



MESSIANIC JEWISH THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Teaching and living a prophetic vision of Jewish life renewed in Yeshua

BH501-Introduction to Biblical Hebrew 1a

Instructor: Robin Van Riper

Blogsite: <https://server11.orbund.com>

Dates: October 15-December 17, 2017 (Fall Quarter, 2017-2018)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Knowledge of biblical Hebrew is an essential foundation for in-depth personal and vocational Tanakh study. MJTI offers a three-course Biblical Hebrew Series (BH501-503) that is designed to provide knowledge of Hebrew verbs, nouns, prepositions, and other parts of speech, with an emphasis on how they function in clauses, verses, and passages of the Tanakh and an eye toward the study of biblical Hebrew narrative texts. In the opening course (BH501), verses and phrases of the Tanakh will be used to introduce fundamental points of grammar and the most common vocabulary. A highlighted feature of this course segment is learning to recognize the triliteral root of Hebrew words and learning to use a Hebrew lexicon. The course also focuses on simple tools for the proper reading and recitation of biblical Hebrew texts.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

This course is offered to equip students in the Rabbinic Studies and Jewish Studies programs to take required and elective Tanakh and Rabbinic Writings courses.

RELEVANCE

The nuanced and in-depth meanings of biblical and rabbinic texts is expressed in their original languages (Hebrew, with a small amount of Aramaic). The Biblical Hebrew Series lays a foundation for students to grapple with these meanings and acquire first-hand knowledge of these writings rather than rely fully on translations which often fail, or are not able, to convey these nuances and depths. Students who complete the series will be positioned to establish a lifelong pattern of Hebrew text study for personal illumination and, where appropriate, to prepare more nuanced and in-depth public talks.

PREREQUISITES

Students must enter the first class session with a basic ability to recognize and pronounce the Hebrew consonants of the aleph-bet and to read simple Hebrew words with vowels. Should you not already have these skills, they are easily acquired with the aide of the self-learning book Simon and Anderson, *Teach Yourself to Read Hebrew* and *Teach Yourself to Read Hebrew: Audio Companion* (download). Purchase them at <http://www.ekspublishing.com>.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Students must have a computer and Internet access. Please contact Joyce Klayman, our IT assistant, for technical help at jbklay@gmail.com.

COURSE FORMAT

The course is offered by live, online video conference meeting weekly. Each session is two hours in duration—Sundays, 7:00 – 9:00 pm EST.

REQUIREMENTS

Study assigned materials prior to each session; participate actively in the live sessions; complete and submit final exam by its deadline.

REQUIRED TEXTS (The publication dates indicate the required edition of each text)

- Brown, Francis, D.D., D. Litt., S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994.
- Green, Jennifer S., G. Brooke Lester and Joseph F. Scrivner. *Handbook to A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew, Revised Edition.*, Nashville: Abingdom Press, 2005.
- Seow, C. L. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew, Revised Edition*. Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1995.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

- Prepare weekly reading assignments in the Seow textbook prior to the weekly conference call.
- Weekly written homework assignments will be given at the end of each session, and are due by the specified time agreed upon each week. *The Handbook to A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* includes an answer key which the instructor encourages students to use to assess their understanding of the material. This tool is designed to challenge students to engage the material more deeply, and to ask more focused questions. Students may correct their work before submitting it.
- A final exam covering the course material will be given at the end of the quarter. Students will receive the Exam after the Unit 8 conference call and it will be due by midnight (your local time) Sunday, December 17, 2017.

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: This course outline and assignments are subject to minor revisions should the progress of the course demand them.

Unit 1 – Aleph Bet, Syllables, Vowels and More - Proverbs 1:1-4 in Application
Seow - Preface, & Lessons 1 & 2 (pp. ix-xii, 1-16)

Unit 2 – The Noun: Gender and Number;
Hebrew Roots and Patterns
Seow - Lesson 3 & 4, (pp. 17-37)

Unit 3 – Geminate Nouns and Introduction to the Dictionary
Seow - Lesson 5 and Excursus A, (pp. 38-53)

Unit 4 – The Definite Article, Prepositions, Verbless Clauses and Reading Markers
Seow - Lesson 6 and Excursus B (pp. 54-69)

Unit 5 – Adjectives
Seow - Lesson 7 (pp. 70-77)

Unit 6 – Verbal Patterns, and The Participle
Seow - Lesson 8 and Excursus C (pp. 78-91)

Unit 7 - Independent Personal Pronouns
Seow - Lesson 9 (pp. 92-103)

Unit 8 - Demonstratives, Relative and Interrogative Clauses
Seow - Lesson 10 (pp. 104-115)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course series successfully, the student will have read and analyzed Hebrew texts from every book of the Tanakh. Students will have developed skills to:

- Use a Hebrew lexicon
- Identify the triliteral root of Biblical Hebrew nouns and verbs
- Identify and understand the seven major verbal patterns of Biblical Hebrew
- Identify and understand the verbal forms Perfect, Imperfect, Preterite, Jussive, Cohortative, Imperative, Infinitive Absolute and Infinitive Construct
- Utilize some of the marks of cantillation that assist in the proper reading of the Tanakh
- Understand the grammatical structure and scholarly nomenclature of Biblical Hebrew that enables the use of reference grammars
- Translate Biblical Hebrew narrative and poetic texts at a beginning intermediate level
- Begin to read and study texts written in Rabbinic Hebrew

ASSESSMENT

Grades will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Active participation in class sessions.
- Demonstrates quality engagement with homework assignments
- Quality of final exam

Class participation = 35%; Homework = 30%; Final Exam 35%

THE GRADING SYSTEM

The basic letter grades have the following significance:

A Exemplary

B Adequate

C Passing, but requiring substantial improvement

F Failed

Grades have been assigned the following numerical values for the purpose of computing the grade point average:

A 4.0 | A- 3.7 | B+ 3.3 | B 3.0 | B- 2.7 | C+ 2.3 | C 2.0 | C- 1.7 | F 0.0
 Further aspects of the MJTI Grading System can be found on page 32 of the MJTI Catalog.

Assessment Criteria for Class Participation, the Final Exam and Self-Assessment Criteria for Written Homework				
	<i>A (exemplary)</i>	<i>B (adequate)</i>	<i>C (passing)</i>	<i>F (failed)</i>
<i>Quality of thought</i>	Clearly grasps how to apply rules to exercises	Some grasp of how to apply rules to exercises	Superficial grasp of how to apply rules to exercises	No evident grasp of material
<i>Engagement with material</i>	Deeply engaged	Modestly engaged	Superficially Engaged	Disengaged
<i>Accuracy and timely submission of homework</i>	Nearly error-free, complete and turned in on time	Some errors, complete and turned in on time	Many errors, complete and turned in on time	Filled with errors, incomplete, late or not turned in at all
<i>Organization of assignments</i>	Well organized	Somewhat organized	Poorly organized	Disorganized

STRUCTURED WORK HOURS

- 18 hours Class time (via conference call)
- 32 hours Reading and study of new material
- 32 hours Preparation of weekly assignments
- 8 hours Exam and preparation
- 90 hours Total structured hours**