

Hebrew Bible Beginning Biblical Hebrew I

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1 Course Description

For students who wish to read, hear, and even (to an extent) produce Hebrew, this course offers a textually immersive introduction to classical Hebrew. Grammatical features like morphology, phonology, and syntax are learned inductively, through a cycle of illustrated readings drawn from Genesis. Techniques of second-language acquisition are also used to help develop language competency. Continuation in HB 2202 is strongly recommended. This course is open to for-credit students and to Continuing Education participants.

Prerequisites: none. The course is required for HB 2202 and advanced biblical Hebrew.

2 Learning Objectives

The basic goal of this course is to begin to learn the rudiments of biblical Hebrew. The course is designed as the first part of a two-semester series. Since some may not continue in the Fall, however, HB 2201 is being offered with two different options for outcomes.

Option 1: Learn the alphabet, vowels, and syllables with the aim of continuing to learn Hebrew in HB 2202. Students will become familiar with the components that can be added to the front and back of Hebrew nouns and adjectives so that they can gain a basic understanding of the relationship between parsings in electronic sources (Accordance, Logos) and parallel translations. The verb system will be introduced briefly with the same purpose. On this path, students will read and translate a few passages from Genesis so that they can begin to read the Hebrew Bible with understanding. Students will learn about the limits of what they know so that they are less likely to misapply what they learn in church contexts. This option should be the default for students taking the course for credit.

Option 2: Learn the alphabet, vowels, and syllables with the aim of continuing to learn Hebrew on your own. Students will hear and read the same overviews as in Option 1, but may choose to work through the assigned exercises at a slower pace. The goal is to gain enough experience to become self-learners who can complete assigned readings and translations as they are able. Students will build enough confidence and momentum to progress through the grammar and workbook on their own schedule. This option caters to the objectives of some continuing education students, for example, but without imposing limits. Note that, in a past iteration of the course, the highest achiever overall was an auditor.

A goal in every case is to whet the appetite for learning Biblical Hebrew for long-term study and use. Language is communal. In the near term, therefore, every student will also have the opportunity to become part of a community of language learners.

3 Required Texts & Materials

The following texts are required. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase their own copies. Digital copies are available within [Logos](#). A hard copy of the workbook at least is preferable, since it is filled with worksheets on which you will want to write.

[Grammar] Karl V. Kutz and Rebekah Josberger. *Learning Biblical Hebrew: Reading for Comprehension: An Introductory Grammar*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018. ISBN 978-1683590842. Note that LBH has a [companion site with resources for teachers and students](#).

[Workbook] Karl V. Kutz and Rebekah Josberger. *Learning Biblical Hebrew: A Graded Reader with Exercises*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019. ISBN 978-1683592440.

4 Supplementary Texts

The following reference works are worth owning and consulting. [\[Making Sense\]](#) in particular contains sound advice on core skills like reading religious texts, writing essays and reviews, revising essays, making oral presentations, and learning languages.

[BHS] *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997. ISBN 978-1598561630. This remains the standard critical edition, though it is gradually being replaced by the BHQ. A paperback edition, marketed to students, is also available; the hardback is much more durable.

[Making Sense] Northey, Margot, Bradford A. Anderson, and Joel N. Lohr. *Making Sense in Religious Studies: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN 978-0199026838.

[SBL2] Collins, Billie Jean, et al. *The SBL Handbook of Style*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1589839649. See the free [Student Supplement](#).

5 Course Outline

We will adhere to the schedule in [Table 1](#) as closely as possible, though the professor reserves the right to adjust it to suit the needs of the class.

Ch. Learning Biblical Hebrew: Grammar	Workbook	Date
1. The Hebrew Alphabet	E1 (a–b)	13 June
2. Hebrew Vowels	E2	14 June
3. Syllables and Reading Hebrew	E3	15 June
4. Gender and Number, Definite Article, Conjunction	E4, R4	16 June
5. Vowel Changes in Hebrew Nouns	E5, R4	17 June
6. Noun and Adjective Function	R6	20 June
7. Constructs, Directional Ending, Prepositions, Interrogatives	E7, R7	21 June
8. Pronominal Suffixes and Review of Definiteness	E8, R8	22 June
9. Learning to Read Intuitively: Common Patterns in Nouns	R9–10	23 June
10. Numbers	R9–10	24 June

Table 1: Schedule of Lessons by Chapter, Exercise (E) & Reading (R)

See the AST website for a list of other [important dates](#).

6 Evaluation

The grade structure for HB 2201 has the following elements.

1. Students are expected to read and study all **lessons** in Chapters 1–10 of the [\[Grammar\]](#), and to complete the accompanying **exercises** and Hebrew **readings** in the [\[Workbook\]](#). Students should use the answer key to correct and evaluate their own work. Assignments will be assessed at the end of each week for completeness only. Students who are taking the course for credit should be prepared to show evidence of their efforts during office hours on Fridays, and, if requested, to upload scans (PDFs) or photos of any relevant pages [\[Workbook, 3–34, 79–101\]](#).
2. **Quizzes** are based on the [\[Grammar\]](#) and [\[Workbook\]](#) assignments. Between four and six quizzes will be set throughout the two-week course. All quizzes are closed book. Students must take opportunities accurately to assess what they have learned and retained. Continuing education students and auditors are encouraged to participate in these exercises fully by scoring and correcting their own work.

The breakdown for the semester's total work is shown in [Table 2](#).

AST's [Academic Calendar](#) provides guidelines and detailed criteria for academic assessment. Marks are assigned by letter grade using these benchmarks (summarized in [Table 3](#)). Note that, at AST, a grade of "C" is deemed "Unsatisfactory."

Workbook	50%
Quizzes	50%

Table 2: Distribution of Grades

A+	94–100	Exceptional
A	87–93	Outstanding
A–	80–86	Excellent
B+	77–79	Good
B	73–76	Acceptable
B–	70–72	Marginally Acceptable
C	60–69	Unsatisfactory
F	0–59	Failure
FP	0	Failure due to Plagiarism

Table 3: Outline of Grades at AST

7 Other Course Policy

Late work will not be accepted, except in genuinely extenuating circumstances. Students must submit something before the deadline if they wish to receive credit. Unless I state otherwise, assignments are to be uploaded by 11:59 PM (Atlantic) on the date indicated.

Essay submissions must be typewritten and double-spaced. They should be free from error. In this course they should follow SBL Style (see [SBL2] in section 4, above). As a reminder, AST upholds an Inclusive Language Policy. Please use gender-inclusive language when referring to human beings. Our traditions have different norms for speech about God; you are of course free to follow and explore those traditions when referring to God.

Plagiarism is the **failure to attribute** (by means of footnotes when writing or aloud when speaking) any ideas, phrases, sentences, materials, syntheses, et cetera, that another author has composed and that you have borrowed for your own work. Plagiarism is unethical. Academic penalties for plagiarism at AST are serious, and may include failure of the course or even suspension of further studies. Unintentional plagiarism is considered plagiarism. AST's Plagiarism Policy is found under that heading in the Academic Calendar.

Students should request permission to record a class or lecture. If permission is granted, or if recordings are provided (as in the case of an online or hybrid course), I stipulate that all recordings be for personal use only. They may not be shared or distributed.

If you have needs that require modifications to any aspect of this course, please consult with the instructor as soon as possible. Any documentation regarding disabilities that you wish to divulge to AST should be provided to the Registrar's Office, where it will be kept in a confidential file.

Finally, I encourage the conscientious use of laptops, tablets, and other technology in my classes. In classroom settings, realize that, as **cognitive psychologists have demonstrated**, "laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." Do your part to foster an environment for dialogue by honouring the presence of your classmates. In online and hybrid settings, consider both the physical environment in which you choose to work and the virtual environment that you help create through your participation in various forums. Let your engagement in this course be marked by rigour and charity alike.

8 Bibliography

Among the many Hebrew grammars and resources, note the following especially:

- Guides & Aids

- Van Pelt, Miles. *English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. At AST: PE 1130 H5 V35 2010
- Einspahr, Bruce. *Index to Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976. At AST: PJ 4833 B683 E35
- Landes, George M. *Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary: Learning Words by Frequency and Cognate*. Atlanta: SBL, 2001. At AST: PJ 4845 L25 2001
- Scott, W. R., and H. P. Rüger. *A Simplified Guide to BHS: Critical Apparatus, Masora, Accents, Unusual Letters & Other Markings*. 3rd edition. N. Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL, 2007. At AST: BS 715 1977f
- Kelley, Page H., Daniel S. Mynatt, and Timothy G. Crawford. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: Introduction and Annotated Glossary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. At AST: BS 718 K38 1998

- Introductory Grammars

- Cook, John A. and Robert D. Holmstedt. *Beginning Biblical Hebrew: A Grammar and Illustrated Reader*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. Study aids are available at bakeracademic.com. At AST: PJ 4567.3 C66 2013
- Kittel, Bonnie, Vicki Hoffer, and Rebecca Abts Wright. *Biblical Hebrew: Text and Workbook* [and Audio CD]. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale, 2004.
- Martin, J. D. *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar*. 27th edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993. At AST: PJ 4567 D37 1962
- Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Biblical Hebrew Reader: With an Outline Grammar*. Leuven: Peeters, 2017. At AST: PJ 4567.3 M87 2017
- Pratico, Gary and Miles Van Pelt. *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. At AST: PJ 4567.3 P73 2007
- Seow, C. L. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995. At AST: PJ 4567 S424 1995
- Weingreen, J. *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1959. At AST: PJ 4567 W4 1959

- Syntaxes & Reference Grammars

- Arnold, Bill T., and John H. Choi. *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. At AST: PJ 4701 A76 2003
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Williams, Ronald J., and Beckman, John C. *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. At AST: PJ 4701 W5 2007

- Gesenius, Wilhelm, E. Kautsch and A. E. Cowley. *Hebrew Grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910. **GKC** remains a standard Hebrew reference grammar in English, even though Cowley's translation – of the 28th German edition – is now over 100 years old. At AST: PJ 4564 G5 1910
- Joüon, P., and T. Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2nd edition. Subsidia Biblica 27. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2008. One of the most complete and up-to-date Hebrew grammars in English, **JM** (1st ed. 1991) was revised from a French work first published by Paul Joüon in 1923. At AST: PJ 4567 J7613 1993
- Lexicons
 - Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2004. The **BDB** was originally published in 1906. On archive.org and at AST: PJ 4833 B68 1996
 - Köhler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000. At AST: PJ 4833 K61813 1994
 - Holladay, William L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971. At AST: PJ 4833 H6 1971
 - Clines, David J. A. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2011. At AST: PJ 4833 D53 1993