I. Course Objectives

The primary objective of this course (OL 501 and 502) is to equip students with a knowledge of basic Hebrew grammar and vocabulary in order that they can continue their Hebrew studies in the seminary’s sequence of original language exegesis classes in Old Testament study. Students who complete both semesters of Beginning Hebrew will be able to read most prose passages of the Hebrew Bible with the use of a standard lexicon. In fact, the final examination for OL 502 will consist, in part, of several prose texts for translation with parsing and grammatical identification in context. While many poetical passages will be read with relative ease after having completed Beginning Hebrew, a considerable amount of poetry in the Hebrew Bible requires an intermediate facility with the language. The later exegesis classes will equip students with an intermediate level of proficiency with Hebrew grammar and a more advanced capability with the vocabulary of the language.

Toward the end of the second semester, students will be provided with the details of a modest program of study beyond seminary that will keep their Hebrew language skills alive and growing in the context of ministry. By the time you leave Gordon-Conwell, it should be crystal clear that it does make a profound difference to have access to the Old Testament Scriptures in the original language(s). Throughout OL 501 and 502, daily assignments will include the requirement that you read the “exegetical insight” at the end of each chapter of the course textbook Basics of Biblical Hebrew. These insights have been written by students, pastors, youth workers, professors and others with a view to demonstrating how your knowledge and appreciation of God’s Word and your ability to communicate biblical truth will be immeasurably
enhanced when you can read and study the Old Testament in the original language.

Gordon-Conwell has a strong commitment to the biblical languages and to the role of original language exegesis in the training of men and women for ministry. The level of the seminary’s commitment is readily apparent in our mission and vision statements; in our advertising and promotional materials; in every class across the divisional structure of faculty instruction and the list could go on and on. Gordon-Conwell is inviolably committed to the authority, relevancy and sufficiency of God’s Word. One of your first assignments in this class will be to read the excellent article by one of our graduates, Jason DeRouchie, “The Profit of Employing the Biblical Languages: Scriptural and Historical Reflections” in the journal Themelios 37.1 (2012) pp. 32-50. As you prepare for this year-long course of study, read it as one of your times of devotion. Though the study of Hebrew will require time, energy, discipline and some sacrifice, you are developing a tool for ministry that will last a lifetime.

Let me make just a few more observations on course objectives. The core textbook will be Basics of Biblical Hebrew by Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt. This title actually consists of two volumes: a grammar and an accompanying workbook. Both the grammar and the workbook will be required in each of the three Fall Hebrew classes (Donna Petter, Andrew Walton and Gary Pratico). It is essential that you acquire the second edition of both the grammar and the workbook. We will complete chapters 1-22 during the Fall semester and chapters 23-35 by the end of the spring semester. It is important to note that each of the Fall semester Hebrew classes will complete chapters 1-22 by the end of the Fall semester. The classes may not move at precisely the same pace through the semester but each of them will complete the first twenty-two chapters of the grammar by the end of the term.

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Please note that we can only realize this course objective if students come to class at the beginning of the Fall semester (Tuesday, September 9th) having mastered the content of the first two chapters of Basics of Biblical Hebrew. This special assignment is being required in each of the
Fall Hebrew sections. To state it differently, on Tuesday (9 September) which is our first class of the Fall semester, we will begin working on BBH Chapter 3 (Syllabification and Pronunciation). When you sit down for our first class, you will already have completed and mastered the content of the first two chapters (Alphabet and Vowels). This “pre course” requirement will be detailed below and can only be completed by accessing Sakai. This is not a recommended assignment; it is required. Without mastery of the alphabet and the full range of Hebrew vowels, the study of syllabification and pronunciation (chapter 3) will be impossible. Please be intentional, serious and deliberate about completing this “pre-course” requirement. It is not an exaggeration to say that your success in OL 501 may depend on it.

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And finally, throughout both semesters, there will be an emphasis on the pronunciation of Hebrew, translation proficiency, the acquisition of a frequency vocabulary and the identification of grammatical forms (verbal and non-verbal). For most of the Fall semester, vocabulary memorization and testing will be both Hebrew to English and English to Hebrew. Paradigm memorization will be required for selected verbal and non-verbal forms (to be detailed later).

II. Required Textbooks for OL 501 and 502


III. Additional Helps (not required)

Four more Zondervan titles from Pratico and Van Pelt have proven helpful to students: Old Testament Hebrew Vocabulary Cards; The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew; Charts of Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew Study Guide (part of Zondervan's Get an A! Study Guides)

M. Van Pelt, Basics of Biblical Hebrew Video Lectures: A Complete Course for the Beginner. A similar resource is the Classic Semlink Hebrew course by Pratico, which also contains lectures on each of the chapters of Basics of Biblical Hebrew. This is available through the Semlink office (Semlink.office@gcts.edu).

For a variety of helps in the study of Hebrew, students are encouraged to access our primary website (www.basicsofbiblicalhebrew.com) as well as the website developed by J. Beckman, a former GCTS student, (www.hebrewsyntax.org/bbh2 (user name and password both bbh2).

In time, students will want to purchase the standard critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. ISBN 3-438-05218-0.

IV. Course Logistics and Requirements (for both OL 501 and 502)

Regular class attendance is required. Please give attention to the language. Regular class attendance is required; not recommended but required. It is understood that there may be occasions and circumstances in which it will be necessary for a student to miss a class. It must be emphasized, however, that this should happen only rarely in each semester, apart from circumstances like an illness, family emergency, the birth of a child or the like. If possible, please tell me when it is necessary to miss a class and we can talk about how to access the day’s lecture and homework assignments. Failure to attend each class (in its entirety) may impact your course grade.

The key to learning this language is consistency and thoroughness in the preparation of daily assignments. The expectation, therefore, is that students will be prepared to go over homework assignments in class
with some measure of mastery. Perfection is not required but students should be able to demonstrate that a good faith effort has been attempted. Daily recitations will not be graded but frequent unpreparedness or consistently poor classroom performance will impact your final course grade.

Related to attendance is the matter of timely arrival for class. Please make every effort to arrive on time. This is not an issue that will impact your course grade but late arrival will likely impact your understanding of assignments, quiz instructions or even the time you have to complete a quiz. Of greater significance, however, is my conviction that opening prayer is an important part of our time together. If you do arrive late for class and heads are bowed, please join us only when you hear, “Amen.”

Weekly quizzes will constitute 40% of the course grade; 40% will be based on the average of two major semester exams; and the remaining 20% of the course grade will be based on the final examination that will be given during the final exam period at the end of the semester.

In order for a student to continue from Fall semester Hebrew (OL 501) to Spring semester (OL 502), the final exam grade for the Fall class must be C or above. In the event that a student does not achieve a C or above on the Fall final, a one-time make-up final exam will be offered within two weeks of the conclusion of the Fall semester.

There is a similar requirement for Spring semester Hebrew (OL 502). The Spring semester final must receive a grade of C or above in order for a student to pass OL 502. The Spring semester class has the same one-time make-up policy as Fall semester Hebrew. Only one make-up opportunity will be offered each semester.

In terms of homework time, the expectation is that students will study three hours outside of class for each hour in class. Few spend less; many spend a little more. I strongly urge students to come for a conversation if your study time is significantly more than three hours outside of class for every hour in class. Study of the biblical languages is a demanding but an altogether rewarding endeavor. Language study takes time, commitment, discipline and perseverance. Carefully consider your academic, work, church and family responsibilities when you decide to
take Hebrew (or Greek for that matter). For the study of the biblical languages, you must anticipate having the time to give three hours of study for every hour in class.

Penultimately, I wish to detail the make-up quiz policy. If you miss a quiz during either semester – you will have the opportunity to take a make-up at the end of the term. That is to say that missed quizzes are not “made up” during the semester. During the final week of classes, students who have missed a quiz will take a make-up. The make-up quiz will cover the semester's material and not just the material that was covered on the missed quiz. It is, therefore, significantly to your advantage not to miss a quiz. It is obviously easier, for example, to take a quiz which covers chapters 13-16 in BBH rather than one that covers chapters 1-22. Note that this policy does not apply to the two major semester exams. Make-ups for these two exams will be given within the semester.

And lastly, in the calculation of the course grade, I will drop the lowest weekly quiz grade. This does not apply to the two semester exams but only to the weekly quizzes.

V. Office Hours and Tutoring

The details of my office hours and the availability of special tutoring (three hours each week) by the Hebrew Language Program tutor (Eric Lundeen) will be announced on the first day of class. You may contact Eric at elundeen@gcts.edu or through campus mail (362A). For any student who wishes to have private tutoring, I am happy to provide the names of tutors who have been approved by the director of the Hebrew Language Program. My office hours will be announced on the first day of class.

VI. Course Schedule and Daily Assignments for OL 501

Please note the following:
   1. The assignments detailed for each day and date are due on the day and date indicated.
2. This assignment schedule also contains the course quiz and exam schedule with the specifics of each quiz. The date and time of the final examination will be announced.

3. Be certain that you understand the quiz and exam make-up policy for both semesters and, equally important, be certain that you understand what constitutes a passing grade on the OL 501 and OL 502 final exams. All of this information is detailed above.

4. All formal vocabulary sections in each chapter of BBH are required on the date that the chapter’s grammar content and exercises are due.

5. All exercises are to be found in the BBH workbook.

6. Carefully review every graded quiz or exam and be certain that you understand and correct mistakes. I will explain the “sigla” of my grading system and the grading scale on the first day of class.

Pre-course assignment (to be completed before Tuesday, 9 September)
Read the course syllabus carefully.
In the BBH grammar, read chapter 1 thoroughly (The Alphabet/Sections 1.1-1.12).
In the BBH workbook, do all of the exercises on pp. 1-4. When you come to class on Tuesday, 9 September, you should be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet (including final forms); to write and pronounce every letter; to know which letters are the so-called begadkephat consonants; which consonants are gutturals; and to know which ones are easily confused. You will not be responsible for transliteration. Just understand the basic concept.

Read chapter 2 (The Vowels/Sections 2.1-2.16)
Do the exercises on p. 7 only, though I would also suggest that you try to pronounce the proper names on pp. 8-9. In this chapter, you should be able to recognize every vowel and be able to give its name, class (a, e, i, o, u) and quality (short, changeable long, unchangeable long etc.); to know which ones are the so-called vowel letters; to know what is meant by the term “defective writing” and which vowels are involved; to know what is the difference between silent shewa and vocal shewa; and to know the difference between daghesh forte and daghesh lene. Be patient. Some of this material will take time.
To complete this pre-course assignment, you will need to access the materials on these two chapters in Sakai. It will also be helpful to consult the following: www.basicsofbiblicalhebrew.com and www.hebrewsyntax.org/bbh2. Full lectures and numerous helps on these two chapters are provided in these and other resources referred to above.

Now you are ready to come to class on Tuesday, 9 September.

Tuesday (9 September)
Course Introduction
Review of the Hebrew alphabet (chapter 1) and vowels (chapter 2)
Go over the exercises of both chapters. This was the pre-course assignment detailed above.
Introduction to Chapter 3 (Syllabification and Pronunciation/Sections 3.1-3.14). Please note that the first formal vocabulary assignment appears in section 3.12. You are responsible for this vocabulary on Thursday (Hebrew to English and English to Hebrew).
Detailing the content of the first quiz on Thursday

Thursday (11 September)
Quiz: Consonant and vowel identification; identification of daghesh (as lene or forte) and shewa (as silent or vocal); vocabulary of 3.12 and beginning syllabification
Review of Chapter 3 (Syllabification and Pronunciation/Sections 3.1-3.14)
Exercises: pp. 11-13 (all exercises); give special attention to the exercises on p. 13 because the identification of daghesh (as lene or forte) and shewa (as vocal or silent) will be a significant topic throughout the course.
Introduction to Chapter 4 (Hebrew Nouns/Sections 4.1-4.12)

Tuesday (16 September)
Completion of syllabification
Chapter 4 (Hebrew Nouns/Sections 4.1-4.12)
Exercises: do all exercises on pp. 15-19 but the most important will be
those in Advanced Exercise, part 1 (excluding numbers 15 and 17) and in the Advanced Exercise, part 2 (1-6). Please note that several upcoming quizzes will require the pluralization of nouns in Hebrew. You will be given the singular noun in Hebrew and you will produce the plural form in Hebrew according to the rules in 4.8. Give careful attention to this important section in 4.8, especially the irregular plurals in 4.8.5.

Introduction to Chapter 5 (Definite Article and Conjunction Waw/Sections 5.1-5.11)
Introduction to Chapter 6 (Hebrew Prepositions/Sections 6.1-6.11)

Thursday (18 September)
Quiz: Syllabification; identification of daghesh (as forte or lene) and shewa (as silent or vocal); noun pluralization; vocabulary of chapters 3-4
Exercises in Chapter 5: all exercises on pp. 21-22 and only 1-5 on p. 23. With respect to the study of the definite article and the conjunction Waw, it should be noted that this material is for recognition only, that is, you will never be asked to prefix either the article or the conjunction to a word in Hebrew.
Exercises in Chapter 6: all exercises on pp. 25-26; Bible translation (1-10 on pp. 27-28).
Introduction to Chapter 7 (Hebrew Adjectives/Sections 7.1-7.10)

Tuesday (23 September)
Exercises in Chapter 7: parsing (1-20 on p. 29); translation (1-15 on p. 30); Bible translation (1-8 on pp. 32-33)
Several upcoming quizzes will require that you inflect adjectives in Hebrew. For example, you will be given a masculine singular adjective in Hebrew and you will be asked to produce in Hebrew the feminine singular or masculine plural form. To that end, give thorough and careful study to Section 7.10 where you are taught how to inflect adjectives. For practice, do the exercise on inflecting adjectives on pp. 31-32. This exercise is not required but recommended.
Introduction to Chapter 8 (Hebrew Pronouns/Sections 8.1-8.13)
As you prepare the Chapter 8 exercises for Thursday, please note that you will be required to produce the paradigms in 8.3 and 8.6 in Hebrew.

Thursday (25 September)
Quiz: Noun pluralization; adjective inflection; short translations with prepositions and the vocabulary of chapters 3-7
Exercises in Chapter 8: translation, part 1: (5-10 on p. 35); translation, part 2: (1-10 on p. 36); translation, part 3: (1-3 on pp. 36-37) and Bible translation (1-7 on p. 37)
Introduction to Chapter 9 (Hebrew Pronominal Suffixes/ Sections 9.1-9.18)

Tuesday (30 September)
Exercises in Chapter 9: translate and identify, part 1: (1-15 on pp. 39-42); translate and identify, part 2: (even only); translate and identify, part 3: (even only)
Introduction to Chapter 10 (Hebrew Construct Chain/Sections 10.1-10.9) for Tuesday, 7 October. Please note that this assignment is not for Thursday of this week. It is for Tuesday of next week. On Thursday of this week, the first major semester exam will be administered.
As you prepare Chapter 10 for next week, give careful study to 10.5 in which we detail the spelling of nouns in the construct state. This is an important section because you will be asked on upcoming quizzes to produce in Hebrew the construct spelling of absolute nouns according to the rules presented and illustrated in this section.
Detailing the contents of the first major semester exam on Thursday

Thursday (2 October)
First major semester exam (8:00-9:30 AM)

The broad topics for this exam include the following: consonant and vowel identification
identification of daghesh (as forte or lene) and shewa (as silent or vocal)
noun pluralization, especially the irregulars
translation of prepositional phrases
inflection and translation of adjectives
identification of adjectival usage
translating and identifying independent personal pronouns,
demonstrative adjectives, demonstrative pronouns and
interrogative pronouns
identifying and translating pronominal suffixes on nouns, prepositions
and the object marker
the vocabulary of chapters 3-9

Tuesday (7 October)
Exercises in Chapter 10: translation (1-25 only on pp. 49-51); Bible
translation (1-12 only on pp. 49-50); construct nouns, part 1
(even only) on pp. 53-55. This last exercise will provide practice
on how to turn absolute nouns into construct nouns (BBH 10.5).
You will be required to do this on a number of quizzes.
Observations on Chapter 11 (Hebrew Numbers), though your only
responsibility in this chapter will come from the formal
vocabulary section in 11.8 (to be detailed in class).
Introduction to Chapter 12 (Introduction to Hebrew Verbs/Sections
12.1-19)

Thursday (9 October)
Quiz: Forming construct nouns (10.5) and translating construct
chains; the vocabulary of chapters 3-12 with only selected
vocabulary words from 11.8. Additionally, some material from
erlier chapters might be included (to be announced in class).
Exercises in Chapter 12: translation (1-12 on pp. 60-61); also part 12b
in the workbook (Choosing and Using a Hebrew Lexicon) on pp.
63-66. Please read this material carefully because we will begin to
use a standard lexicon now and through the Spring semester.
Introduction to Chapter 13 (Qal Perfect – Strong Verbs/Sections
13.1-16)
Reading Week (13-17 October)
No Class
Students who are having some difficulty at this point in the course or are behind in the acquisition of the grammar or vocabulary should use the Reading Week to catch up. The Hebrew Language Program tutor will hold his regular tutoring times.

Tuesday (21 October)
Exercises in Chapter 13: paradigm memorization (be attentive to the requirement detailed on p. 67); parsing (1-10 on p. 67); translation (1-10 on p. 68); Bible translation (1, 2, 4 and 6 only on pp. 69-70)
Introduction to Chapter 14 (Qal Perfect – Weak Verbs/Sections 14.1-18)

Thursday (23 October)
Quiz: Inflecting and parsing Qal Perfect strong verbs and the vocabulary of chapters 10-13. This quiz might also review some material related to the study of construct nouns (to be announced in class).
Exercises in Chapter 14a: parsing (1-20 on pp. 73-74); translation (odd only on pp. 74-75); Bible translation (1, 3 and 4 on p. 76)
Exercises in Chapter 14b: parsing (1-15 on p. 81); Bible translation (1 and 4 only on p. 84)
Introduction to Chapter 15 (Qal Imperfect – Strong Verbs/ Sections 15.1-12)

Tuesday (28 October)
Exercises in Chapter 15: parsing (1-15 on p. 89); translation (odd only on pp. 90-91); Bible translation (1, 2, 3 and 9 on pp. 91-92)
Introduction to Chapter 16, Part 1 (Qal Imperfect – Weak Verbs/Sections 16.1-11). Please note that you are preparing only half of this chapter for Tuesday, 4 November. On Thursday of this week, you will be taking the second major semester exam. Chapter 16 is a very full and important chapter and, therefore, we will cover it in two parts. The first part will be completed on Tuesday, 4 November and the second half will be done on Thursday, 6 November.
Detailing the contents of the second major semester exam for Thursday.

Thursday (30 October)
Second major semester exam (8:00-9:30 AM)

The broad topics for this exam include the following:
reproducing (in Hebrew) selected independent personal pronouns (8.3) and demonstratives (8.6)
translating and identifying demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative adjectives
recognizing and translating the full range of Hebrew pronominal suffixes on nouns, prepositions and on the accusative marker (section 9.14 will be emphasized)
forming construct nouns and translating construct chains (be sure that you have control of section 10.5)
inflecting, parsing and translating Qal Perfect strong and weak verbs (this will be the major emphasis of the exam)
the vocabulary of chapters 3-14

Tuesday (4 November)
Today, we will do the first half of Chapter 16 (Sections 1-11)
Exercises in Chapter 16a: parsing (1-10 on p. 95); translation (1-10 on p. 96); Bible translation (8, 9 and 10 on pp. 98-99)
Exercises in Chapter 16b: parsing (1-10 on p. 101); translation (1-5 on p. 102); Bible translation (7, 10 and 11 on p. 104)

Thursday (6 November)
Today, we will complete the second half of Chapter 16 (Sections 16.12-25)
Exercises in Chapter 16c: parsing (1-15 on p. 107); translation (1-5 on p. 108); Bible translation (1, 3, and 4 on p. 109)
Introduction to Chapter 17 (Waw Consecutive/Sections 17.1-12)
Reading Week (10-14 November)
No Class
The recommendation for the November reading week is the same as for the October reading week. Students who are having some difficulty at this point in the course or who are behind in the acquisition of the grammar or vocabulary should use the Reading Week to catch up, especially with the study of strong and weak Qal Perfect and Imperfect verbs. Polish your parsing skills and be certain that you have mastery of those paradigms that you must produce in Hebrew. Almost every quiz from now through the end of second semester Hebrew (OL 502), will have Qal Perfect and Imperfect verbs (strong and weak) to parse, to produce in Hebrew or to translate. And lastly, the Hebrew Language Program tutor will hold his regular tutoring times during the November reading week.

Tuesday (18 November)
Exercises in Chapter 17: parsing (1-10 on p. 125 and 1-10 on p. 130); Bible translation (1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11 and 13 on pp. 126-128 and 1, 2 and 3 on p. 131)
Introduction to Chapter 18 (Qal Imperative, Cohortative, and Jussive/Sections 18.1-18)

Thursday (20 November)
Quiz: Parsing, inflecting (in Hebrew) and translating strong and weak Qal Perfect and Imperfect verbs
Exercises in Chapter 18a: parsing (1-19 on pp. 135-136); translation (1-9 on p. 136); Bible translation (4, 5 and 10 on pp. 137-138)
Exercises in Chapter 18b: parsing (1-10 on p. 141); translation (1-5 on p. 142); Bible translation (2, 6 and 12 on pp. 143-145)
Introduction to Chapter 19 (Pronominal Suffixes on Verbs). We will adopt a largely inductive approach to this rather complicated chapter. Your accountability for this material will be detailed in class but do note that you will be required to memorize the vocabulary (19.11); to read the “exegetical insight” (19.12); and to treat 19.13 and 19.14 as especially important reference sections.
Introduction to Chapter 20 (Qal Infinitive Construct/Sections 20.1-20.15)
Tuesday (25 November)
Exercises in Chapter 19: Bible translation (1, 6, 8, 10 and 11)
Exercises in Chapter 20: parsing (1-30 on pp. 163-164 and 1-10 on p. 165); translation (3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 14 on pp. 165-166); Bible translation (5, 8 and 15)
Introduction to Chapter 21 (Qal Infinitive Absolute/Sections 21.1-21.10)

Thursday (27 November)
Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class

Tuesday (2 December)
Completion of Chapter 20 exercises if necessary.
Exercises in Chapter 21: parsing (1-15 on p. 173); translation (1-5 on p. 174); Bible translation (1, 2, 3, 6 and 9 on pp. 175-176)
Introduction to Chapter 22 (Qal Participle/Sections 22.1-22.14)

Thursday (4 December)
Quiz: parsing Qal Perfects, Imperfects, Imperatives, Cohortatives, Jussives, Infinitive Constructs, Infinitive Absolutes and Participles (active and passive) and the vocabulary of chapters 12-22.
Exercises in Chapter 22: parsing (1-25 on pp. 179-180); translation (1-8 on pp. 180-181); Bible translation (1, 3 and 6 on pp. 181-182)

Tuesday (9 December)
This will be our last formal class of the Fall semester (8:00-9:00 AM) and it will be devoted to “left-over” exercises, questions and review for the final examination.

Thursday (11 December)
This is the likely date for the three-hour final examination. Definitive time and date to be announced.