

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

Detroit Bible Institute

313-836-7324

Time: Wednesday 7-9pm

Instructor: Michael Smokovitz

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Description

This course is an introduction to the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. Students will be both challenged and inspired to seek deeper levels of knowledge and understanding of the Bible through its original languages, and be given a basic set of tools and resources for doing so.

Objectives

Upon completing this course students will...

- Know why original language study matters and articulate its relevance
- Know what is involved in translation and hence why translations differ
- Have a general understanding of the history of the Hebrew language and of the Hebrew Bible
- Know which portions of the Old Testament are in Aramaic rather than Hebrew
- Read, pronounce, and write Hebrew
- Have a basic understanding of the parts of speech in the Hebrew language system (their identity and function)
- Understand basic issues of Old Testament textual criticism and how they affect the text and interpretation
- Learn how to do responsible word studies, avoiding common pitfalls and errors
- Be exposed to common interpretive errors made when appealing to the original languages
- Memorize fifty of the most frequently occurring words in the Hebrew Bible which will allow one to recognize 55% of the total words that occur in the Hebrew Old Testament

Textbook

Fields, Lee M. *Hebrew for the Rest of Us: Using Hebrew Tools without Mastering Biblical Hebrew*, 2008. (ISBN: 978-0-310-27709-5)

Grading

The Detroit Bible Institute employs a “pass-fail” grading system. A student must attain at least 75% of the available points to pass a class (please see DBI Student Catalog for further details). There are 200 total points available in this class. Students must earn 150 points to pass the class.

Attendance	10 points
Participation during in-class exercises	30 points
Reading log	30 points
Homework assignments	20 points
Vocabulary quizzes	90 points
Final exam	20 points

Attendance

The Detroit Bible Institute requires that each student who receives credit must attend 10 of the 12-week sessions (please see DBI Student Catalog for further details). If a student must miss a session due to illness or emergency, it is the student’s responsibility to “make-up” the session by obtaining the notes of a fellow student and any handouts. If a quiz is missed it can be made up the following class period.

Additional Materials

Students will need to have their own set of blank index cards to make alphabet and vocabulary flashcards with. Students should come to class prepared to write and take notes. A notebook or binder is recommended. Students are required to keep a reading log that catalogues their completion of the assigned readings. This can be typed or handwritten. Simply include the dates, number of pages, and time spent.

Week 1 – Class Introduction; Why Original Language Study Matters; Read, Pronounce, Write, and Transliterate Hebrew Alphabet; Exposure to Various Script Fonts; **Homework:** Make Alphabet Flashcards; Letter Recognition Assignment; Read Chapter 1 (pp. 1-11).

Week 2 – Hebrew Vowels; Numeric Values; Bible Codes; Vocabulary; **Homework:** Make Vowel Flashcards; Make Vocabulary Flashcards 1-5; Word Recognition and Gematria Assignment; Read Chapter 3 and do exercises.

Week 3 – Vocab Quiz; History of Hebrew Language, Script, and Bible; Biblical Aramaic; Textual Criticism; Inerrancy; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 6-10; Inerrancy Essay; Read Chapters 2 and 4 and do exercises.

Week 4 – Vocab Quiz; Textual Criticism Continued; Hebrew Root System; Parts of Speech; Clauses, Phrases, Constituents; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 11-15; Read Chapters 5-6 and do exercises.

Week 5 – Vocab Quiz; Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Nominals; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 16-20; Read Chapters 7-9 and do Exercises.

Week 6 – Vocab Quiz; Articular versus Anarthrous; Absolute versus Construct; Case; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 21-25; Read Chapters 10-11 and do Exercises

Week 7 – Vocab Quiz; Adjectives; Overview of the Hebrew Verbal System; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 26-30; Read Chapters 12-13 and do Exercises.

Week 8 – Vocab Quiz; Perfect versus Imperfect Verbal Forms; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 31-35; Read Chapters 14-15 and do Exercises.

Week 9 – Vocab Quiz; Volitional Forms; Infinitives; Participles; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 36-40; Read Chapters 16-17 and do Exercises.

Week 10 – Vocab Quiz; Word Studies; Common Errors; Avoiding Common Fallacies Made When Appealing to Original Languages; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 41-45; Read Chapters 18-19 and do Exercises.

Week 11 – Vocab Quiz; Prose versus Poetry; **Homework:** Make Vocabulary Flashcards 46-50; Read Chapters 20-21 and do Exercises.

Week 12 – Final Exam; Course Recap; Evaluations; Reading Log Due.

Bibliography

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Kaiser, Walter C. *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?* Downers Grove: IVP Academic.

Kittel, B.P., Hoffer, V., and Wright, R.A., *Biblical Hebrew: A Text and Workbook*, 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale, 2005.

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Stuart, Douglas. *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

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Waltke, B. W., and O'Connor, M. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Wegner, Paul D. *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods and Results*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.