



MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
SPRING 2024

OT 1B03—GUIDE TO BIBLICAL LANGUAGES: HEBREW 1

INSTRUCTOR:

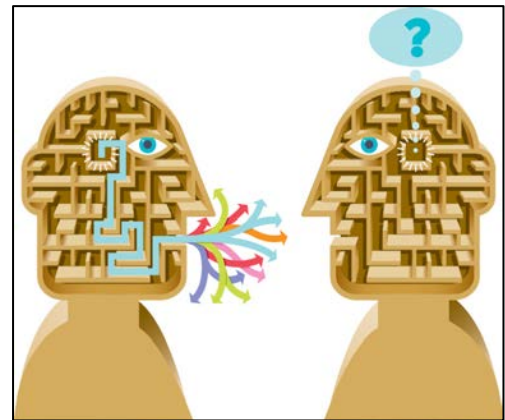
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Online Asynchronous: This course is asynchronous; however, due to the nature of language learning, **optional** weekly online synchronous workshops will be offered using Zoom. Days and times will be arranged to optimize availability to students. There is a course web page on [Avenue to Learn](#) (A2L) that will offer all resources needed to navigate the requirements for the course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 the 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 languages and application to the biblical text.

- 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. Those who want to continue with deeper study may do so.

MODE OF DELIVERY



Synchronous learning is online or distance education that happens in real time, whereas **asynchronous** learning occurs through online channels without real-time interaction. **This course will be asynchronous** online learning. Students must have a basic familiarity with computers to participate, including the ability to navigate Avenue to Learn (A2L) course site and make and upload PDFs of assignments to A2L. **Optional synchronous** workshops will be offered using Zoom. These optional, weekly workshops will be dedicated to answering questions, clarifying concepts, consolidating learning, discussing interpretation, and practicing skills.


Since this is an online course, the question arises about accountability on quizzes and exams. For all quizzes, you are on your honor to not use any notes or tools as you take the quiz. However, the two major exams must be proctored. You need to arrange for someone to proctor your exams. It cannot be a relative or classmate. It must be a person in a position of responsibility. For example, you can ask someone with official capacity at your church, such as a church administrative assistant or your small group leader. Your choice needs the instructor's approval. Prior to the exam date, the instructor will email the exam to the proctor, who needs to print out the exam from a PDF file, supervise you taking the exam, then scan it back to the instructor.

Students are also encouraged to meet with the instructors (by appointment either in person or on Zoom) to discuss any questions raised in the forum and/or the assignments. Students should expect to commit at least 5–6 hours per week on the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

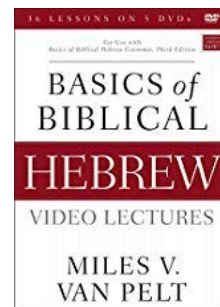
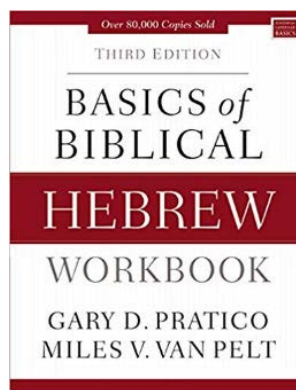
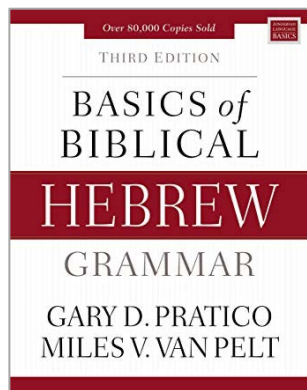


-  Knowing
 - To identify major noun and verb grammatical categories in Hebrew
 - To understand how language makes meaning
 - To recognize the functions of language (interpersonal, experiential, and textual)
 - To critique word study methodology
 - To recognize some key vocabulary in biblical Hebrew
 - To recognize and reproduce elementary grammatical forms/paradigms in Hebrew
-  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)

2. To be a mature interpreter of Scripture as taught by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:6–16)
 3. While unmeasurable in the context of this course, to allow the Scripture to motivate, form, and transform our faith, worship, and Christian way of life
- c.  Doing
1. To describe the functions of the basic grammatical forms in Hebrew and use them in interpretation
 2. To begin to read and translate Hebrew texts
 3. To interpret the biblical text meaningfully without committing common mistakes

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Texts and Resources



1. Grammar (required)

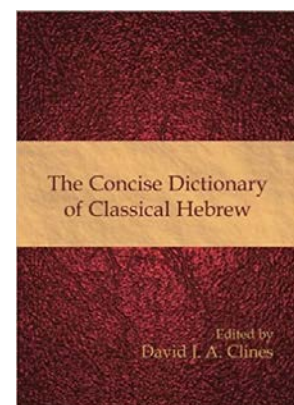
Pratico, Gary D., and Miles Van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Workbook*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. ISBN: 978-0310533498

2. Workbook (required)

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

3. Lexicon (required)

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



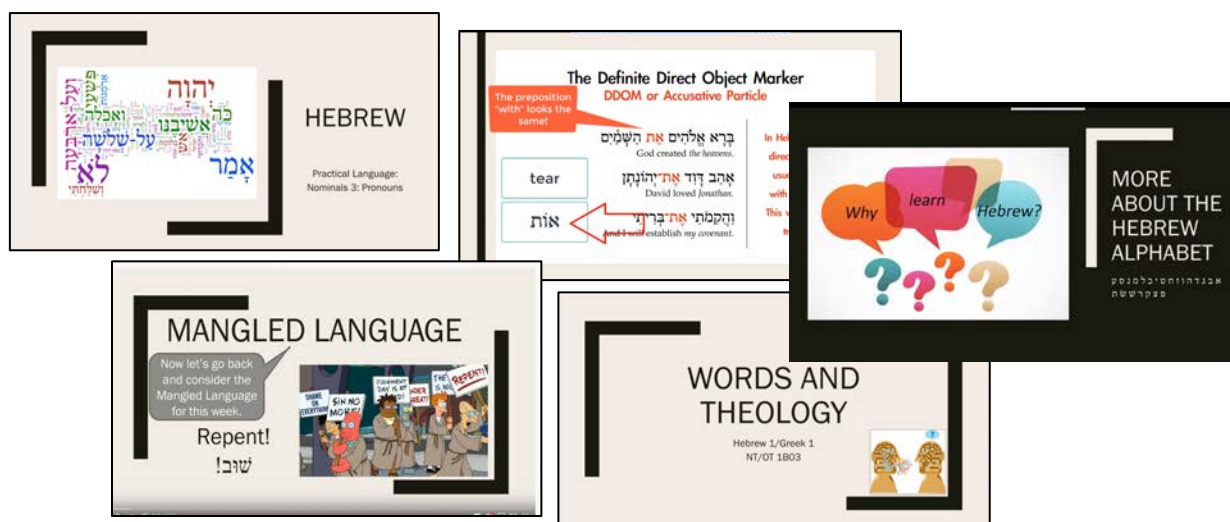
4. BBH Video Lectures (**OPTIONAL**)¹

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=76IyeFx9jXs>. 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.



6. Bible Software (optional)

I will present some good Bible software options for free download or purchase, as well as discuss responsible use of these very helpful tools. But I ask that you *not* use any Bible software during most of the first semester of study.

Textbook Purchase: 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. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

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 a download from <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/bbh>. For the download options there is “instant delivery.” They may also be available from other sources, such as Christianbook, LLC.

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.

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 to pronounce Hebrew.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Workbook Exercises	30%
Vocabulary Quizzes	30%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	30%
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.

Workbook Exercises 30%. Due as detailed below. Relate to Outcomes a.1, 5-6; c.1, 2.

Students will complete weekly exercises from the BBH Workbook that involve the use of material covered in the BBH Text/Videos. 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. **Students are required to complete at least the alternate questions in each section (1, 3, 5, etc. or a, c, e etc.).** Many students choose to do more for extra practice. These exercises will be collected and graded on four different dates. Students will memorize only the 3 most frequent paradigms. More details will be posted on A2L.

Vocabulary 30%. Due as detailed below. Relates to Outcomes a.5; c. 2.

You will be responsible for learning roughly 250 common words in Hebrew. You will be required to

give an English gloss for each. The vocabulary will be taken from the BBH 3rd edition materials and quizzed online regularly on A2L.

Midterm Exam: Hebrew 10%. Due by Jun 2. Relates to Outcomes a.1-6; b.1-2; c.1-3.

There will be a test on chapters 1 to 11. This will be conducted with the assistance of a proctor. More information will be given on A2L.

Final Exam 30%. Due by Jul 3 at noon. Relates to Outcomes a.1-6; b.1-2; c.1-3.

Information will be given in class.

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.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

- 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 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 professor 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 professor after class.
- Students are also expected to stay for the entire class session.

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, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

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.

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.

Highly Recommended for Online (Asynchronous) Courses

– Presence and Meaningful Participation

Presence and participation in this course are expected. Faculty know from many years of experience that a student's level of presence and participation in the course will impact how well she or he will score in the course. Although there are exceptions to this rule of thumb, low levels of presence and participation tend to translate to low grades; mediocre presence and participation tend to translate to mediocre grades; and high levels of presence and participation tend to translate to higher grades. A word needs to be said about what constitutes "presence" (attendance) and "participation" in an asynchronous course. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities to meet the expected level of attendance and meaningful participation. Be aware that merely logging into the online class is not, by itself, sufficient as a demonstration of attendance and participation by the student. "Academically related activities" certainly includes participation in and completion of the course requirements that are described below. Additionally, just as students are expected to engage with the course content/materials throughout the week outside of the learning management system (A2L), so also students are expected to engage one another in formative dialogue "outside of class." This is an important part of belonging to and maintaining a community of learning and is a staple ingredient in what constitutes "presence."

– Online Etiquette

It is critical in any MDC class that students show respect for classmates and the instructor. This is even truer in the online environment because many of the non-verbal cues that we use to interpret what a person is communicating to us are not present online (except, perhaps in video posts). Therefore, it is especially critical that we be mindful of how our words will be interpreted by those who are reading them. As the instructor of the course, it is my responsibility to monitor communications to ensure that all students feel comfortable expressing their views in a respectful manner. Most if not all courses at MDC are devoted to the interpretation of Scripture. Invariably there will be disagreements; these disagreements must be discussed and negotiated in a respectful manner. This applies to individual and group communications involving the instructor and the others enrolled in the course. The instructor will expect that you will give some thought to your postings. Excessive postings are also frowned upon

because these amount to dominating the discussion. Please limit your postings to less than 200 words. Instructors reserve the right to ask students to take a step back to allow others discussion time if she or he feels that an individual is dominating the discussion. In your responses, please try to be clear which point your response refers to. Students who violate these guidelines may be dismissed from class.

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Hebrew Lessons	Workbook	Quiz / Exam	Language Theory
1	May 1–5	BBH 1–2	BBH 1–2	Quiz 1 - Aleph-bet, Vowel, and BBH 2 Vocab	Theory 1: Functions of Language
2	May 6–12	BBH 3–4	BBH 3–4	Quiz 2 – BBH 3–4 Vocab	Theory 2: Words and Theology
3	May 13–19	BBH 5–6	BBH 5–6	Quiz 3 – BBH 5–6 Vocab	Theory 3: Form and Function; Syntax and Semantics
4	May 20–26	BBH 7–9	BBH 7–9	Quiz 4 – BBH 7–9 Vocab	Theory 4: Lexicons for Hebrew and Word Studies
5	May 27–Jun 2	BBH 10–11	BBH 10–11	Midterm Exam thru BBH 11 due by Jun 2	Midterm Exam
6	Jun 3–9	BBH 12–13	BBH 12–13	Quiz 5 – BBH 10–13 Vocab	Theory 5: Exegetical Fallacies
7	Jun 10–16	BBH 14–15	BBH 14–15	Quiz 6 – BBH 14–15 Vocab	Theory 6: Discourse
8	Jun 17–21	BBH 16	BBH 16	Final Exam thru BBH 16 due by Jul 3	Theory 7: Literalism & Relevance Theory