



INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

GREEK I | NT 1B03

01 May, 2023 – 24 June, 2023



INSTRUCTOR:

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Online Asynchronous

This course is asynchronous: there is no weekly class meeting.

All course content/assignments will be accessed through [Avenue to Learn](#) (A2L).

Note: *This is an online course.* Students

must have a basic familiarity with computers and navigating webpages in order to participate; this includes the ability to video-conference over *Zoom*, and the ability to upload files to Avenue to Learn.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

People like to talk about what the Bible means, sometimes, even with reference to “the original Greek.” 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 they need to understand *how Greek 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 Greek grammar. This will enable students to be better prepared to engage with our main task: learning the basics of Greek and focusing on how the linguistic elements lead to meaningful and accurate interpretation. In this course, there will necessarily be some memorization of vocabulary and the three main paradigms (the article, nominal endings, and verb endings), 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 apply 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 Greek resources as well as a more detailed knowledge of the languages 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 want to) but want to understand how language work, how to move from one language to another, and how to interpret the biblical text responsibly (those who want to continue with deeper study are encouraged to do so!).

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES



Knowing

- Know the major grammatical categories in English and Greek
- Understand how language makes meaning
- Understand the functions of language (experiential, interpersonal, textual)
- Understand what constitutes a legitimate “word study”
- Recognize and understand a number of words from the Greek New Testament
- Begin to learn the grammatical forms/paradigms in Greek



Being

- Be “one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2.15)
- Be a mature interpreter of scripture as taught by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:6–16)
- Be someone who allows scripture to motivate, form, and transform your faith, worship, and Christian way of life



Doing

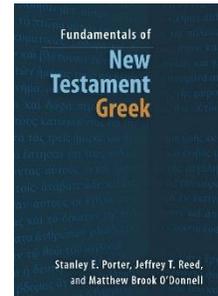
- Be able to describe how choices in language affect the meaning of the biblical text
- Be able to describe the functions of the basic grammatical forms in Greek and use them in interpretation
- Be able to read and understand Greek texts from the New Testament
- Be able to communicate the biblical text meaningfully without committing common mistakes

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: TEXTS AND RESOURCES

Note: this course will be conducted as a “flipped classroom,” which means that the students are required to come to the weekly tutorial having already studied the relevant materials for the given week. Our weekly meeting via Zoom will be dedicated to answering questions, clarifying concepts, consolidating learning, discussing interpretation, and practicing skills.

1. **Textbook:** Porter, Stanley E., Jeffrey T. Reed, and Matthew Brook O’Donnell. *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

While your learning content will be covered in online materials, this text will be a valuable reference for both Greek I and Greek II.



2. **Reference Sheet:** Mounce, William D. *Biblical Greek Laminated Sheet*. Zondervan Get an A! Study Guides. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005. *You may find this sheet (it is a few pages) helpful as a quick reference to some of the basics you will learn in Greek I and II; you will find more detailed charts in the back of the textbook above.*



3. **MDC Video Lectures:** A series of video lectures has been prepared by MDC’s Dr. Francis Pang specifically for this course, focusing on language theory and interpretation. They also review and explain concepts in the textbook. These video lectures will be found on A2L, and are required viewing for your learning content.
4. **Materials: Assignments, Handouts, Lesson Slideshows:** Greek materials will be posted on Avenue to Learn and will be accessible there; this includes your weekly practice exercises and supplemental material. **Vocabulary:** A *Quizlet* (free online flashcard program) group will be created which includes study sets for students to memorize and review vocabulary for the course.
5. **Additional Resources: (these may be helpful for your own prep and understanding)**

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

Textbook Purchase: Required textbooks are available from READ ON Books, located in the Hurlburt Family Bookstore off of Cullen Hall. For advance purchase, orders can be placed by phone (416.620.2934), text (416.668.3434), or email (books@readon.ca), with payment by e-transfer, credit card, or cheque; shipping is free for students.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Exercises (practicing the grammar)	30%
Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
“Mangled Language” Discussion Participation	5%
Term Test	15%
Sermon or Commentary Analysis Paper	20%
Exam	20%
Total	100%

NOTE: All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate Assignment Box on Avenue to Learn **in PDF format only.**

A. Practice Exercises, 30%: Due by 11:59 PM according to schedule below.

Students will complete weekly exercises provided by the instructors that involve the use of material covered in the weekly Greek videos and tutorials. The online workshops will focus in part on discussing and answering questions about these exercises to help you learn; we will work through examples together in tutorial. These exercises will be collected and graded on four separate occasions.

B. Vocabulary Quizzes, 10%: Due as detailed below.

You will be responsible for learning roughly 150–200 of the most common words in the Greek New Testament, as well as the most common paradigms (the article, verb endings, etc.). You will be required to give an English gloss for each. The vocabulary and the most common paradigms will be quizzed *weekly* on A2L (online quizzes and exams will *not* require typing in Greek). **Weekly quizzes are due by Sunday at 11:59 PM.**

C. “Mangled Language” Discussion, 5%: Participation mark.

- a. Each week, a question (in video form) will be posted in a discussion on A2L. It will deal with a “questionable” interpretation of a biblical text. Students should watch this video and engage on the Mangled Language forum. This is a 5% *participation* mark based on the level of thoughtful engagement; if you participate, you will get the grade (don’t worry about having the “right” answer).

D. Term Test, 15%: Due by June 4.

There will be a test due by June 4.

E. Sermon/Commentary Analysis, 20%: Due on Friday, June 16, by 11:59 PM

Evaluate and critique a sermon, article, or an excerpt of a commentary (which will be provided by the instructors) in terms of the handling of the original Greek language. Students should utilize what they learn in the course of study and identify the common exegetical and linguistic fallacies (which will be covered in language theory lectures).

The entire report should be around 8 pages and must follow the “McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses.” Details will be provided on A2L.

F. Final Exam, 20%: Due by Friday, June 23; (information will be given in class).

V. COURSE SCHEDULE (Note that there are **four** categories of videos, which make up the major content of the course; they are shaded in colours below.)

Wk. of	MANGLED LANGUAGE (ML)	LANGUAGE THEORY (LT)	PRACTICAL GREEK (PL)	GREEK TUTORIAL VIDS	ASGNMNT
May 1	ML 1: Love I		Alphabet, vowels, punctuation; parts of speech; aux. system [PL 1+2]	Alphabet, pronunciation and vowels	
May 8	ML 2: Love II	Theory I: the three functions of language [LT 1]	Nominal System 1: case, gender, number; noun functions [PL 3]	The Greek article	Exercises for PL 1–3 due May 14
May 15	ML 3: δικαιοσύνη	Theory II: theories of language [LT 2]	Nominal System 2/3: 1/2-declension nouns; 1/2 adjectives and adjective structures [PL 4+5]	1/2 declension nouns and adjectives	
May 22	ML 4: Divine Necessity	Theory III: word studies and Greek lexicons [LT 3+4]	Verbal System 1/2: Mood, Tense, Aspect; PL 6-7]	Primary active endings	Exercises for PL 4–7 due May 28
May 29	ML 5: ἐκκλησία	Theory IV: exegetical fallacies [LT 5+6]	Verbal System 3: Voice; Present Active; Future Active; Contract Verbs Personal pronouns (non-vb.) [PL 8-9]	Primary middle/passive endings; secondary active endings	**Term Test due June 4
June 5	ML 6: Mirror Reading	Theory V: Meaning and choice [LT 7]	Verbal System 4: Imperfect; 1 and 2 Aorist Middle; the verb εἶμι ('to be') [PL 10-11]	Secondary middle/passive endings	Exercises for PL 8-11 due Jun 11
June 12	ML 7: Gender Inclusive Language	Theory VI: punctuation and interp. [LT 8]	Verb review and practice; chunking and translating [PL 12]	Chunking the text	Analysis Paper due by June 16
June 19	This final week is a review week to prepare for the exam: exam due June 24				Exercises for PL 12 due Jun 21

VI. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

- a. All thoughtful student participation is welcome. There are no “dumb questions” or “stupid answers.” Students will respect each other’s contributions and respond to one another without ridicule or scorn—even while there may be disagreement.
- b. Students are expected to attend all online classes, be on time for class, and stay for the duration of the class session; the only legitimate reasons to miss class are due to illness or emergency (being late on another assignment does not count as an emergency); please email the instructor to explain if you must miss a class.

VII. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

a. 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](#).

b. 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, you need to respect the integrity of the original expressions of the names of God, but in reference to humans, you will need to follow the language of Bible versions such as the NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), NIV (2011), CEB (2011), etc.

c. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may include 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, etc. Academic dishonesty can result failure of an assignment, 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 at MDC, regardless of previous institutions or habits; please refer to the Divinity College [Statement on Academic Honesty](#).

VIII. DISCLAIMER: This syllabus is the property of the instructor 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, or in unanimous agreement with the students.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.