

OT 5150
Hebrew Exegesis
RTS Houston
Summer 2026
Dates/Times: see Course Calendar

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: By Appointment, email and we will set up a time (we can meet over Zoom or on the phone as needed).

I. Course Description

This course is designed to help students a working facility with beginning Hebrew Grammar and syntax with a view toward translation and sermon preparation so that students may be equipped to rightly handle God’s word.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Tim 2.15)

II. Course Objectives

1. Become acquainted with the text of the BHS and apparatus
2. To develop skills in Hebrew Exegesis
3. Continue developing your Hebrew vocabulary

III. Course Guidelines

1. Languages are learned *slowly* with *a lot* of practice and constant attention. As such, class attendance is mandatory. **Only excused** absences will be allowed and must be approved by the instructor via email prior to the beginning of class (except in case of an emergency). Unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
2. Students must come to class ready to discuss the assigned material. A lack of preparation may result in the reduction of your participation grade.
3. Computers may *not* be used in class.
4. **Due to your work in Hebrew 1 and 2, you have “earned the right” to use all facets of Bible software for this course.** Yet, this also comes with responsibility that you maintain your Hebrew! It is not the time to “let off the gas.”

5. Late-paper policy. Sometimes it will be necessary due to life situations to receive an extension on papers (see extension policy below); however, an extension is not awarded for procrastination. Papers submitted late without a viable reason (approved by the instructor) will be reduced by *one letter grade per day that they are late*. Thus, if a paper would have received an “A” grade but was submitted a day late, the grade will be reduced to an “A-”, an “A-” will become a “B+” and so on.
6. Recommendations for learning Hebrew:
 - a. Review your Hebrew *every day*. As the saying goes, “if you don’t use it, you lose it.” Reviewing your notes and practicing your Hebrew every day will dramatically increase your language acquisition.
 - i. Note: cramming for quizzes and exams is quite possibly *the worst* way to study for a language course. You *must* constantly review the material until it is second nature to you!
 - b. Vocab! Vocab! Vocab! One of the first things lost in your study of a new language is the vocabulary. Constant vocabulary review is essential to language acquisition.
 - c. Review your paradigm charts regularly (yes, even in Hebrew Ex!). It is easy to forget paradigms and verb forms; therefore regular effort to reproduce these charts will be helpful for you.
 - d. Have fun! Examining the Hebrew text of the OT can be one of the most fruitful things for your ministry and personal sanctification. The text is often more rich than immediately apparent and so a close examination of it will yield great fruit!
 - e. Let your Hebrew studies lead to worship. In this class we are working to study the holy and inspired word of God in its original language. Do not lose sight of that when you are trudging through paradigms and vocabulary. Your hard work in these months will produce a lifetime of ministry from the OT to the praise of the triune God! So, let your studies be grounded in worshipful dedication to the Lord and praise Him that you are in a place to study this great language!
 - i. Side note: the purpose of this course is not so you can say, “look, I know Hebrew!” It is so that your future ministry will be properly grounded in the word of God. Pride has no place in this course, only faithful work in the service of Christ and His Church.

IV. Course Assignments

Assignment α: Final Vocabulary Exam (10%)

There will be a final vocab exam at the end of the course (to be downloaded from Canvas and emailed back to me) covering all the vocab from the list provided for you.

Assignment β: Final Translation Exam (10%)

You will complete a translation exam based upon the translations we do in class (the book of Jonah; Psalms 1–2). This exam will be downloaded from Canvas and emailed to me as a PDF.

Assignment γ: Translation Project and Participation (20%)

Students must translate and parse all verbs in the book of Jonah and Psalms 1–2. We will be working through these translations together in class. See appendix 2 for an example of how this project should look.

Assignment δ: Accent Exercises (10%)

You will complete five (5) accent assignments for this course. The goal is to aid you in understanding the Masoretic accent system. See Appendix 3 for these assignments.

Assignment ε: Exegetical paper (50%)

Students must turn in a major exegetical paper on the assigned paper deadline. See appendix 1 for requirements.

****Extra-Credit Opportunity

For an additional *five points* added to your **final grade** for the semester, you may take your exegetical paper and turn it into a sermon. The sermon *must* be a manuscript, double-spaced, and 8-10 pages in length.

Due dates: All assignments will be due 6 weeks after the final day of the course, unless otherwise noted on the course calendar. **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!**

Summary:

Vocab Exam: 10%

Translation Exam: 10%

Translation Project and Participation: 20%

Accent Assignments: 10%

Final paper: 50%

V. Grade Scale

97-100	A	86-87	B-	75-77	D+
94-96	A-	83-85	C+	72-74	D
91-93	B+	80-82	C	70-71	D-
88-90	B	78-79	C-	0-70	F

VI: Required Texts

Matthew H. Patton and Frederic Clarke Putnam, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse: A Guide to Working with Hebrew Prose and Poetry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019). (Abbreviation: *BHD*).

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS).

-You should get a BHS with the apparatus! NOT A READERS EDITION! **Digital copies are fine, but make sure you copy and paste it into a word document for translation as computers are not allowed in class.

Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Christo H.J. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 2nd edition (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2017).

Emanuel, David. *A Primer of Biblical Hebrew Poetry: An Essential Guide for Reading and Analysis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2025. (Abbreviation: *PBHP*).

Futato, Mark. *Basics of Hebrew Accents*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. (Abbreviation: *BHA*).

A Hebrew Lexicon of the student's choice (digital or in print), good options include: BDB, HALOT, DCH, Holliday.

Recommended Texts for further or supplemental study

Biblia Hebraica Quinta

Randall Buth, "Word Order in the Verbless Clause." **Pages 79-108** in *Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew*. Edited by Cynthia Miller. Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 1999.

_____. "The Hebrew Verb: A Short Syntax." **Pages 137-64** in *Living Biblical Hebrew: Selected Readings*. Biblical Language Center, 2006.

_____. "Introduction to Accents." **Pages 115-22** in *Living Biblical Hebrew: Selected Readings*. Biblical Language Center, 2006.

Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2017).

Wilfred G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, JSOT Supp 26 (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 1986).

David J.A. Clines. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 8 Vols.

Benjamin J. Noonan, *Advances in the Study of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: New Insights for Reading the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020).

VII. Course Calendar

We will meet over two long weekends for this course (July 9th–11th and July 31st–August 1st). We will meet 5PM–9:30PM on Thursdays and Fridays; 9AM–1PM on Saturdays.

As such, you will need to complete various assignments *prior to* coming to class those weeks. We will be going over the translations *in class*, failure to have them translated beforehand will result in a reduction in your grade.

Week 1 (July 9th–11th) Translation, Reading, and Assignments

Reading

Futato, *Basics of Hebrew Accents*, ALL.

Patton, *Basics of Hebrew Discourse*, Part 1: Intro–chapter 6

A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar § 12–13, 19–20, 21–22, 25, 36, 39, 40, 46–48

Translation

Come to class ready to translation *in class* Jonah 1–3

Week 2 (July 31st–August 1st)

Reading

Emanuel, *A Primer of Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ALL.

Translation

Jonah 4, Psalms 1–2

Assignments

Accent Assignments 1–5 **Due**

Due within six (6) weeks of course completion (everything must be submitted by midnight 9/12/2026):

Final Vocabulary Exam: download from Canvas and email

Final Translation Exam on Jonah and Psalms 1–2: download from Canvas and email

Final Paper: Submit your final paper on Canvas

***Note: Readings and assignments should be completed *prior to* coming to class that day. We will be going over this material in the lectures and in class translation. Assignments other than reading should be submitted on Canvas and are due that class day.

Appendix 1: Paper Requirements

Overarching Requirements:

1. Writing Style: I expect a professional, readable paper with minimal grammatical and typographical errors. Too many errors will lead to a reduction of your paper grade.
2. Paper Length: The *minimum* length for your papers is 5,000 words inclusive of footnotes. The *maximum* length for your paper is 7,500 words inclusive of footnotes.
3. Title page: include a title page with your name, course number, date, and number of words in your paper.
4. References: You must use a *minimum* of 7 references in your paper. The bible *does not* count as a reference! **Warning:** Wikipedia is *not* an academic reference tool; do ***not*** use it for your paper. References should be cited by means of the standard SBL footnote format found in the *SBL Handbook of Style*. Your primary sources for references will be Hebrew grammars, syntaxes, and lexicons. You may also use monographs and academic articles. However, **you may only use TWO commentaries (instructions for their use will be given in class)**. The goal of this paper is for you to write your own commentary on this passage, not to merely mimic others!
5. You must include a bibliography at the end of your paper following the SBL style. The bibliography should *not* be counted as part of your word count.
6. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. If you are asking yourself if you should cite something, be safe and cite it! If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic “F” for the course and will be subject to the Seminary’s disciplinary code of conduct.
7. Your paper should be **double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman (or similar) font**. **Footnotes are to be single space 10 point Times New Roman**. Note sure why, but students never follow this. Please do! It makes your professor happy, and happy professors grade happily!
8. All Hebrew must be in *Unicode*.

Specific Paper Requirements:

Text: Passage of your choice; approved by instructor.

Expectations:

I. Introduction with a thesis statement. Your thesis statement will be what you think the main point of the passage is. The main body of the paper will then *support* that main thesis.

II. The main body of your paper will be a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. You should focus on the logical flow of the passage emphasizing the development of the thought therein. Any significant exegetical issue *must* be discussed. In essence you are writing a commentary on the Hebrew of your passage!

III. Conclusion Summarizing your paper and re-stating your thesis.

Annotated Translation

As an appendix to your paper and *not* part of your word count, you should include *your* annotated translation of the passage. This annotation should include comments on any significant comments on difficult translation issues and why you translated the passage the way you did.

Discourse Analysis of the Text

As a second appendix to your paper and *not* part of your word count, you should include *your* discourse analysis of the passage.

NB: the annotated translation and DA may be joined into one appendix. This would be my preference, but sometimes it can be difficult to get all the information in one chart. We will discuss details in class on what these look like!

Appendix 2: Translation Project

The key aspect of this assignment is that all of your translations for this semester will be turned in. Your translation of every verse and parsing of every verb (including infinitives and participles) must be included.

It is preferred that this assignment be typed; however, this can be difficult so a hand-written and scanned copy may be turned in.

The primary factor for grading this assignment is *completion*. However, if it is clear that the material has not been completed with sufficient thoughtfulness, the grade will be drastically reduced.

Example from Judges 1.1:

H:

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בַּיהוָה לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ אֶל-הַכְּנָעַנִי בַתְּחִלָּה
 לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ:

T: After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel asked the Lord saying: “Who will go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?”

P:

Verb	Root	Stem	Aspect	P/G/N	Misc
וַיְהִי	היה	Qal	Impf	3ms	wcs
וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ	שאל	Qal	Impf	3mp	Wcs
לֵאמֹר	אמר	Qal	Inf C	n/a	Lamed prep
יַעֲלֶה	עלה	Qal	Impf	3ms	n/a
לְהִלָּחֵם	לחם	Nifal	Inf C	n/a	Lamed prep

Appendix 3: Accent Exercises

The goal of these *short* assignments is to practice your facility with the Masoretic accent system, focusing primarily on disjunctive accents. For each exercise you will provide a “chart” illustrating where the required breaks are for the assigned verse and explain that break with a few brief sentences. That sentence should explain 1) the particular accents that are signaling the break as well as 2) how the syntax of the verse fits within the particular accent breaks in the verse.

You will find good examples of what these charts *may* look like in Futato, chapter 2 or you may follow the example below.

Assignment 1: Divide Jonah 1:3 in *half* via the Hebrew accent system. Why is the division there?

Assignment 2: Divide Jonah 1:7 in *half* via the Hebrew accent system. Why is the division there?

Assignment 3: Divide Jonah 1:16 into *quarters* via the Hebrew accent system. Why are the divisions there?

Assignment 4: Divide Jonah 2:7 (MT) into *quarters* via the Hebrew accent system. Evaluate the accent divisions in contrast to the ESV divisions (2:6 in the English).

Assignment 5: Divide Jonah 3:7 into *quarters* via the Hebrew accent system. Why are the divisions there?

Example: Dividing Jonah 3:2 into quarters

S	A ^a	T ^a	קוּם לָךְ אֶל־נִיְנֻוּהַ
		T ^b	הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה
	A ^b	Z ^a	וּקְרָא אֵלַיִךְ אֶת־הַקְּרִיאָה
		Z ^b	אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר אֵלֶיךָ:

Explanation: The *atnakh* divides the verse into the Lord’s two commands to Jonah: the command to “go” to Nineveh (A^a) and his assigned task to “cry out” to it (A^b). In A^a the *tiphkha* divides the opening command to “go to Nineveh” (T^a) with the description of Nineveh as “the great city” (T^b). In A^b the *zaqeph qaton* divides the second half from the opening command to proclaim the Lord’s message (Z^a) with the relative clause modifying “message” (Z^b).

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Hebrew Exegesis
 Professor: Rev. Dr. William Wood
 Campus: Remote Live
 Date: Summer 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.	Strong	Paper!!!!
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	Focused on Exegesis
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Scripture is the norming norm (norma normans) for reformed theology, and we are focusing on scripture!
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	God works through his Word
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	
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.)	Moderate	There is no room for pride in learning Hebrew!
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-Xns.	Strong	Pastoral ministry is focused on the word.