Syllabus: OL501

OL501: Hebrew I with Dr. Gary Pratico

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Course Objectives

This course is the first part of a two-course sequence, Hebrew I and Hebrew II, that is designed to equip students with a knowledge of basic Hebrew grammar and vocabulary. With the completion of these two courses, a student can expect to read most prose sections of the Hebrew Bible with the use of a standard lexicon. While students can also expect to be able to read some Old Testament poetry, this genre tends to be more difficult than prose, and it often requires an intermediate capability with the language.

The core textbook for Hebrew I and Hebrew II will be Basics of Biblical Hebrew by Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt. Under this title, there is both a grammar and a workbook. Both of these volumes are required. It is essential that you acquire the second edition (Zondervan, 2007) of the grammar and workbook. The course schedule, grammar assignments, and exercises come from the second edition of both works. Attempting to work with an older version of the grammar and workbook will lead to confusion in the assignments and exercises.

It is important for students to understand that until Semlink Hebrew has been updated to reflect the second edition of the grammar and workbook (2007), you will be working with course materials that are built around the first edition of both volumes. We cannot emphasize strongly enough that you must use the second edition of the grammar and workbook.

Hebrew I will cover chapters 1-17 of the grammar. This section of the grammar will study the non-verbal grammar such as nouns, adjectives, and prepositions. It will also study the two major finite verbal inflections, the Perfect and the Imperfect. Hebrew II will complete the grammar, covering chapters 18-36. This section of the grammar will complete the study of Hebrew verbs, focusing primarily on what are called the “derived stems.”

Throughout both courses, there will be an emphasis on pronunciation and the acquisition of frequent vocabulary. The former will be accomplished through the lectures and additional audio aids; the latter will focus on the grammar’s formal vocabulary sections and other frequency vocabulary resources detailed below.

Each chapter of the grammar has a section that presents an exegetical insight or word study (among other topics) that will show the importance of knowing Hebrew for the study and understanding of the Old Testament. It is our hope that, even at this beginning level of
language study, students will see that it is does make a difference to approach the Old Testament text from the perspective of the original language.

Textbooks

Required textbook and resource by the beginning of this course:


Two additional books by the twelfth week of the course:


Vocabulary resources.


Recommended textbooks (not required in this course). The following lexicons may be helpful during basic language instruction and future Old Testament language courses:

- A rather full bibliography of sources for the study of Hebrew and for the exegesis of the Old Testament is given in chapter 36 of the grammar (see especially section 36.8).

Study guides and other resources.

- For additional study helps, go to our website (www.basicsofbiblicalhebrew.com).

Course Requirements

Please Note: This is a twenty-week course of study. The course schedule (including weekly assignments as well as quizzes and exams) has been spread over the full twenty weeks, with more than a week at the end to prepare for the final examination.

One chapter of the grammar will be required each week. Within a reasonable range of variation, try to establish a schedule of study that is consistent each week.

1. Required Reading and Study

   By way of introduction to the course textbooks, it is essential that you read the preface to *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar* and also the preface to *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Workbook*. In these sections, we have explained the layout of the grammar and the workbook. This is information you need to know in order to work effectively with the textbooks for this course. In addition, each week you will be required to read and study the appropriate chapter of the grammar.

   In every chapter, after each formal vocabulary section, we have included a short study that is designed to illustrate how a knowledge of the original language makes a difference in your understanding of a biblical text or the meaning of a word in a
particular context. There are other studies as well that you will find interesting and informative. They are written by Old Testament scholars, graduate students in Old Testament studies, pastors, and youth leaders. The range of writers indicates that you don’t need a doctoral degree in Hebrew Bible to use the language for a deeper understanding of God’s Scriptures and for a more effective communication of biblical truth.

2. Memorization
Memorization of the formal vocabulary section is required. You should aim to have the vocabulary for each chapter memorized toward the end of the week in which the chapter is due. The various quizzes and exams will test vocabulary from Hebrew to English only; that is, you will not be asked to produce vocabulary words in Hebrew. Be diligent in your mastery of vocabulary. Don’t get behind.

You will also be required to memorize selected paradigms as specified in the course schedule and in the grammar.

3. Completion of Workbook Exercises
You will be required to complete all of the exercises noted in the course schedule. All required exercises are to be found in Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Workbook. The workbook has additional exercises that may be used for practice, but it is important that you do the required exercises first. The additional exercises are optional. The answer key covers all exercises in the grammar so that you can do some optional exercises and know if you’ve done them correctly.

Be certain that you have truly mastered all of the required exercises. This means that you should understand the form (spelling) and the use of every Hebrew word in every exercise. If a particular exercise has a verb, for example, you should be able to provide all parsing information, including verbal root. The grammar gives careful attention to the matter of how to identify and parse various verbal and non-verbal forms.

This word of instruction is particularly important in the translation of Bible texts. On occasion, you may need to consult an English translation, but it is essential that you understand the spelling and use of every Hebrew word in the verse. Don’t make the mistake of relying on an English translation. This should be a last resort and not a point of departure.

4. Exams and Quizzes
There will be two required quizzes and two required exams in this course. If you are a student at the Hamilton campus, you may take your exams at the Goddard Library, and you should request one exam at a time. Any other students should designate a proctor who will be able to administer all four exams for the course (see frequently asked questions below). When you are ready to take your first quiz, contact the Semlink office (see contact information below). Please allow at least two weeks for delivery. The Semlink office will send all four exams to your proctor at one time. The exams should be returned to the Semlink office one at a time, by your proctor, as soon as you have completed them. The professor will grade your exam within one day of receiving it from the Semlink office. However, please allow at least 2 weeks for the exam to reach the Semlink office and be returned to you.

○ Quiz 1: a one hour exam to be taken after you have completed chapter 6, and must be completed by the end of the 7th week.

Most of the following topics will appear on this quiz:
- The names of the consonants
- The names, types, and classes of the vowels
- Recognizing Daghesh Lene and Daghesh Forte in words
- Recognizing Shewa as silent or vocal
- The three patterns of defective writing
- Syllabification of words
- Translation, use, and pluralization of nouns (both regular nouns and selected nouns for which the irregular plurals have been given in the vocabulary sections)
- Recognition of the definite article and conjunction in translation
- Translation of prepositions
- Phrase and sentence translations
- Vocabulary of chapters 3-6

○ Midterm: a three hour exam to be taken after you have completed chapter 10, and must be completed by the end of the 12th week.

Most of the following topics will appear on this exam:
- All of the material covered in Quiz #1
- Inflection, translation, and use of adjectives
- Independent personal pronoun paradigm
- Demonstrative paradigm
- Translation and use of independent personal pronouns
- Translation and use of demonstrative adjectives and demonstrative pronouns
Pronomial suffixes on nouns, prepositions, and the object marker
Recognition and translation of construct chains
Formation of construct nouns in Hebrew
Phrases and sentences for translation
Vocabulary of chapters 3-10

Quiz 2: a one and a half (1.5) hour exam to be taken after you have completed chapter 15, and must be completed by the end of the 16th week.

Most of the following topics will appear on this exam:
- Qal Perfect (strong and weak verbs)
- Vocabulary of chapters 12-15
- Phrase, sentence, and Bible translations

In this quiz, you will be asked to give Perfect and Imperfect forms in Hebrew. You will also be asked to parse Perfect and Imperfect verbs.

Final: three hour exam to be taken after you have completed chapter 17, and must be completed by the end of five months. Please note: You must receive a grade of C or higher on this exam in order to pass the class.

The final exam will cover the contents of chapters 1-17, including the vocabulary of chapters 3-17. Remember that the vocabulary of chapter 11 is required, even though we skipped that chapter. Most of the following topics will appear on this exam:
- The names of the consonants
- The names, types, and classes of the vowels
- Recognizing Daghesh Lene and Daghesh Forte in words
- Recognizing Shewa as silent or vocal
- The three patterns of defective writing
- Syllabification of words
- Translation, use, and pluralization of nouns (both regular nouns and selected nouns for which the irregular plurals have been given in the vocabulary sections)
- Recognition of the definite article and conjunction in translation
- Translation of prepositions
- Inflection, translation, and use of adjectives
- Independent personal pronoun paradigm
- Demonstrative paradigm
- Translation and use of independent personal pronouns
- Translation and use of demonstrative adjectives and demonstrative pronouns
- Pronomial suffixes on nouns, prepositions, and the object marker
- Recognition and translation of construct chains
- Formation of construct nouns in Hebrew
- Qal Perfect and Imperfect verbs, strong and weak verbs (consult the grammar for which paradigms you need to produce in Hebrew and for those that are for recognition only)
- Recognition and translation of Waw Conversive on Imperfect and Perfect Verbs
- Parsing and use of the two temporal modifiers in the two narrative sequences
- Phrases, sentences, and Bible texts for translation
- Vocabulary of chapters 3-17, including chapter 11

Grading

Your final grade for the course will be computed on the following basis:

Average of both Quizes 1/3 of final grade
Midterm Exam 1/3 of final grade
Final Exam 1/3 of final grade

The grading scale is as follows: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 88-89; B 83-87; B- 80-82; C+ 78-79; C 73-77; C- 70-72; D+ 68-69; D= 63-67; D-=60-62; F<60

Important Grading Policies
*** In this class, you are required to complete two (2) quizzes and two (2) exams. Each quiz and test must be completed and post marked by the date assigned to it by the Semlink Office. If a quiz or exam is not postmarked by its due date, a penalty of one full letter grade will be assigned to that assignment. ***

*** Any student who has not demonstrated competency (not perfection, but competency) on any portion of a quiz or exam will be required to contact a teaching fellow for additional help before taking a follow-up examination on that particular topic only. This make-up exam must be completed before a student can take the next exam in the sequence. This requirement will be imposed only if the student's work is considered to be failing, that is, in the D range or below. A notation will be placed on the corrected exam that this exercise will be required. The Teaching Fellow will follow-up with the student to arrange for the make-up. This follow-up evaluation will be pass/fail. ***

*** You must receive a grade of C or higher on the Final Exam in order to pass the class. ***