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## OT 501 Survey of Biblical Hebrew

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**This is a draft; the final copy will be available in June**  
**Survey of Biblical Hebrew - OT 501**

June 2004 – A Three Hour Course  
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### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to Biblical Hebrew for the purposes of exegetical work in Christian ministry. Every type of Christian ministry can be enhanced if the goals of this course are achieved. Particular emphasis is given to inductive learning of the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew, the use of standard, basic exegetical tools, including several types of parsing aids, which are well-suited for pastoral ministry.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To analyze Biblical Hebrew words through mastery of elementary phonology, including correct pronunciation and the employment of basic reading skills
2. To determine the range of grammatical functions and choose the most appropriate one(s) by knowing the changes in word formation (morphology)
3. To interpret the interrelations of Biblical Hebrew words (syntax)
4. To translate Hebrew texts
5. To become familiar with a standard Hebrew lexicon such as A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (*CHALOT*) and to gain facility using a beginning Hebrew grammar
6. To discover how to utilize an exegetical Bible software program for assistance in translating Biblical Hebrew
7. To learn basic exegetical skills, such as word study which employs knowledge of Biblical Hebrew
8. To memorize a few common vocabulary words in the Hebrew Bible

Beyond the above mentioned objectives, I hope you develop: 1) a passionate love for the study and interpretation of the Scriptures in Hebrew and 2) skills in teaching and/or preaching God's word.

### **Email and Library Support**

Please note the following people for assistance . . .

- with technical difficulties in FirstClass, contact Jared Porter, ExL Support, at [ExL\\_Support@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu) or 859.858.2373
- with library assistance, please contact Hannah Kirsch at [Hannah\\_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu)

### Required Texts and Software

1. Seow, C. L. A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew. rev. ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

This is the foundation text for this course. We will proceed through the text systematically in each module, and it will be referred to often in the lectures and assignments. The text contains lessons which will help us learn the essentials of Biblical Hebrew grammar. It is useful to the student because it introduces actual references from the Old Testament beginning in lesson four.

2. Holladay, William. A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.

This is a standard dictionary. We use it because *CHALOT* has a simple, clear presentation making it ideal for the beginning student.

3. BibleWorks 6.0. Hermenueitika, Big Fork, MT.

This software program will assist us in spotting grammatical forms of Hebrew words (also called “parsing”) and provide entries from a standard Hebrew dictionary (*Brown, Driver, and Briggs*) for quick reference. For an additional fee, one can obtain the full version of another larger dictionary, A Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (*HALOT*). BibleWorks is also a powerful tool for doing Hebrew (and Greek) word studies. The program functions as a concordance (a.k.a. “search engine”) to find all usages of a word, phrase, or form and provides a quick and easy way to see how the recurrences of a word function in the co-texts.

4. Elliger, K., and W. Rudolph. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967-77.

This is the Hebrew Bible whose base text comes from the oldest complete manuscript of the Old Testament, *Codex Leningradensis* (ca. 1008 A.D.), with slight alterations. Referred to as BHS, we will read texts from it as we gain the appropriate competency.

5. Scott, William R. A Simplified Guide to BHS. Berkley, CA: BIBAL, 1987.

This short booklet explains in part the masora and the critical apparatus of the BHS (the notes surrounding the Hebrew text on each page of a BHS page).

6. Arnold, Bill T. and John H. Choi. A Guide to Hebrew Syntax. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

This text is a treatment of Hebrew syntax, dealing with the various functions of parts of speech in Hebrew, as well as how individual words work together to give meaning to a text. I will assign specific readings from this text in the later portion of the semester.

### Note Regarding Required Software

The Biblical Studies Area has several good reasons for requiring a Bible software program in your ministry preparation. First, one of the objectives of this class is the introduction of Bible software which will enable you to employ insights from Biblical Hebrew in your ministerial work. BibleWorks is one of the best programs to facilitate this purpose as an exegetical tool. Second, you will discover that this program is very useful when you take other biblical study courses through Asbury Seminary. Therefore, your purchase/use of BibleWorks is an investment for additional classes. However, if the purchase of the program is financially not feasible for you, then you may utilize one of the many computers on the Wilmore campus.

### **Recommended Texts**

The recommended texts have value for gaining further competence with the Hebrew language and thought-world.

1. Chisholm, Robert. From Exegesis to Exposition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

This book is designed to help students deduce the significance of the Hebrew text and to craft a way to communicate its significance in teaching and/or preaching.

2. Joüion, Paul, S.J. A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew. Edited and translated by T. Muraoka. 2 Vols. Subsidia Biblica 14/I-II. Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993.

This is an up-to-date and comprehensive reference grammar. It was written by the French scholar Joüion in 1923 and subsequently revised and translated by the Japanese scholar Muraoka in 1991. It is clearly written and it has a robust section treating syntax, a section often neglected in Hebrew grammars. It is full of useful insights and information for anyone with a basic knowledge of Biblical Hebrew grammar.

3. Owens, John Joseph. Analytical Key to the Old Testament. 4 Vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989-1992.

This resource parses every Hebrew word in the Old Testament verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and book by book and gives the appropriate page where the word is found in the *Brown, Driver, and Briggs* lexicon. As mentioned above, one may also retrieve parsing information for all Hebrew words via the BibleWorks software program.

4. Armstrong, T., D. Busby, and C. Carr. A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: Four Volumes in One. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.

Often referred to as A-B-C, this book is similar to Owens' work except for the fact that it only parses words that appear less than fifty times in the entire Old Testament. This text may be more helpful in mastering Hebrew in that it requires the student to memorize the more common occurrences.

**\*WARNING:** Owens' Key, ABC, and BibleWorks are tools for ministry. But, if your desire is to take additional Hebrew based courses, then please take some precautionary measures in using this resource. Always try to push yourself by parsing without assistance and translate as much Hebrew as possible before going to these resources for parsing help.

5. Waltke, Bruce, and Michael O'Connor. An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax. Winona

Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

This useful text contains virtually all the "ins and outs" of Hebrew syntax. In comparison, Williams' text is like a "reader's digest" version of Waltke-O'Connor. Waltke-O'Connor is much easier to comprehend at the intermediate Hebrew level.

6. Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Oxford, 1907; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979.

Even though this dictionary was published around the beginning of the twentieth century, it still provides a wealth of information per the expense. The book's format needs revising.

7. Mitchel, Larry A. A Student's Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

This guide categorizes every single Hebrew word in the Old Testament according to the number of occurrences. It is a good tool to aid you in increasing your Hebrew vocabulary.

#### 8. English Grammar Guides

Many problems students encounter in this course are related to proper understanding of grammatical terminology. In this course you may read about and hear grammatical terms that you may only vaguely remember from your initial learning of the English language. Many of the terms employed have a basis in all languages, so familiarizing yourself first with the terms in English will certainly assist you in understanding Hebrew. A good resource to assist students out of this dilemma is Madeline Semmelmeier's The New Webster's Grammar Guide (Berkley: New York, 1991). An excellent on-line resource can be found at [www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar). Upon request, you may also receive a copy of a short grammar review created by a former ATS instructor.

### Hebrew Honor Society

Asbury has a chapter of Eta Beta Rho, a national honor society that recognizes achievement in Biblical and Classical Hebrew. Any student who earns a grade of "B" or higher in OT501 and another Asbury course which requires Hebrew will be eligible and encouraged to seek induction.

### Evaluation

Your grade is calculated on the following factors:

Assignments & Readings	25%
Regular Quizzes	35%
Course Participation	10%
Final Celebration of Learning	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximate Grade Scale

A 93-100

A- 90-92

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F 0-59

## Course Procedure

### 1. Class Participation - 10% of course grade

Full participation and engagement with the course materials are essential in order to obtain the learning goals of this course, so please join in the class discussions with your colleagues. You are also encouraged to raise questions or make comments in the discussion center via the on-line component of the course in addition to the class meetings on campus.

### 2. Assignments & Readings - 25% of course grade

We will work through Seow's grammar, our main text, covering 1 to 3 lessons per module. The assignments for each module will consist of the exercises from Seow, as well as other material intended to achieve the objectives of a particular module.

Between the longer gaps of class sessions, your assignments can also be sent privately to me, using the "To Office" icon or by fax. There is a feature in BibleWorks that can help you type in Hebrew . . . refer to the user's manual for more information. **If you choose to fax, the number to submit assignments is the same as my phone number 859.491.1043.**

Virtually all the assignments will be graded in order to determine how much work is being attempted. It goes without saying, but bears repeating, that a large majority of your success in understanding Hebrew is achieved by a positive attitude and lots of motivation to complete assignments.

Important Note: Late exercises & worksheets will be accepted, but penalized 25% each calendar day late and receive no comments. Late assignments will not be accepted after four days. Timely completion of all assignments is a requirement for passing this course.

Please stay current with your reading. Students will be asked to turn in a reading report at the end of the semester for all assigned reading.

### 3. Celebrations of Learning (Quizzes) - 35% of course grade

There will be days of joyous festivity when we will gather to celebrate our newfound understanding of the language. These festive days are often termed quizzes or exams. The "quizzes" will cover the major issues discussed in each module, as well as the vocabulary from Seow's grammar. The specific lessons from which words will appear will be announced. Audio files (real media files) of the vocabulary words will also be made available in the on-line component of the course so that you can hear the words. These celebrations are comprehensive and will include material from previous modules.

### 4. Final Celebration of Learning (Final Exam) - 30% of course grade

At the end of the semester, you will complete a final celebration of our journey into Biblical Hebrew. The exam will cover vocabulary, a few short translation exercises (roughly one or two verses from the OT), and an Exegetical Assignment, in which you will be given a selected passage and asked to dissect it using the skills acquired throughout the semester. The due date for the final will be announced.

## Course Schedule:

The course begins June 1 and ends June 25.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Components of the Course</b>
1	June 1	Syllabus and Course Introduction The Alphabet [http://www.levsoftware.com/alefbet.htm] The Writing System The Dagesh and the Begadkephat letters.
<i>Quiz - Alphabet</i>		
2	June 1	Simple vowels, stress, and accents. Vowel markers and the Sheva. Syllabification
<i>Quiz - Alphabet, Vowels, Weak Consonants</i>		
3	June 1	Nouns and noun endings: Word patterns  segolates, prefixed nouns, etc). Hebrew roots and patterns. Introduction to dictionaries and lexical tools.
4	June 2	The definite article Prepositions and simple conjunctions Excursus B: Reading Markers and Pausal Forms
<i>Quiz - Nouns, Weak Roots, Prepositions</i>		
5	June 2	The Adjective More on Prepositions
<i>Quiz - Adjectives, forms and uses</i>		
6	June 8	Introduction to the Verbal Derived Stems The Qal Participle Excursus C: Nomenclature for the stems. Introduction to all the derived stems in general
<i>Quiz - Verbal Patterns/The Binyanim</i>		
7	June 8	Independent Personal Pronouns Suffixed Pronouns Uses of the Qal/Niphal
<i>Quiz - Uses of the Qal, The Binyanim</i>		
8	June 9	Demonstrative Pronouns Relative Clauses Interrogative clauses, exclamations and emphatic questions. Uses of the Piel, Pual, Hithpael



*Quiz - Vocabulary, The Binyanim*

9	June 9	The Construct Chain The Superlative Nouns with pronominal suffixes. Uses of the Hiphil, Hophal Excursus D: Reference Grammars.
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*Quiz - Vocabulary*

10	June 15	Introduction to "aspect" in the Hebrew verb The Qal perfect - forms and uses. Excursus E: Hebrew Poetry
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*Quiz - Forms of the Qal*

11	June 15	The Qal perfect of weak roots Stative verbs Excursus F: Orientation to the Hebrew Bible Introduction to word study methodology
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12	June 16	The Imperfect Aspect - forms and uses.
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*Quiz - Forms of the Imperfect*

13	June 16 Absolute	Narrative Discourse Patterns, Qal Infinitive and Construct, Introduction to Exegetical Process.
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14	June 21 & 22	Final Exam - due date TBA.
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Select Bibliography

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- Futato, Mark. Beginning Biblical Hebrew. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.  
Hebrew Tutor. Parsons Technology, Hiawatha, IA.  
Kelley, Page H. Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.  
Kittel, Bonnie. Biblical Hebrew: A Text and Workbook. New Haven: Yale, 1989.  
Lambdin, Thomas O. Introduction to Biblical Hebrew. New York: Scribner, 1971.  
Seow, C. L. A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew. rev. ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

***Intermediate/Advanced Biblical Hebrew Grammars***

- Arnold, Bill, and John Choi. A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.  
Gesenius, Wilhelm. Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited by E. Kautzsche. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910; reprint 1970.

- Gibson, J. C. L. Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar – Syntax. 4th ed. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994.
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- Williams, Ronald J. Hebrew Syntax: An Outline. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1976.

### ***Hebrew Lexicons***

- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Oxford, 1907; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979.
- Clines, David J. A., ed. The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew. 5 Vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993-. (5 vols. to date – more coming!)
- Holladay, William. A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, eds. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. 4 Vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-. (3 vols. published in English thus far.)

### ***Hebrew Lexical Helps***

- Armstrong, Terry, Douglas Busby, and Cyril F. Carr. A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament: Four Volumes in One. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- Beall, Todd, William Banks, and Colin Smith. Old Testament Parsing Guide. rev. & updated ed. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000.
- Einspahr, Bruce. Index to Brown, Driver, & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. Chicago: Moody, 1977.

### ***Hebrew Analytical Lexicons***

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- Owens, John Joseph. Analytical Key to the Old Testament. 4 Vols. Grand Rapids Baker, 1989-1992.

### ***Hebrew Interlinears***

- Kohlenberger, John III. The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. (One volume)

### ***Hebrew Word Study Tools***

- Botterweck, Johannes, and Helmer Ringgren, eds. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. 13 Vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-1998. (13 vols. to date – 4 more coming!)
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason Archer, and Bruce Waltke, eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 Vols. Chicago: Moody, 1981.
- Jenni, Ernst, and Claus Westermann, eds. Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament. 3 Vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
- VanGemeren, Willem, ed. The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. 5 Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

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Watts, John D. W. Lists of Words Occurring Frequently in the Hebrew Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. (Out of print)