 27: Chs. 6–9

June 10: Chs. 10–13

June 24: Chs. 14–16

(2) Vocabulary Quizzes 10%. See Avenue to Learn.

You will be responsible for learning roughly 270 common words in Hebrew. You will be

required to memorize one English gloss for each word. The vocabulary will be taken from the BBH 3rd edition materials and quizzed online regularly on A2L.

(3) Participation 5%. Weekly.

Participation grades are earned by thoughtfully engaging in discussion during the workshops. Part of this will include discussion of the weekly “Mangled Language” modules. Students are to come to workshops prepared to discuss these topics.

(4) Term Test 15%. Week of May 30.

There will be a term test on chapters 1 through 9 during the week of May 30. This will be conducted with online video monitoring at a time mutually agreeable to the students and instructor. This will likely take place outside of the weekly workshop time. More information will be given on A2L.

(5) Sermon or Commentary Analysis 20%. Due on Friday, June 17 by 11:59 pm (marked on the schedule with **).

Evaluate and critique **one** sermon, article, or an excerpt of a commentary (which will be provided by the instructor) in terms of the handling of the original Hebrew language. Students should utilize what they learn in class and identify the common exegetical and linguistic fallacies, along with any ways that language has been used well. The entire report should be between **6–8 pages** and must follow the “McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses.” While this is not a “research paper,” at least five secondary resources other than the required course texts must be consulted. Details will be provided on A2L.

The rapid pace of this course requires that students begin thinking about the paper early on. It is recommended that students choose their topic by week 2 and begin gathering resources in week 3.

(6) Exam 20%. Due on Tuesday, June 28.

Information will be given in class.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Marks will be deducted for late assignments if there is no valid reason (e.g., illness or serious family crisis). The deduction will be 3% per day (excluding Sundays). If possible, please be in touch with the instructor at least 48 hours before the due date to discuss extensions.

Because this is an accelerated online class, students must be diligent to keep up with the material in order to be successful. It is expected that students are prepared to give **daily time** to the course during the 8 weeks it will run.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Week of	Interpretation (MDC Videos on A2L) ²	Language Theory (MDC Videos on A2L)	Practical Hebrew (BBH Videos/Text and MDC Videos)
1	May 2	Mangled Language 1: Love	Introduction and Syllabus	Alphabet: Names, Forms. BBH 1 Vowels, Pronunciation. BBH 2–3
2	May 9 Wkbk May 13*	Mangled Language 2: Soul	Theory 1: Functions of Language	Nominal Systems 1: Parts of Speech. Person, gender, number. Nouns (Paradigm), Article, Conjunction Waw. BBH 4–5
3	May 16	Mangled Language 3: Theologizing	Theory 2: Words and Theology	Nominal Systems 2: Phrases and Prepositions, Adjectives (Paradigm). BBH 6–7
4	May 23 Wkbk May 27*	Mangled Language 4: Gender Inclusive Debate	Theory 3: Form and Function; Syntax and Semantics	Nominal Systems 3: Pronouns: personal, relative, demonstrative, interrogative. BBH 8 Nominal Systems 4: Pronouns: objective, possessive. BBH 9
5	May 30 Term Test May 31	Mangled Language 5: Word Studies	Theory 4: What do Words “Mean”?	Nominal Systems 5: Construct Chains; Numbers. BBH 10–11
6	June 6 Wkbk June 10*	Mangled Language 6: Punctuation	Theory 5: How to Use Lexicons	Verbal Systems 1: Tense/Aspect/Mood; Stems; Qal Perfect Strong (Paradigm). BBH 12–13
7	June 13 Analysis Assignment: June 17**	Mangled Language 7: Be Holy	Theory 6: Exegetical Fallacies	Verbal Systems 2: Finite/Non-finite; Qal Perfect Weak. BBH 14 Verbal Systems 3: Qal Imperfect Strong (Paradigm). BBH 15
8	June 20 Wkbk June 24*	Mangled Language 8: Discourse	Theory 7: Discourse	Verbal Systems 4: Qal Imperfect Weak. BBH 16
9	June 27	--	--	Review Exam (June 28)

V. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

- Students are expected to attend all online 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 or there is a serious emergency, your absence is acceptable. Please email the instructor to explain.
- Students are expected to be on time for class. Admittedly, unavoidable delays do occasionally happen. If you arrive late, please email an explanation to the instructor after class.
- Students are also expected to stay for the entire class session.
- 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.

² These are short (15–20 min) videos dealing with misinterpretations.

VI. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Style

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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. 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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

Academic Honesty

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 <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/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.