



McMaster Divinity College
Course Syllabus

NT 3P1071
Greek I
A Guide to Biblical Languages
Spring 2025

Online Asynchronous: May 5–June 27

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

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00–12:00

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.

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 without 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!).

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 someone who allows scripture to motivate, form, and transform your faith, worship, and Christian way of life
- Be a mature interpreter of scripture as taught by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:6–16)



Doing

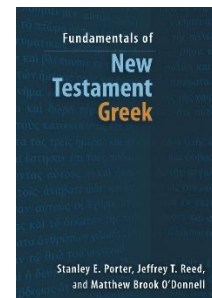
- Be able to describe how choices in language affect the meaning of the biblical text
- Be able to describe the functions of the basic grammatical forms in Greek and use them in interpretation
- Be able to communicate the biblical text meaningfully without committing common mistakes

TEXTBOOKS 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.

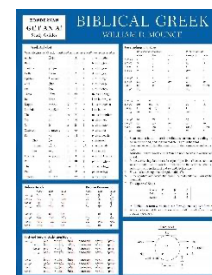
1. **Reference Grammar:** Porter, Stanley E., Jeffrey T. Reed, and Matthew Brook O’Donnell. *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010.

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



2. **Greek Summary:** 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. **Online Greek Source:** Tyndale House: Scripture Tools for Every Person (STEP): available free from stepbible.org. Supplemental handouts will also be provided.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **Additional Resources: (these may be helpful for your own prep and understanding)**

Lamerson, Samuel. *English Grammar to Ace New Testament Greek*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

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

Textbook Purchase: All required and recommended books 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.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Note: All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate Assignment Box on A2L in **PDF Format**.

- A. Practice Exercises, 20%:** 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. Mid Term Exam, 20%:** Due by Friday, **June 6**.
- D. Sermon/Commentary Analysis, 20%:** Due on Friday, **June 20**, 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.
- E. Final Exam, 30%:** Due by Friday, **June 27**; (information will be given in class).
- F. Bonus Activity: 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!

*** Proctor for Tests and Exams:** Each exam will be administered to the student to complete within an allotted time. Exams will be proctored. The student must choose someone to proctor the exam, and this person must be approved by the instructors and Registrar of McMaster Divinity College. Examples of approved proctors are faculty or staff of any accredited seminary, university, or college, or a pastor or staff member of a local church. Alternatively, we can find one or two common timeslots for all students and the instructor will be proctoring the test/exam. A sign-up sheet will be posted 10 days before the test/exam for students to indicate their availability. If a student needs special accommodation due to unforeseeable circumstances, please email the instructor for further details on arranging the exams.

Weekly Exercises (practicing the grammar)	20%
Vocabulary Quizzes	10%
Sermon or Commentary Analysis Paper	20%
Mid Term	20%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Week of	Mangled Language (ML)	Language Theory (LT)	Practical Language (PL)	Paradigm	Exercise/Quiz
1	May 5–9	Love I [ML 1]	Introduction and Syllabus	Alphabet and Pronunciation [PL 1] Parts of Speech and the Auxiliary System [PL 2]	Alphabet, pronunciation and vowels	Quiz 1 due May 11
2	May 12–16	Love II [ML 2]	Functions of language [LT 1]	Nominal System 1 – Nominal Features and the Greek Article [PL 3]	The Greek article	Exercises for PL 1–3 due May 16 Quiz 2–3 due May 18
3	May 19–23	Δικαιοσύνη [ML 3]	Theories of language [LT 2]	Nominal Systems 2 – Noun and Pronouns [PL 4] Nominal Systems 3 – Greek Adjectives [PL 5]	1/2 declension nouns and adjectives	Quiz 4–5 due May 25
4	May 26–30	Divine Necessity [ML 4]	Words and Theology [LT 3] Greek Lexicons and Lexicography [LT 4]	Review and Introduction to Verbs [PL 6] Verbal System 1 – Verbal Categories I [PL 7]	Verbal system	Exercises for PL 4–7 due May 30 Quiz 6–7 due June 1

5	June 2–6	Church and ἐκκλησία [ML 5]	Exegetical Fallacies [LT 5, 6]	Verbal System 2 – Verbal Categories II [PL 8] Primary Endings [PL 9]	Primary active endings	**Mid Term Exam due June 6 Quiz 8–9 due June 8
6	June 9–13	Mirror Reading [ML 6]	Meaning and choice [LT 7]	Verbal System 4 – Primary M/P and Secondary Active Endings [PL 10] Verbal System 5 – Imperfect and Secondary M/P Endings [PL 11]	Primary middle/passive endings; secondary active endings	Exercises for PL 8-11 due June 13 Quiz 10–11 due June 15
7	June 16–20	Gender Inclusive Language [ML 7] Word Study [ML 8]	punctuation and interp. [LT 8]	Verb review and practice; chunking and translating [PL 12]	Secondary middle/passive endings	Analysis Paper due by June 20 Quiz 12 due June 22
8	June 23–27	This final week is a review week to prepare for the exam: exam due June 27				Exercises for PL 12 due June 29

POLICY STATEMENTS FOR MDC

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you “tidy up” your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one’s own as if it is one’s own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

1. 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](#).

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

5. 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.”

6. 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.

7. Late Submission Policy

All assignments must be submitted on or before the due date unless other arrangements are made in advance. A late penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all assignments submitted after the deadline unless an extension has been obtained from the instructor prior to the deadline. Assignments cannot be submitted after **June 29, 2025** without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (mdcreg@mcmaster.ca).

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.