

**Hebrew 103/303: Biblical Hebrew, First Semester**  
**Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies**  
**University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
**Fall 2009**

**Class:** MW 2:30-3:45 (SOC SCI 6112), F 2:25-3:15 (VH 144)

**Instructor:** Eric Tully

**Office:** 1336 Van Hise Hall

**Office Hours:** MW 12:30-1:10 or by appointment

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Welcome to Biblical Hebrew! The purpose of this course is to acquire a basic knowledge of Biblical Hebrew in order to read prose texts. Biblical Hebrew is the ancient Semitic language in which (most of) the Old Testament/Tanakh was written. Other texts written in ancient Hebrew are found in several hundred inscriptions, letters, and administrative documents discovered by archaeologists, as well as in the Dead Sea scrolls. Biblical Hebrew was used in ancient Israel from about 1000 B.C.E. to roughly the destruction of the second Jewish temple in 70 C.E.

This year (including the spring semester) we have four general learning goals:

- ❖ to *read* Hebrew narrative by sight.
- ❖ to see the *literary importance* of reading the Bible *in Hebrew*, not just in translation.
- ❖ to become a *skilled* language learner.
- ❖ to *enjoy* reading Hebrew.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1) **Attendance** is crucial for your success in this class. You are expected to come to class with all the assigned work completed and ready for active participation. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student and to be prepared for the next class session. Late arrivals and early departures are unacceptable.

2) Every Monday we will go over a new lesson from the textbook. As part of your preparation for class you must **read over the new lesson before class**. Even if you don't understand everything in it, our class time will be more productive if you have read through the material beforehand. You should be prepared to read the Hebrew examples aloud.

3) **Homework exercises** from the textbook will be assigned for each class period. We will go over these assignments at the beginning of the next class period. Completing these assignments will be worth 15% of your grade. **DO NOT LOSE POINTS HERE**. Late assignments will not be accepted, except by special permission in case of emergencies. I will drop the two lowest assignments at the end of the semester.

4) Every Monday (or the first class of the week) we will begin class with a brief 10 minute **quiz** focused on material covered the previous week. Because this is a language class, *every* quiz is cumulative (especially the vocabulary). The quiz will start at the beginning of the class, so do not be late. There will be no make-up quizzes (except at my discretion), but your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

5) We will have a **mid-term** (Fri, Oct 16) and a **final exam** (Wed, Dec 23, 10:05 a.m.) Both exams will be cumulative. The midterm and final exams must be taken at the scheduled times, except in cases of emergency.

6) **Oral recitation:** It is important that you gain the ability early on in your study of Biblical Hebrew to not only understand the grammar of the language and translate, but also to read Hebrew aloud fluently. To accomplish this you will prepare a text—**either Numbers 6:22-27 or Deuteronomy 6:4-9**—and

read it for me during office hours (or by appointment). This assignment is due by **Fri, Dec 4** (you may complete the assignment earlier in the semester).

**A NOTE ON VOCABULARY AND MEMORIZATION:**

The vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible includes roughly 10,000 words. During the fall and spring we will memorize almost all the words that occur 50 times or more in the Hebrew Bible (~739 words). With each new lesson, one of the first things you should do is **make vocabulary flash cards**. You should also make cards for relevant grammatical forms, as discussed in class. You can buy blank flashcards of various shapes and sizes at the UW Bookstore.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION:**

Classes will follow a consistent pattern. First, we will go over the assigned exercises. You should be prepared to read the Hebrew exercises fluently and translate from the Hebrew (not just reading your English translation!). I don't expect you to necessarily have all the right answers, but I do expect that you have given it a good-faith effort. If you cannot figure something out, try and identify exactly what's causing your confusion. We will not always have time to go over every exercise in class, so tell me which ones would be most helpful for us to go over together. Second, we will go over any new material (you should have read the new lesson before class). Third, we will review old material from previous weeks.

**COMMUNICATION:**

1) I have set up a course email list for our use. The address is: **hebrst103-1-f09@lists.wisc.edu** Please feel free to use this list to communicate with your fellow students, arrange study groups, ask questions, or do anything else related to Biblical Hebrew.

2) I will occasionally post files for download on the Learn@UW website (**<http://learnuw.wisc.edu>**).

**GRADING:** (approximate %)

Daily Assignments: 15%

Quizzes: 25%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Oral Reading: 10%

Extra Credit (Equivalent to 1 Daily Assignment)

Grading Scale:

A 93-100 (Outstanding)

AB 89-92 (Exceptional)

B 82-88 (Good)

BC 79-81 (Fair)

C 70-78 (Adequate)

D 60-69 (Marginal)

F 0-59 (Failing)

**EXTRA CREDIT**

Attend a Center for Jewish Studies Lecture and write a short assignment. One option is:

Leo G. Perdue, "The Mantic Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East";

November 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.; Grainger Hall. Room TBA.

Compose a short lecture interaction assignment of one typed page, due in class (one week after lecture).

(1) Summarize the main point of the lecture.

(2) Write at least one paragraph reacting to the lecture, for example, with a question, a critical comment, or your personal response..

**TEXTBOOKS:**

Cook, John A., and Robert D. Holmstedt. 2005. *Ancient Hebrew: A Student Grammar*. Unpublished.

**You can get this in two ways:**

Pick up at Student Print (Memorial Union) [around \$15]

The PDF file is posted at Learn@UW – print your own copy (it is 243 pages).

Recommended: Long, Gary A. *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew: Learning Biblical Hebrew Grammatical Concepts through English Grammar*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002.

[College Library Reserves: PJ 4567.3 L66 2002]

Day	Date	Lesson	Topic	Exercises (TBA)
Wed	Sept 2	#1	Alphabet (Consonants)	
Fri	4	#2	Syllables, Dots, Dashes, and Vowels	
Mon	7		<b>NO CLASS: Labor Day</b>	
Wed	9	#3	QUIZ #1; Article; Inseparable Prepositions; Conjunction	
Fri	11			
Mon	14	#4	QUIZ #2; Singular Nouns; Qal Perfect; Objects	
Wed	16			
Fri	18		<b>NO CLASS: Erev Rosh Hashana</b>	
Mon	21	#5	QUIZ #3; Plural/Dual Nouns; Qal Perfect היה	
Wed	23			
Fri	25			
Mon	28		<b>NO CLASS: Yom Kippur</b>	
Wed	30	#6	QUIZ #4; Constructs; Irregular nouns	
Fri	Oct 2			
Mon	5	#7	QUIZ #5; Pronouns; segolate nouns; modal perfect	
Wed	7			
Fri	9			
Mon	12	#8	QUIZ #6; Qal Imperfect; Past Narrative; יהיה; ויהי	
Wed	14			
Fri	16		<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
Mon	19	#9	NO QUIZ; Adjectives; Demonstratives; Numerals	
Wed	21			
Fri	23			
Mon	26	#10	QUIZ #7; Personal Pronouns; Qal Participle	
Wed	28			
Fri	30			
Mon	Nov 2	#11	QUIZ #8; Intro to <i>Binyanim</i> : Piel, Hifil	
Wed	4			
Fri	6			
Mon	9	#12	QUIZ #9; Piel, Hifil: Imperfect, Past, Participle	
Wed	11			
Fri	13			
Mon	16	#13	QUIZ #10; Jussives, Imperatives	
Wed	18			
Fri	20		<b>NO CLASS: Away at conference</b>	
Mon	23	#14	QUIZ #11; Infinitive construct/absolute	
Wed	25			
Fri	28		<b>NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break</b>	
Mon	30	#15	QUIZ #12; Passive-Reflexive <i>Binyanim</i>	
Wed	Dec 2			
Fri	4		<b>ORAL RECITATION DUE</b>	
Mon	7	Review	QUIZ #13	
Wed	9			
Fri	11			
Mon	14	Review		
Wed	23		<b>FINAL EXAM (10:05 A.M. -12:05 P.M.)</b>	