

# THEO3217 Biblical Hebrew I

## 希伯來文（一）

Lecturer: Dr. Sam Lau  
(email: drsamyslau@gmail.com)

2023-2024 First Term  
Mon 9:30am-12:15pm FYB UG01

### Course Description

This course, and the sequel THEO3218/THEO5302 Hebrew II in the next semester, are designed to enable students to read Biblical Hebrew. In this course, Hebrew I, students learn the alphabets to the basic forms of Hebrew sentences. Students not only learn how to read simple sentences from the Hebrew bible, but also learn to identify different parts of speech, and basic grammar. Students will also learn some Hebrew songs which accompany the lessons. This course follows closely to its textbook, *Learn Biblical Hebrew* by John H. Dobson (2014). Hebrew I will cover Lessons 1-13.

### Learning Outcomes

#### Knowledge Outcomes

- (1) recite and write down from memory the Hebrew alphabets, vowels and their transliterations
- (2) pronounce and read Hebrew words
- (3) recite from memory Genesis 1:1 (D 2.4; p. 18); Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (D 5.6; p. 55); the songs: We welcome you (D 1.13 Q5; p. 16) and Blessed are You (D 5.9 Q6; p. 58)
- (4) memorize at least 350 Hebrew words perfectly by the end of the course
- (5) recognize words and identify them correctly as nouns, verbs, prepositions, constructs, suffixes, adjectives, infinitives or participles
- (6) identify the forms of questions, commands and requests
- (7) parse a given word
- (8) explain the usage of adjectives, participles, infinitives, prefix and suffix conjugations, waw consecutive conjugation as well as concepts of perfective and non-perfective

#### Attitude Outcomes

- (1) develop an interest and respect for the historical and cultural development of the Hebrew language from its paleo-Hebrew script until its Aramaic script, and the modern Hebrew language
- (2) appreciate the distinctiveness of the Biblical Hebrew language
- (3) cultivate an interest to read Biblical Hebrew texts

### List of Topics

1. The Hebrew Alphabets and Vowels
2. Word Order in Sentences
3. The Prenominal Suffixes and Pronouns

4. The Narrative (waw Prefix Conjugation/waPC) and Completed (Suffix Conjugation/SC) Action
5. Parsing
6. The Adjectives
7. The Continuing Action (Prefix Conjugation/PC)
8. Absolute and Construct Nouns
9. The Previous and Future Action
10. Commands and Requests
11. Possession and Question Tags
12. Participles
13. Infinitives
14. Numbers, Time and Measurements

### Learning Activities

We will do a lot of drilling exercises through different forms: in songs, oral recitation, oral exercises, dialogue and writing exercises. There will be reinforcements through one to one and small group interactions throughout the course.

### Assessment Scheme (including Requirements)

Task Nature and Weightage	Purpose and Rationale	Learning Outcomes
<p><u>1. Compulsory Attendance and Active Participation (10%)</u></p> <p>A penalization of 0.5% of this grade for each missed period of lecture. If students <b>have valid reasons</b> to miss lectures and tutorial sessions for 10 class periods, students are expected to withdraw from the course asap. Otherwise, a full penalization of 30% of the <b>final</b> grade applies.  <b>Penalization of this grade applies regardless of valid or invalid reasons.</b></p> <p>Students <b>must</b> participate <u>pro-actively</u> in class as required: <u>Pro-active</u> refers to learning activities where students are expected to verbalize pronunciation of words learned, sing, recite verbally –</p>	<p>Language courses require constant drilling, and due to the fact that Biblical Hebrew is a dead language, absence from any period will result in difficulties to catch up for each class period.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will follow the smooth progress of building upon each topic as the language is taught.</li> <li>2. Students get <b>immediate</b> reinforcements for each new word or concept learned.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students can follow the progress of each topic smoothly.</li> <li>2. Students build upon each new concept of the language based on the previous one.</li> <li>3. Students can reinforce the learning through active use of the language.</li> <li>4. Student learns to reinforce their own understanding with co-learners and the instructor.</li> </ol>

<p>all in audible volume to their partners, or instructor or to keep pace with the whole class. There will be penalization of the full 10% from this course if students do not engage pro-actively. Students will be pre-warned of this possibility as the class progresses.</p>		
<p><b>2. 8 Quizzes (32%)</b>  Q1: Alphabets, transliteration, short and long vowels.  Q2: Paradigm for preposition + pronominal suffixes (D 3.10; p. 31) and Vocabulary D 2.7  Q3: Vocabulary D 3.1 (columns 1 and 3) and D 3.3 (columns 1 and 3).  Q4: Paradigm for Pronouns (D 4.8; p. 46 column 1) and Paradigm for Suffix Conjugation (SC verbs) (D 4.8; p. 46 table and column 2)  Q5: Vocabularies D 5.1 (column 1); D 5.5 and parsing questions.  Q6: Vocabularies (D 6.1; p. 60 column 1; D 6.4; p. 63 column 1) and parsing questions.  Q7: Paradigm for Prefix Conjugation verbs (PC verbs) p. 354; and Demonstrative Pronouns D7.10 (plus notes) and parsing questions.  Q8: Vocabularies (D 8.1; p. 89).</p>	<p>The quizzes are to reinforce the accumulation of the foundational vocabularies and paradigms.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students' memorization of the vocabularies will aid the learning progress when examples are based on these foundational words.</li> <li>2. Students' memorization of the paradigms will aid the learning progress of grammar concepts foundational to the language.</li> <li>3. Students will be able to read and understand simple sentences from the Hebrew Bible.</li> <li>4. Students will be able to parse phrases as they read and will be able to process the meanings of the words automatically with more practice.</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Written Assignments (18%)</b>  During class lectures, the instructor will assign a few written assignments where students are required to write on the board, or on their own notebooks. Students are</p>	<p>To grasp Biblical Hebrew fully, the written form is quintessential. It aids recognition and reinforces memory. Writing out the</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students reinforce the concepts by active application of the language through these written assignments.</li> <li>2. Students get the</li> </ol>

<p>expected to follow these instructions and attempt to complete them. N.B. There will be a mark deduction for late submission of assignments.</p>	<p>assignments retains the learning in concrete form.</p>	<p>opportunity for immediate reinforcements in class through these assignments.</p>
<p>4. <u>Oral Test (10%)</u> Students memorize 2 songs: We welcome you (D 1.13 Q5; p. 16) and Blessed are You (D 5.9 Q6; p. 58); and 2 scripture texts: Genesis 1:1 (D 2.4; p. 18); Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (D 5.6; p. 55).</p>	<p>Biblical Hebrew is the language of the Torah, the scripture of Judeo-Christian religion, memorization of core scripture and songs for worship enhance the purpose for learning of the language – which is to read the Torah or Hebrew Bible.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students learn to appreciate the religious practice of scripture memorization.</li> <li>2. Students learn to sing from memory as part of religious worship and prayer.</li> <li>3. Students appreciate the Jewish religious cultural practices based on scripture.</li> <li>4. Students build confidence to verbalize the Hebrew words through scripture and songs.</li> </ol>
<p>5. <u>Final Test (30%)</u> This test comprises of the contents of the final 4 topics; and the general accumulation of learning basic grammar sentences, and parsing.</p>	<p>This final test wraps up the end of the basics of the course.</p>	<p>Same as Task #2.</p>

### Course Components:

The course consists of lectures, oral drills, written assignments and a lot of memorization, self and group revisions. The time allocation (on average per week) of the learning activities is as follows:									
Lecture		Class interaction		Excursion/ Web-based repor		Reading and research		Written assignments	
In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class	In class	Out of Class
1.25 hrs	NA	1.0 hr	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.5 hrs	0.5	2 hrs
M		M		M		M		M	
M: Mandatory activity in the course					O: Optional activity				

### Learning Activities

Besides lectures, there will be songs, listening, actions, group rote memorization, peer learning and correction, and discussion.

### Course Textbook

John H. Dobson, *Learn Biblical Hebrew* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014). [D: UL PJ4567.3 .D63 2014]

### Course Schedule

M 4 Sep	Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Lessons 1A & 2A: Learning Vowels, Alphabets and Transliteration. Memorize Gen. 1:1 Songs: Alphabet song and We Welcome You (D p. 16).
M 11 Sep	Quiz 1; Lessons 1B & 2B: Rules for <i>Shewa</i> ; Rules on <i>dagesh</i> and sentence order. Reading Hebrew.
M 18 Sep	Quiz 2 Lesson 3: Pronominal Suffixes; Pronouns and SC Verbs (1) Introduction to Lessons 4-6 Memorize Paradigm for preposition ך + pronominal suffixes (D 3.10; p. 31)
M 25 Sep	Quiz 3 Lesson 4: Narrative and Completed Action Memorize Pronouns and SC verb paradigm (D 4.8; p. 46)
M 2 Oct	Quiz 4 Revise Lessons 1-4 and Learn Parsing. Lesson 5 Adjectives Learn Song: Blessed are You (D p. 58)

M 9 Oct	Quiz 5 Lesson 6 Continuing Action Memorize PC verb paradigm Memorize Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (D 5.6; p. 55)
M 16 Oct	Quiz 6. Revise Memory verse Deut. 6:4–5 Introduction to Lessons 7-8; Lesson 7: Absolute and Construct Nouns.
M 23 Oct	Quiz 7 Lesson 8: Previous and Future Action; Introduction to Lessons 9-13.
M 30 Oct	Quiz 8. Lesson 9: Possession and Questions; Lesson 10: Commands and Requests
M 6 Nov	Lesson 11: Numbers Lesson 12: Infinitives
M 13 Nov	Lesson 13: Participles Revise for Oral Test
M 20 Nov	Oral Test and Revision for Final Test
M 27 Nov	Final Test

### **Feedback for Evaluation**

Two course evaluations will be conducted. The first will be done midway through the course which is tailored to facilitate better progress through the course. The second will be conducted by the university wide exercise.

### **Recommended Learning Resources**

Cook, J.A. and Holmstedt, R.D. (2013). *Beginning Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Kahn, Lily. (2014). *The Routledge Introductory Course in Biblical Hebrew*. NY: Routledge.

Pratico, G.D.M. and van Pelt, M. (2001). *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. With CD-Rom. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Seow, Choon-Leong. (1995). *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (rev. ed.; Nashville: Abingdon).

Webster, Brian. (2009). *The Cambridge Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*. Cambridge/NY: Cambridge University.