

Syllabus for Old Testament 5302
HISTORICAL HEBREW GRAMMAR

Richard A. Taylor

Fall 2020

*“L’hébreu n’est pas une langue difficile, mais simplement
une langue où l’on trouve quelques difficultés.”*

–Henri Fleisch

Catalog Description

“An inductive and deductive study of biblical Hebrew from the perspective of its historical development within the Semitic family of languages.” 3 semester hours.

Aims and Objectives of the Course

As a result of this course, the diligent student should be able to do the following things.

1. Trace the main developments in the history of the Hebrew language through its various stages, from the earliest usage for which there is extant evidence up to the present time. Our primary interest in this course is biblical Hebrew. However, biblical Hebrew is best understood in relation to the other phases of this language, especially those that immediately precede and follow it chronologically. Even within biblical Hebrew there is evidence of significant linguistic transition and development. An understanding of linguistic features found in the various stages of the Hebrew language will be useful to students doing research on any portion of the Hebrew Bible. Our approach will be both diachronic, stressing the development and evolution of the morphological forms that we find in the Hebrew Bible, and synchronic, emphasizing the characteristics of biblical Hebrew as distinct from those of other stages of the language.

2. Articulate the distinguishing features of morphology for verbs, verbals, and nouns, not only in terms of the historical development of the Hebrew forms but also in terms of their relationship to forms for other Semitic languages. Our primary focus will be on the evolution of the Hebrew forms more so than on the forms found in other Semitic languages. Although this course draws on many matters of comparative Semitic linguistics, it is not a course in comparative Semitics as such. The discipline of comparative Semitic grammar gives more or less equal weight to the data of all the Semitic languages, while the discipline of historical Hebrew grammar puts greater stress on the development of Hebrew in particular and its relationship to the other Semitic languages.

3. Translate representative texts from various stages of the Hebrew language and account for their distinctive morphological and syntactical features as compared to biblical Hebrew. For this purpose we will deal inductively and directly with selected samples of the linguistic evidence that illustrate stages in the linguistic development of ancient Hebrew.

Students who are pursuing the PhD in Old Testament studies should keep in mind that one of the five comprehensive examinations to be taken upon the completion of their course work is an examination over historical Hebrew grammar. In anticipation of this comprehensive examination, one of the objectives of this course is to lay a solid foundation in matters pertaining to the historical development of the Hebrew language. Thorough preparation for this course will prove to be advantageous at the later stages of the Old Testament doctoral program.

Requirements for the Course

1. *Assigned reading (10%)*. Students should complete the reading of the assigned texts and supplementary readings in accord with the schedule presented below. I have prepared study questions to guide the reading of the assigned texts by Blau and Sáenz–Badillos. These guides will be distributed in class. Although time will not permit equal coverage of all this material in class, the readings will provide important and necessary background for the classroom discussions. In particular, the material on morphology is very important for the purposes of this course; other areas, such as phonology or syntax, play a significant but less central role in this regard. A grasp of the historical development of the Hebrew forms, especially for the verb and the noun, is essential for our goals. Students will report weekly on the completion of the reading assignments.

2. *Translation assignments (20%)*. Students should translate the assigned Hebrew texts and be prepared to discuss and interact with their linguistic data. This includes being able to vocalize and parse the Hebrew forms that appear, as well as noting distinguishing features in their orthography, morphology, and syntax. In this way students will begin to form first-hand opinions about the various stages of the Hebrew language as represented by these texts. Once we have completed our class discussion of each of these assignments, please turn in your written work for that text, including corrections and/or annotations made during the class discussion.

3. *Written exercises on morphology (20%)*. There will be eight take-home written assignments. These assignments will deal with the morphological development of various Hebrew forms covered in the assigned readings and class discussions. These exercises provide an opportunity for further reflection on selected issues of historical Hebrew grammar. They should be completed and returned to the instructor at the following class.

4. *Examinations (40%)*. Two examinations of equal weight (20%) will be given during the semester. These examinations focus on various aspects of morphology and history of the Hebrew language. Further details about how to prepare for the examinations will be provided in class.

5. *Book review (10%)*. All students will read the following work: Ian Young and Robert Rezetko, with the assistance of Martin Ehrensverd, *An Introduction to Approaches and Problems*, vol. 1 of *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, Bible World, ed. Philip R. Davies and James G. Crossley (London: Equinox, 2008). Each student will lead a class discussion and critical evaluation of a specific portion of this book according to a schedule to be worked out in class. Since this assignment presupposes a familiarity with the major issues of historical Hebrew grammar, it will be best to save work on it for the latter part of the course.

Student Assistance

I may normally be reached during working hours in my office at Todd Academic Center 201E. Appointments may be scheduled directly with me or through the secretary in the Old Testament office on the second floor of the Todd Academic Center. My e-mail address is as follows: rtaylor@dts.edu. I may also be reached by telephone at the following number: 214.887.5316 (office).

Course Extension Policy

The Seminary does not permit course extensions except in the most extenuating of unforeseen

circumstances. It is therefore mandatory that all work for this course be completed as scheduled. Please review the specifics of the no-extension policy as published by the Registrar's office. This institutional policy will be strictly enforced in all courses.

Course Supplemental Information

Dallas Theological Seminary does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

Grading Scale

A+	99–100	B+	91–93	C+	83–85	D+	75–77
A	96–98	B	88–90	C	80–82	D	72–74
A–	94–95	B–	86–87	C–	78–79	D–	70–71

Texts

The following works are required reading for the course.

Blau, Joshua. *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew: An Introduction*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic, ed. M. O'Connor and Cynthia L. Miller, vol. 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010.

Sáenz-Badillos, Angel. *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Translated by John Elwolde. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Young, Ian, and Robert Rezetko, with the assistance of Martin Ehrensverd. *An Introduction to Approaches and Problems*. Vol. 1 of *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*. Bible World, ed. Philip R. Davies and James G. Crossley. London: Equinox, 2008.

The following works are helpful, although they are not required for this course.

Bauer, Hans, and Pontus Leander. *Einleitung, Schriftelehre, Laut- und Formenlehre*. Vol. 1 of *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments*. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1922. Reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1991.

Ben-Hayyim, Ze'ev, with assistance from Abraham Tal. *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew, Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions*. Rev. English ed. Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000.

Bennett, Patrick R. *Comparative Semitic Linguistics: A Manual*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998.

Cook, John A. *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb: The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic, ed. Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and Jacobus Naudé, vol. 7. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.

- Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Vol. 1. 5th rev. ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002.
- Fox, Joshua. *Semitic Noun Patterns*. Harvard Semitic Studies, ed. Jo Ann Hackett and John Huehnergard, no. 59. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- Garr, W. Randall. *Dialect Geography of Syria–Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. Reprint, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- Gogel, Sandra Landis. *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*. Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study, no. 23. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.
- Hadas–Lebel, Mireille. *Histoire de la langue hébraïque: Des origines à l'époque de la Mishna*. Collection de la Revue des Études juives, ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati, vol. 21. Paris and Louvain: Peeters, 1995.
- Hetzron, Robert. *The Semitic Languages*. Routledge Language Family Descriptions. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Hoffman, Joel M. *In the Beginning: A Short History of the Hebrew Language*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2004.
- Joosten, Jan. *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies, vol. 10. Jerusalem: Simor, 2012.
- Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. Rev. ed. Subsidia biblica, vol. 27. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006.
- Kautzsch, E., ed. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd English ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
- Lambdin, Thomas O., and John Huehnergard. *The Historical Grammar of Classical Hebrew: An Outline*. Cambridge, MA: unpublished manuscript, 2000.
- Lipiński, Edward. *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar*. Orientalia Iovaniensia analecta, vol. 80. Leuven: Peeters, 1997.
- Lipiński, Edward. *Semitic Linguistics in Historical Perspective*. Orientalia Iovaniensia analecta, vol. 230. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.
- Miller–Naudé, Cynthia, and Ziony Zevit, eds. *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic, ed. Cynthia L. Miller–Naudé and Jacobus Naudé, vol. 8. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- Moscatti, Sabatino, ed. *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages: Phonology and Morphology*. Porta linguarum orientium, ed. Bertold Spuler and Hans Wehr, vol. 6. 3rd printing. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980.

Parker, Simon B. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Reymond, Eric D. *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew Grammar: A Student's Guide to Phonology and Morphology*. Resources for Biblical Study, vol. 89. Atlanta: SBL, 2018.

Rezetko, Robert, and Ian Young. *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps toward an Integrated Approach*. Ancient Near East Monographs—Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Weninger, Stefan, ed., in collaboration with Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C. E. Watson. *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*. Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft / Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science, vol. 36. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.

Class Schedule This course will meet once a week on Wednesdays from 7:45–10:25 a.m. in Todd Academic Center 218.

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| August 26 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topics for discussion: introduction to the course; the paleo-Hebrew script; classification of Semitic languages; relationship of Hebrew to other Semitic languages. 2. Read the following: Sáenz-Badillos, <i>History</i>, 1–28 (“Hebrew in the Context of the Semitic Languages”); Huehnergard, “Semitic Languages,” in <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i>, 4:2117–34; Lipiński, <i>Semitic Languages</i>, 47–87 (“Classification of Semitic Languages”). 3. Learn the paleo-Hebrew alphabet (from the left-hand column of the chart in Joüon–Muraoka, <i>Grammar</i>, 18) and be prepared to read inscriptions written in this script. |
| September 2 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topics for discussion: linguistic features of Canaanite dialects; historical origins of the Hebrew language. 2. Read the following: Blau, <i>Phonology and Morphology</i>, 1–31 (introduction); Sáenz-Badillos, <i>History</i>, 29–49 (“Hebrew as a Northwest Semitic Language”); Anson F. Rainey, “Whence Came the Israelites and Their Language?,” <i>IEJ</i> 57 (2007): 41–64; idem, “Redefining Hebrew—A Trans-jordanian Language,” <i>Maarav</i> 14 (2007): 67–81. 3. Translate ascriptions of ownership found on various arrowheads, bowls, seals, ostraca (see Taylor, “Practice with Paleo-Hebrew Script”); translate and study the Gezer calendar (Gibson, <i>Syrian Semitic Inscriptions</i>, 1–4). |
| September 9 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Topics for discussion: law of attenuation; Barth–Ginsberg law; Philippi’s law. 2. Read the following: Blau, <i>Phonology and Morphology</i>, 32–62 (introduction); Garr, “The Dialectal Continuum of Syria-Palestine,” 205–40. |

3. Translate and study the first third of the Mesha inscription (Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 71–83 [KAI, 181]).
- September 16
1. Topics for discussion: morphology of the verb (qal); history of stress.
 2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 63–71 (phonetics) and 72–95 (phonology); Joüion–Muraoka, *Grammar*, 113–37 (morphology of the verb, qal); Sáenz-Badillos, *History*, 50–75 (“Pre–exilic Hebrew”); Blau, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 30–37 (“History of Stress”); GKC, 114–36 (strong verb, qal).
 3. Translate and study the second third of the Mesha inscription.
 4. Turn in written exercise 1.
- September 23
1. Topic for discussion: morphology of the verb (the derived stems).
 2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 96–127 (phonology); Joüion–Muraoka, *Grammar*, 138–58 (derived stems).
 3. Translate and study the final third of the Mesha inscription.
 4. Turn in written exercise 2.
- September 30
1. Topic for discussion: morphology of the noun.
 2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 128–55 (phonology); Joüion–Muraoka, *Grammar*, 217–62 (morphology of the noun); Sáenz-Badillos, *History*, 76–111 (“Biblical Hebrew in Its Various Traditions”); GKC, 221–39 (noun).
 3. Translate and study the Siloam tunnel inscription (Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 21–23 [KAI, 189]).
 4. Turn in written exercise 3.
- October 7
1. Topic for discussion: morphology of the noun, continued.
 2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 156–86 (morphology: pronouns); Bauer–Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache*, 448–506; GKC, 239–86 (noun).
 3. Translate and study the Yavneh-yam inscription (Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 26–30 [KAI, 200]) and Tell Arad inscriptions C and D (Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 49–54).
 4. Turn in written exercise 4.
- October 14
- Mid–term exam.
- October 21
1. Topic for discussion: selected issues of aspect and tense.
 2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 187–216 (morphology: verbs); Joüion–Muraoka, *Grammar*, 325–57 (syntax of tenses and moods: *qatal* form, *yiqtol* form, volitives); Driver, “Use of the Tenses.”

3. Translate and study Lachish letters 3, 4, 6 (Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 32–49 [KAI, 193, 194, 196]).

4. Turn in written exercise 5.

October 28

1. Topic for discussion: dialect geography in biblical Hebrew.

2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 216–40 (morphology: verbal themes); Joüon–Muraoka, *Grammar*, 357–409 (syntax of inverted tenses, participles, infinitives); Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)*, 29–44; Rendsburg, “Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew,” 65–88.

3. Translate and study 1QIsa^a 40:1–11 (see handout).

4. Turn in written exercise 6.

November 4

1. Topic for discussion: selected bibliographical matters.

2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 240–60 (morphology: the weak verbs); Sáenz-Badillos, *History*, 112–60 (“Hebrew in the Period of the Second Temple”); Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 70–86.

3. Translate and study 4QFlorilegium (see handout).

4. Turn in written exercise 7.

November 11

1. Topic for discussion: linguistic features of Samaritan Hebrew.

2. Read the following: Blau, *Phonology and Morphology*, 260–86 (morphology: the noun); Ben-Ḥayyim, “Samaritan Hebrew: An Evaluation,” 517–30.

3. Translate and study Genesis 1:1–2:7 in the Samaritan Pentateuch (von Gall edition).

4. Turn in written exercise 8.

November 16–20 Reading week. No classes.

November 23–27 Thanksgiving recess. No classes.

December 2

1. Topic for discussion: linguistic features of Qumran and rabbinic Hebrew.

2. Read the following: Sáenz-Badillos, *History*, 161–201 (“Rabbinic Hebrew”); Pérez Fernández, *Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, 1–15; Segal, *Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, 1–20; Hadas-Lebel, *Histoire de la langue hébraïque*, 131–41 (“Origine de l’hébreu mishnique”).

3. Translate from the Mishnah Soḥah 9.15; Ḥabot 3.17; Pesāuim 10.5; *Berakot* 1.5 (see handout).

December 9

1. Topic for discussion: linguistic features of medieval and modern Hebrew; selected bibliographical matters.

2. Read the following: Sáenz-Badillos, *History*, 202–66 (“Mediaeval Hebrew”), 267–87 (“Modern Hebrew”).

3. Be prepared to discuss Young and Rezetko’s *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*.

December 14–17 Final examinations.