Hebrew VII (CG HEBRW 207)
Hebrew College
Fall 2014

Instructor
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Office hours by appointment

Prerequisites
Hebrew VI (CG HEBRW 206), Intensive Hebrew Grammar (CG HEBRW 215), or equivalent

Course Description

The focus of this course will be an in-depth study of selected topics in Hebrew grammar, with an emphasis on the grammatical features of Biblical Hebrew. The course will build upon and assumes the students’ prior knowledge of general Hebrew grammar, including mastery of the Hebrew verb system. To the extent possible, the texts from which we will draw our illustrations will be coordinated with the Rabbinical School’s Shanah Aleph Tanakh Core curriculum.

Classes will consist of “frontal” presentation of grammatical concepts, and of reading texts and applying those concepts. Homework will include exercises and text preparation. The language of instruction will generally be English, although Hebrew will be used where appropriate.

Although the focus of the course will be on pre-Modern Hebrew, connections will be made to the grammar and vocabulary of Modern Hebrew.

Course Materials

A Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), such as one published by Koren Publishers, that repeats pre- and post-positive cantillation marks on the stressed syllable (as will be explained in the first class session)

H.N. Bock, The Phonology of Classical Hebrew for Students of Modern Hebrew (instructor-supplied)


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1 A public-domain PDF copy of BDB, indexed with bookmarks to the first and second letters of the entries, is downloadable at https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/16081936/Brown%20Driver%20Briggs%20%28BDB%29.pdf
Syllabus

Week 1 and 2
Introduction
Course goals and expectations
Required materials
Hebrew’s place among the Semitic languages
History of Biblical Hebrew: the Masoretic text
Archaic Biblical Hebrew

The consonants of Biblical Hebrew
Inventory
Convergence of earlier consonants and its significance
The “gutturals”

Week 3

The vowel system: introduction

Week 4 and 5
The vowel system: vowel classification
The סְפּוֹרָה

Syllable structure
Stress, vowel length and syllable closure
Impact of gutturals
Identification of יְדֵי ה’ יִשְׂרָאֵל
Final syllables in nouns vs. (i) verbs and (ii) nouns in construct
Effect of stress variation on vowel length
Segolate nouns
Prefixed particles

Week 6
Mid-term on Biblical Hebrew phonology
The Biblical Hebrew verb system
The infinitive construct
Participles

Week 7–8
Expression of the narrative past
The modal use of וַיֵּאָכְלָה and יָדָע

Week 9
The volitives
Week 10  
Stative verbs; verbs of interior action; performative verbs

Week 11  
The infinitive absolute  
Pronoun object suffixes on verbs  
Overview of the cantillation system

Week 12  
Review  
Final exam

Reference Materials

Dictionaries


Treatises

F.C. Putnam (ed.), *A Cumulative Index to the Grammar and Syntax of Biblical Hebrew* (Eisenbrauns, 1996)  

Tables

Verbs:

S. Barkaly, ס. בָּרָקַל (Reuben Mass, 1970)  
Y. Tzedakah, י. תֶצֶדָּקָה (Kiryat Sefer, 1971)

Nouns:

S. Barkaly, ס. בָּרָקַל (Reuben Mass, 1969)