



**BL 511-1 *The Language of the Old Testament* (3)**

**Fall 2009**

**Instructor: R. R. Remin**

**Contacting the Instructor**

**Office: L2981**

**Class Times: W F 8:15-9:30**

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**Class Location: L2100**

**Course Description**

A beginning course in biblical Hebrew and its grammatical structure. Some attention is given to the oral reading of Hebrew. Students will be introduced to hard copy and electronic resources available to assist their study of biblical Hebrew.

**Student Outcomes**

**Primary Outcomes**

1. The student will learn and then review the grammatical elements of biblical Hebrew by observation of the Hebrew text so that the student will be able to identify correctly the morphological patterns of the verbs and nouns as well as translate Hebrew text into meaningful English. Students are required to learn the structural markers (morphemes) of the Hebrew language rather than the rote memorization of the same. The emphasis falls soundly on learning to understand the Hebrew text and not necessarily the translation of the text *per se*. The pedagogical methodology of the course presents the student with the opportunity to learn inductively and deductively.
2. From the first lesson the student will be reading Hebrew Biblical text. The student will read in Hebrew the first two chapters of Esther in this semester and more of Esther and the first chapter of Genesis. As time permits selected portions of Amos, Micah, Hosea and the Psalms will be read.
3. The student will commit to memory in this semester a minimum vocabulary of approximately 250 words of Hebrew vocabulary all of which occur more than forty times in the Old Testament or are of particular theological interest.
4. The student will be taught the major reading markers (accents) of Hebrew so that the student can learn to read the texts out loud, discerning the meaningful units in each case.
5. The student will learn how to read and regularly use the Hebrew lexicon which is referred to by the names of its editors, namely, *Brown-Driver-Briggs* and which is abbreviated *BDB*.

6. The student will be introduced to the major reference grammars for biblical Hebrew (Gesenius-Kautzsche-Cowley, Jouon, Waltke-O'Connor) as well as theological dictionaries such as *TWOT*, *TDOT*, *DOTT*, *DBI*, *ABD*, and *IDB*. Some time will be spent discussing computer and internet resources.

### Secondary Objectives

7. The student will learn how to observe and how to learn by observation.
8. The student will be introduced to those aspects of Persian culture which are evident in the story of Esther and which are distinct from the Jewish culture of the Old Testament and our modern culture. Thus the need for cross-cultural awareness even within the Old Testament will be demonstrated.
9. The student will read *Tall Tales* which are childrens' stories told in biblical Hebrew. This reading facilitates learning to read more quickly and to read for for amusement and pleasure.
10. The student will be introduced to the basic principles of the contextual-syntactical-verbal-theological method of exegesis.

### Required Texts

The required texts for this course are:

W.S. LaSor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew, an Inductive Approach Based on the Hebrew Text of Esther*, 2 Vol. (W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978). (Please note that various re-printings of this text have rendered it a one volume text which students will inevitably render a two volume text. This often the Hebrew student's first creative act by division which is usually followed by other less beneficial "creative acts" in a first year Hebrew course when practicing syllabification.)

Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., Briggs, Charles A. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Clarendon Press, 1907). There is no value to having an edition with "Strong's numbers" as Strong's dictionary is inaccurate to the point of being dangerous and in any case has been replaced.

Ethelyn Simon, Irene Resnikoff, Linda Motzkin and Susan Noss. *Tall Tales Told in Biblical Hebrew* (EKS Publishing Co., Oakland, CA, 1994).

There are several tools available to help memorize vocabulary. How to memorize vocabulary will be discussed in class. However you need to choose one of the following.

- a. *FlashWorks* via an internet connection.
- b. R.B. Dillar, *Hebrew Vocabulary Cards* (Vis-Ed, Springfield, 1981).
- c. A purchased computer program or something off of the internet. E.g. *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary* produced by Memorization Technology.
- d. Make your own cards. Be accurate!

The following items are highly recommended to those students who wish to begin using their knowledge of Hebrew in Old Testament exegesis immediately.

Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Baker, 1981).

Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors* (Westminster Press, 1984).

### **Course Schedule**

This course meets on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:15 to 9:30 a.m. in one of the class rooms of the Ambrose Seminary.

Special dates to remember are:

September 30 (Wednesday)	Seminary Student Faculty Retreat (Community Day) (no classes)
November 6 (Friday)	Two Part Test
November 27 (Friday)	Word Study / Reference Works Project is due.
December 9 (Wednesday)	Last Class in this this Course
December 14-18	Final Examination as scheduled by the Registrar.
November 30	<i>The Day</i> beyond which no professor can grant an extension to complete course work is December 18 (end of semester). November 30 is the day by which you must apply to the Dean and/or Registrar's Office for an extension beyond December 18.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Each student will attend all scheduled sessions of this course. Students will not receive marks for attendance but absences will result in deductions from their final grade.

Each class builds on the previous and so missing a class leaves the student at a disadvantage and questions raised because of an absence inconvenience the rest of the class. Moreover the purpose of this course is not to facilitate "an information dump" from the textbook. Learning language requires repetition, hearing, and learning from other students, all of which cannot be done in isolation. Moreover Greek exegesis is a skill and an art both of which improve as a result of the interaction in class between instructor and students and between students. It is in the class that students learn the methodology and catch the passion for the task at hand.

2. Each student will prepare each lesson from the textbook in advance of the class in which it is discussed. Complete assignments as instructed.

3. Each student will write weekly quizzes testing vocabulary and points of grammar.
4. Each student will write a two part mid-term test (in class closed book and open book take-home) as scheduled in the semester.
5. Each student will complete “word study / reference works project” which is a study of a Hebrew word in the various selected reference works available for studying Hebrew and write an evaluation of the works used (A list of possible Hebrew words, the selected reference works and criteria for grading this assignment will be made available.).
6. Each student will compile and regularly revise their own synthesis of Hebrew grammar which they are learning.
7. Each student will write the two part final examination (in class closed book and open book take-home) as scheduled by the Registrar during the scheduled examination week.
8. A note on the methodology and values adopted in the teaching of this course.
  - a. The instructor recognizes and tries to maintain a sensitivity to the fact that more mature adult learners have a different learning style than undergraduates and that individual students have different learning styles. And so, for example, examinations have two parts – an open book take home and a closed book section written in confinement.
  - b. Patience and repetition are by-words in this course.
  - c. The emphasis falls on learning and understanding as opposed to rote memorization; on recognition as opposed to the ability to reproduce information and data. The ability to reproduce tables and charts does not guarantee that learning and understanding have been achieved.
  - d. The focus is on learning to read and understand as opposed to writing which is a very different skill.
  - e. The instructor is aware that fear (in moderation) may be a motivator to learning but fear in immoderate degrees prevents learning, and will try to set an atmosphere accordingly.
  - f. The instructor assumes that all students have forgotten all of the grammar they had ever been taught and will teach accordingly. The instructor is not as cynical on this point as the author of your text who states that this is a polite way of saying that students weren’t taught any.
  - g. Students are encouraged to work together in learning groups.
  - h. To these ends the instructor has adopted certain rules for the class.

#### The Rules For The Class

Have fun!  
Make mistakes!  
Ask dumb questions!  
Cheat! (Except on the tests and the final.)  
Consider this classroom a safe zone!

There are no dumb questions!  
There are no topics which are off limit.

### Course Grade

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 15% -- weekly vocabulary/grammar quizzes
- 20% -- Mid-Term Test
- 20% -- Word Study / Reference Works Project
- 10% -- Student's own synthesis of Hebrew grammar and demonstration of knowledge of Hebrew in class.
- 35% -- Final Examination

Although marks are not given for attendance, marks will be deducted for absences.

### Very Important Notes

1. Ἰ:λ ρεμ→φ<ιη θ™αρ (Deut 4.9) All hand written tests, examinations, or any other hand written thing you hand to your professor must be written in ink! Your professor cannot and will not read anything written in pencil.
2. ρῶμ:ΞΥ Ἰ:λ ρεμ→φ<ιη θ™αρ All other assignments must be submitted in hard copy. (Do not submit electronic copies and expect me to print them.) Follow these guidelines!
  - All printing is in black ink and on white paper. Twelve point font. There are no other colors or shading. No borders around pages.
  - The cover page will have this information in this order, centered on the page, and nothing else at all.
    - The name of the assignment at the top of the page.
    - Student's name two thirds of the way down the page. Student number is optional, but if included should be on the next line immediately below the name.
  - At least three quarters of the way down the page the words "Ambrose Seminary" must appear and on the next line the date on which the assignment was handed in.
  - The fonts used must be twelve point standard fonts. The basic fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, etc.
  - Any Greek and/or Hebrew in the assignment must be in a Greek or Hebrew font. Do not put quotation marks around nor italicize any Greek or Hebrew words in Greek or Hebrew fonts. Transliteration is not acceptable except in a direct quotation or a title of a published work. Students will be provided with fonts upon request. However, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the fonts are correctly printed before the paper is handed in. (Not all printers will correctly print all fonts.) This is the students responsibility. Papers with incorrectly printed fonts will not be read. In the effect of "font printing failure" the Greek or Hebrew words may be hand printed in black ink. (This was how it was done from the time of the invention

of the type writer until the passing of the same when the personal computer was invented.)

- Footnotes and bibliography must be consistent and in an acceptable format which identifies who wrote what, when and where it was published.
  - One (and only one) staple in the upper left corner. Do not use plastic covers, rings, binders, etc. Think “Adam’s ale!”
3. You may contact your professor by various means.
- a. Office Hours. These Office Hours on campus are subject to meetings called by higher authorities (president, dean, registrar), previously scheduled meetings with other students, the instructor’s health (doctors’ appointments, medical emergencies), snow storms, ice storms, highway closures, automobile failure, and/or “the crick don’t raise.” Book an appointment via email to ensure that I’m here, that you will receive notification of cancelation or you will not be preempted by another appointment (the above notwithstanding) .
    - i. Monday           Afternoons
    - ii. Tuesday        Between my early morning double block and my late afternoon double block and when not in a committee meeting.
    - iii. Wednesday   Between the first and second class period; after lunch.
    - iv. Thursday      Not available; usually not on campus.
    - v. Friday           Between the first and second class period; after lunch.
  - b. Email in the office:   rremin@ambrose.edu
  - c. Voice in the office:   410-2000 ext 7906
4. Absences are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught, namely the inductive method. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all.
5. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Academic Calendar* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these regulations. The following academic policies are particularly relevant.
- a. **Add/Drop Policy:** Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the academic calendar. Failure to file the relevant withdrawal form will result in an “F” on your transcript.
  - b. **Course Extensions or Alternative Examination Requests:** Students may not turn in course work after the last day of the scheduled final examination period (which is the technical end of semester) unless they have applied to the Registrar and Dean and received permission for a “Course Extension.” Faculty members cannot grant

extensions beyond the end of the semester. Likewise, alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior application to the Registrar and approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination times must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in accordance with the deadline as published in the academic calendar. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

- c. **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty.** The seminary maintains a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, academic dishonesty (cheating), and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.