

Hebrew 103/303: Biblical Hebrew, First Semester
Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Fall 2007

Class: MW 2:30-3:45 (VH 478), F 2:25-3:15 (VH 119)
Instructor: Jim Kirk
Office: 1336 Van Hise Hall
Office Hours: F 3:15-4:30 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 easier prose and poetic 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 famous Dead Sea scrolls. Biblical Hebrew was used in ancient Israel, in speech or writing, from about 1200 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) to roughly the destruction of the second Jewish temple in 70 C.E. (Common Era).

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

- ✓ to *read* Hebrew narrative by sight come May.
- ✓ to see the *literary importance* of reading the Bible *in Hebrew*, not just in translation.
- ✓ to learn to be a *skilled and strategic* language learner.
- ✓ to *enjoy* reading Hebrew (so much that you spend your summer reading Hebrew for fun!).

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.

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 and I will collect them. Simply handing in these assignments will be worth 15% of your grade. **DO NOT LOSE POINTS HERE**. These assignments cannot be handed in outside of class, except by special permission.

4) Every Monday we will begin class with a brief 10 minute **quiz** focused on material covered the previous week. However, since this is a language class you may consider *every* quiz cumulative (especially when it comes to vocabulary). No surprises at all on the quizzes. Just know everything! The quiz will start at the beginning of the hour, so please 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** (???) and a **final exam** (Wed., Dec. 19 at 12:25 P.M.). Both exams will be cumulative.

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 encourage you in this you must prepare a text—*either Numbers 6:22-27 or Deuteronomy 6:4-9*—and read it for me during office hours (or by appointment). You do not have to memorize the passage (but I recommend it). This is due by **November 30** (feel free to complete the assignment earlier in the semester).

A NOTE ON VOCABULARY AND MEMORIZATION:

The vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible includes roughly 10,000 words. This fall and spring we will memorize almost all the words that occur 50 times or more in the Hebrew Bible (~739 words). There are no short-cuts to memorization and very few people can cram 100 new words into their brain an hour before a test. Therefore it's important that you keep up with vocabulary. With each new lesson, one of the first things you should do is sit down and **make vocabulary flash cards**. Then carry that stack of cards around with you everywhere you go and whenever you have a free moment go through them. You should do the same thing with anything else that needs to be memorized (I will let you know). You can buy blank flashcards of various shapes and sizes at the UW Bookstore.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND PREPARATION:

Classes will follow a simple pattern. First, we will go over the previous day's assignment. You should be prepared to read the Hebrew exercises fluidly 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 are stuck, 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.

COMMUNICATION:

1) I have set up a course email list for our use. The address is: hebrst103-1-f07@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 post files for download on the Learn@UW website (<http://learnuw.wisc.edu>).

<u>GRADING:</u> (approximate %)	Grading Scale:	A	93-100 (Outstanding)
Daily Assignments: 15%		AB	89-92 (Exceptional)
Quizzes: 25%		B	82-88 (Good)
Midterm Exam: 25%		BC	79-81
Final Exam: 25%		C	70-78 (Adequate)
Oral Reading: 10%		D	60-69 (Marginal)
		F	0-59 (Inadequate)

TEXTBOOKS:

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

Pick up at Student Print in Memorial Union [\$20.65]

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 5	#1	Alphabet (Consonants)	1-8
Fri	7	#2	Syllables, Dots, Dashes, and Vowels	1-5
Mon	10		QUIZ #1	6-10
Wed	12	#3	Article; Inseparable Prepositions; Conjunction	
Fri	14			
Mon	17	#4	QUIZ #2; Singular Nouns; Qal Perfect; Objects	
Wed	19			
Fri	21			
Mon	24	#5	QUIZ #3; Plural/Dual Nouns; Qal Perfect; היה	
Wed	26			
Fri	28			
Mon	Oct 1	#6	QUIZ #4; Constructs; Irregular nouns	
Wed	3			
Fri	5			
Mon	8	#7	QUIZ #5; Pronouns; segolate nouns; modal perfect	
Wed	10			
Fri	12			
Mon	15	#8	QUIZ #6; Qal Imperfect; Past Narrative; ויהי; יהיה	
Wed	17			
Fri	19		MIDTERM EXAM	
Mon	22	#9	NO QUIZ; Adjectives; Demonstratives; Numerals	
Wed	24			
Fri	26			
Mon	29	#10	QUIZ #7; Personal Pronouns; Qal Participle	
Wed	31			
Fri	Nov 2			
Mon	5	#11	QUIZ #8; Intro to <i>Binyanim</i> : Piel, Hifil	
Wed	7			
Fri	9			
Mon	12	#12	QUIZ #9; Piel, Hifil: Imperfect, Past, Participle	
Wed	14			
Fri	16			
Mon	19	#13	QUIZ #10; Jussives, Imperatives	
Wed	21			
Fri	23		NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)	
Mon	26	#14	QUIZ #11; Infinitive construct/absolute	
Wed	28			
Fri	30		ORAL RECITATION DUE	
Mon	Dec 3	#15	QUIZ #12; Passive-Reflexive <i>Binyanim</i>	
Wed	5			
Fri	7			
Mon	10		QUIZ #13	
Wed	12			
Fri	14			
Wed	19		FINAL EXAM (12:25 P.M.)	