

OT5100: Hebrew I

3 Hours – Fall 2026

Professor Dr. William A. Ross (wross@rts.edu)

TA TBD

Class Time Tuesday 8:00AM–12:00PM



Let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve
the gospel without the languages. (Martin Luther)

דָּלֵא יִלְיָהּ, קִטְלָא חַיִּיב (Rabbi Hillel, *P. Avot 1.13*)¹

A. פֶּשֶׁר (Explanation)

COURSE GOALS

1. Acquire a working knowledge of the fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.
2. Lay a solid foundation on which to build in Hebrew II, with a view to a lifetime of competence with and enjoyment of reading and expositing Biblical Hebrew.
3. Deepen our love for the Word of God in Scripture, as written in the original languages.

PREREQUISITES &C.

None, but see Pre-Course Assignments below. Additionally, if your knowledge of English grammar is shaky (Do you know what a participle or verbal mood is off the top of your head?), read Frank Braun, *English Grammar for Language Students* before the beginning of the course. It is very brief and affordable.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Study Lab – (30 min.) Starting at 7:30AM there will be an optional thirty-minute session to review homework assignments and ask questions to prepare for the quiz. You are encouraged but not required to attend. This session will be held beginning on the first day of class.

Quiz – (30 min.) Quizzes will cover vocabulary, grammar, and translation and will be graded in class as corporate review.

Lecture (2.5 hrs.) Almost all of in-class time will be devoted to explaining new material, involving student participation and translation exercises as time allows.

Class will break from 10:00–11:00AM for chapel (if/when it occurs). An additional break after the first hour of class may also occur, time permitting. Class schedule will differ slightly on the first day of class and on exam days. See information about the midterm and final exams below.

¹ “One who does not study is likely to die.”

B. משמרות (Obligations)

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Adam J. Howell, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, eds., *Hebrew for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving Biblical Hebrew*; Baker Academic, 2020.
- Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*. 3rd edition; Zondervan, 2019.
- Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Workbook*. 3rd edition; Zondervan, 2019.
- William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. 10th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Karl Elliger and Willhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (any edition).

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments (3%)

You must complete the following tasks before the first day of class:

1. (5pts) Read BBHG 1 and complete Pre-Course Reading Quiz affirming you have done so. (True/False)
2. (10pts) Complete BBHW 1 in full to turn in on the first day of class.
3. (5pts) Access the course on Canvas and add a picture of yourself to your ID.

When you are finished tasks 2. and 3. above, you should be able to write and identify each Hebrew consonant by name (including final forms), and know what sound they make. Note that **you will have a quiz on the first day of class** covering BBHG 1.

Quizzes (29%)

You will have twelve quizzes, usually covering vocabulary and grammatical concepts from the previous class, plus a small and randomized selection of material you should already know. Vocabulary comes directly from lists in the assigned chapters in *BBHG* and is always cumulative. You will also be asked to indicate your completion of the assigned chapters in *Hebrew for Life (HFL)*, according to the schedule below. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

Midterm (29%)

The midterm will be taken in class and cover all material up to that point. You will also be asked about your completion of the assigned chapters in *Hebrew for Life (HFL)*.

Final Exam (39%)

The final exam will be taken by hand, on campus, during the exam period. It will include material from all topics covered in class, including vocabulary, grammar, and translation (*BBHG* §§1–3).

C. חקוק (Statutes)

GRADING POLICY & SCALE

3%	Pre-Course Assignments	A	100–97	C	82–80
29%	Quizzes	A-	96–94	C-	79–78
29%	Midterm	B+	93–91	D+	77–75
39%	Final Exam	B	90–88	D	74–72
		B-	87–86	D-	71–70
		C+	85–83	F	69–0

COURSE SCHEDULE

All parts of this syllabus are subject to change. All changes will be communicated in advance.

Date		In-Class Activity	Assignments Due	Testing
A	26 th	Course Introduction Hebrew Alphabet & Vowels (1–2)	Pre-Course Assignments	Quiz 1
September	2 nd	[Video: Syllabification, Pronunciation, Nouns (3–4)] ²	BBHW 2	Quiz 2 HFL 1
	9 th	Definite Article, Conjunction, Prepositions (5–6)	BBHW 3–4	Quiz 3
	16 th	Adjectives & Pronouns (7–8)	BBHW 5–6	Quiz 4 HFL 2
	23 rd	Pronominal Suffixes (9)	BBHW 7–8	Quiz 5
	30 th	Construct Chain (10)	BBHW 9	Quiz 6 HFL 3
	7 th	[Fall Break: No Class]		
October	14 th	Numbers (11)	BBHW 10	Midterm HFL 4–5
	21 st	Introduction to Verbs & Qal Perfect Strong (12–13)	BBHW 11	Quiz 7
	28 th	Qal Perfect Weak (14)	BBHW 12–13	Quiz 8 HFL 6
November	4 th	Qal Imperfect Strong (15)	BBHW 14	Quiz 9
	11 th	Qal Imperfect Weak (16)	BBHW 15	Quiz 10 HFL 7
	18 th	Waw Consecutive (17)	BBHW 16	Quiz 11
	25 th	[SBL Conference: No Class]		
Dec	2 nd	Qal Imperative (18)	BBHW 17	Quiz 12 HFL 8–9
	9 th	[Exam Period: No Class]		

² I will be out of the country this week but will provide a video of this lecture. The quiz will occur in class.

D. הלכות (Guidelines)

OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Homework

You will have daily homework consisting (usually) of translation, grammar, and parsing exercises. This homework comes directly from the *Workbook* (BBHW) and corresponds to the chapter(s) covered each day (see schedule). **Note that with the exception of BBHW 1 for the Pre-Course Assignments, I do not collect or grade homework.** Obviously this means you can decide not to do it, or to do it half-heartedly, but that would be a serious mistake. Do the work carefully, find your weak spots, and participate in the Study Lab for review and extra practice to facilitate the learning process.

Study Lab

Students have the option of meeting with the TA prior to class to review homework assignments and to help you prepare for the quiz with extra examples. These 30-minute sessions are an addition to the daily class meetings but *participating is not required or graded*. This is simply for your benefit. The Study Lab will begin meeting on the first day of the course.

Tutoring

In addition to the Study Lab, students will have free tutoring made available with the TA, typically in small groups. If you are interested in participating in such a group, contact the TA directly. **Tutoring is available only to those students already attending Study Lab on a regular basis, unless approved by the professor.**

Attendance, Timeliness, Momentum

I do not take attendance and do not award points for it, but consistent unexcused absence or lateness will negatively affect your final grade. Missing all or part of a single day will create serious problems in your progress studying Hebrew. **Please note that in the event of missing class 1) there are no makeup quizzes and that 2) I do not make video or audio recordings of class available.**

Participation, Laptops, and Note-Taking

No computers are permitted in class for the duration of this course. No Artificial Intelligence of any kind may be used in or for this course. Furthermore, we will not be using Bible software for anything in this course.³ Learning the biblical languages well is an analog process: Physical books, physical paper, and a good pencil.⁴

³ I consider digital tools for vocabulary acquisition (e.g., Quizlet, Anki, etc.) an exception to this policy.

⁴ The pen is utterly overrated and should be avoided. I recommend the very affordable and excellent quality Pentel Graph Gear 1000 or – if you have a few more pennies to spend – the fantastic rOtring Rapid PRO or the rOtring 600. If you use 0.7mm HB lead, then you will earn a heavenly reward (actually, that's not true but it is still the best lead size and weight). See my Amazon List here: <https://tinyurl.com/58vf7xek>.

Since you are not allowed to use a computer, **I will provide detailed, color note packets for you to use in class.** These packets will be made available digitally in advance. You may print them out on your own or purchase a physical copy through Amazon (details to come).

Lateness & Extensions

Assignments are due by midnight on the dates indicated in the schedule below. In order to receive an extension without penalty, you must submit a request to me by email at least forty-eight hours prior to the due date, stating the reason for your request. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. If granted, an extension will be up to one week. Requests for extensions of more than one week must be submitted to the registrar for consideration by the academic dean in consultation with the professor. Late submission of assignments will result in reduction by half a letter grade for each calendar day beyond the due date.

Vocabulary

You will never be able to read biblical Hebrew if you do not know the vocabulary. In this course you will learn approximately 350 vocabulary words. Quizzes will always be “cumulative” (and will continue to be, even in Hebrew II and Hebrew Exegesis). Every word that you have been assigned starting in Hebrew I will be fair game, so stay frosty.

I do not care how you learn and review your vocabulary – textbook, flashcards, audio, Quizlet, whatever.⁵ But I do expect you to know it well. Any of the following resources will work, depending on your study preferences, though none are strictly required:

Miles V. Van Pelt and Gary D. Pratico, *Old Testament Hebrew Flashcards*. 2nd edition. Zondervan: 2004.

Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic*. 2nd edition; Zondervan, 2019.

Miles V. Van Pelt and Gary D. Pratico, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary in Context*. Zondervan: 2019.

J. David Pleins, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary by Conceptual Categories: A Student's Guide to Nouns in the Old Testament*. Zondervan: 2017.

Jesse R. Scheumann and Merissa Scheumann, *Picture Hebrew Flashcards*. Available on Amazon.

Other Recommended Texts

- a. Miles V. Van Pelt, *Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide*. 2nd edition. Zondervan: 2019.
- b. Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Biblical Hebrew Laminated Sheet*. Zondervan, 2005.

⁵ With that said, I am always happy to discuss learning strategies and options if you have concerns.

- c. Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Charts of Biblical Hebrew*. Zondervan, 2007.
- d. Frederic Clarke Putnam, *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew*. 2nd edition; Stylus Publications: 2002.⁶
- e. Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary in Context*. Zondervan, 2019.
- f. Donald A. Vance, George Athas, et al. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader's Edition*. Hendrickson, 2015.

RTS CHARLOTTE CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY USAGE

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Please note: Absolutely zero use of AI is permitted in this course.

⁶ Out of print but still available for purchase online. Putnam has made a free PDF download available, which can be easily located with a simple internet search.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: OT5100 Hebrew I
 Professor: Ross

Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Fall 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Beginning skills taught for reading, understanding, and thus interpreting Scripture through the use of Hebrew.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	None	
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Open class with a brief prayer and devotional song (in Hebrew).
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Encouragement to build lifetime habits of reading the OT in the original Hebrew.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	None	
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	Equips students with foundational skillset for later refinement.