1. Course Description

This course is a review of Biblical Hebrew grammar with a survey of the major genres of the Hebrew Bible. Texts are read in Hebrew; the course is taught in English. The course emphasizes the literary and grammatical aspects of the texts. The course requires participation in class activities, the timely completion and submission of regular assignments—usually exercises from the textbook, the Translation Adventure project, and a midterm and final exam (see below for more details).

2. Course Objectives

This course will introduce you to the grammatical and literary tools you need to read the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew. We will be following the grammatical concepts and exercises outlined in Jo Ann Hackett’s textbook, A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew. We will work through these concepts and exercises in class (with many different kinds of activities and games to keep us motivated) and you will be expected to keep up with these exercises in your course assignments. As we progress through the grammar, we will focus more and more on translating Biblical Hebrew texts and understanding the different kinds (‘genres’) of texts in the Hebrew Bible.

You will apply these skills regularly, and will be expected to engage these skills in a Translation Adventure which you will prepare and present to the class. The Translation Adventure can be a passage you select from the Hebrew Bible which you carefully translate and annotate, looking not only at the grammar and vocabulary of the passage, but also historical translations (making informed decisions on when to agree or disagree with past, often famous, translators). The Translation Adventure can also be a focused study of a single word, usually a very common word in the Hebrew Bible (for example, “to love”) whose easy English translation has covered up many different cultural dimensions that we can only see through the Hebrew.

The main objective of this course is to acquire these grammatical and literary (“philological”) tools to be able to translate the Hebrew Bible on your own, and to get excited about the study of ancient language, texts, and culture.

3. Course Materials

Textbook required for purchase:

Recommended book:
4. Course Responsibilities and Grading

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**Vocabulary and Grammar ‘activities’ (10% of final grade)**

These in-class activities are a mix of ‘quiz’ and ‘participation.’ They are occasionally graded (marked in the syllabus). Mostly they are not graded. If they are not graded, all who participate get full credit (that means, if you weren’t in class and you don’t have a legitimate excuse for your absence, you miss credit for the activity).

**Regular Assignments (30% of final grade)**

Otherwise known as homework. These assignments come straight out of the textbook (Hackett). If you completed the assignment with relatively few errors, you get full credit. We will usually go over these assignments in class, so make sure they are completed on time! Each day an assignment is late, the assignment loses 10% of its total possible grade.

**Translation Adventure (10% of final grade)**

We will have one translation adventure this semester that you are responsible for completing and submitting. A translation adventure can be either a detailed, ‘tagged’ translation of a biblical passage, from Hebrew to English or an in-depth study of a single word. We will talk about this in more detail in class. The translation adventure will be assigned closer to the end of the semester (we need to build our skills first!).

**Midterm and Final Exam (midterm = 20% of final grade; final = 30% of final grade)**

These are graded exams. They are meant to evaluate your acquisition of the material presented in the textbooks, discussed in class, and worked on in your assignments.

5. Tea Time (‘Office Hours’) and Contacting Me

**Tea Time (aka Office Hours)** will be Thursday, 12-2 or by appointment. Come by my office (Lown 311) for a tea, coffee, cookie, and an opportunity to talk more about what we are learning in class, your academic interests, or any other issue. I am here for you.

You may also contact me by email (vayntrub@brandeis.edu). I will make every effort to answer your emails in a timely manner, but I will not be able to answer emails about assignments, exams, extensions, etc. the night before an assignment is due.

6. Course Schedule

**Week 1**

**Thursday, Aug 25**

Introduction to course.

Class activity: *Why we’re here and what we know today*.

Handout: List of (English) words we use in this class.
Week 2

Monday, Aug 29
Reading due: Hackett, chs. 1-5 (pp. 1-19)
Assignment due: My Alphabet List (turn in a handwritten list of 22 Hebrew words and their English translation, from pp. 263-278, each word corresponding to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet)
Class activities:
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 11, 15, 19)
- Reading aloud, introducing accent rules.

Wednesday, Aug 31
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 6 (pp. 20-26)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 25-26 (turn in)
Class activities:
- What is a root? (handout)
- Independent personal pronouns and adjectives

Thursday, Sept 1
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 7 (pp. 27-31)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 30-31 (turn in)
Class activities:
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 29-30).
- Practice with sentences.
- Nouns, definite article (the), vav-conjunction (i.e., ‘and’).

Week 3

*no class Monday, Sept 5*

Wednesday, Sept 7
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 8 (pp. 32-39)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 38-39
Class activities:
- Going over Assignment due. Practice with sentences.
- Prepositions (in, on, etc.), relative pronoun.

Thursday, Sept 8 (Brandeis Monday)
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 9 (pp. 40-48)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 47-48
Class activities:
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 45-46)
- Going over Assignment due. Practice with sentences.
- Construct chain (the queen’s house), demonstrative adjectives and pronouns.
Week 4
Monday, Sept 12
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 10 (pp. 49-55)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 54-55
Class activities:
- Vocabulary and grammar activity (graded; pp. 53-54)
- Going over Assignment due. Practice with sentences.
- Pronominal suffixes on nouns (my dog, your horse, etc.)

Wednesday, Sept 14
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 11 (pp. 56-65)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 64-65
Class activities:
- Vocabulary and grammar activity (pp. 63-64)
- Going over Assignment due.
- Introducing the verb (Qal prefix conjugation)

Thursday, Sept 15
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 12 (pp. 66-73)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 72-73
Class activities:
- Grammar and vocabulary activity (graded; pp. 70-72)
- Going over Assignment due.
- Prefix conjugation of verbs with variant patterns.

Week 5
Monday, Sept 19
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 13 (pp. 74-81)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 80-81
Class activities:
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 79-80)
- Going over Assignment due.
- Introducing the ‘volitive forms’ (verb forms that express a wish)

Wednesday, Sept 21
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 14 (pp. 82-88)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 87-88
Class activities:
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 86-87)
- Going over Assignment due.
- Introducing the ‘consecutive preterite form’ (i.e., common narrative verb form)
Thursday, Sept 22
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 15 (pp. 89-94)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 93-94
Class activities:
  - Vocabulary activity (p. 92)
  - Review of ‘consecutive preterite form’
  - Going over Assignment due.

Week 6
Monday, Sept 26
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 16 (pp. 95-101)
Assignment due: study for graded grammar activity.
Class activities:
  - Grammar activity (graded; paradigms on p. 96 and p. 97)
  - Introducing pronominal suffixes on the suffix conjugation (e.g. He observed me)

Wednesday, Sept 28
Reading due: Review Hackett, ch. 16 (pp. 95-101)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 100-101
Class activities:
  - Going over Assignment due.
  - Introducing the Qal infinitive construct and infinitive absolute (e.g., to guard, guarding)

Thursday, Sept 29
Reading due: Hackett, ch. 17 (pp. 102-108)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 107-108
Class activities:
  - Review of Qal infinitive construct and infinitive absolute
  - Vocabulary activity (pp. 106-107)
  - Going over Assignment due.
  - Introducing participles

Optional make-up Friday, Sept 30
Review session for Midterm exam (Thursday Oct 6)

Week 7
*no class Monday, Oct 3*

Wednesday, Oct 5
Reading due: Hackett ch. 18 (pp. 109-114)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 113-114
Class activities:
  - Review of participles in sentences.
  - Going over Assignment due.
  - Rapid review of Hackett chs. 1-18
Thursday, Oct 6  
MIDTERM EXAM (Covering Hackett, chs. 1-18)

Week 8
*no class Monday, Oct 10* (Prof. giving talk at Yale; make-up is midterm review Sept 30)

*no class Wednesday, Oct 12*

Thursday, Oct 14
Reading due: Preparation for Psalm performances  
Assignment due / Class activity: Psalm performances! (Memorize a short Psalm—list distributed in class—and perform it Charades-style/interpretive-dance-style for the class).

Week 9
*no class Monday, Oct 17*

Wednesday, Oct 19
Reading due: Hackett ch. 19 (pp. 115-121)  
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 120-121  
Class activities:  
  - Making a verbal stem chart.  
  - Going over Assignment due.  
  - More Niphal

Thursday, Oct 20  
Reading due: Review Hackett ch. 19 (pp. 115-121); Read Hackett ch. 20 (pp. 122-126)  
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 125-126  
Class activities:  
  - Grammar activity (graded; Qal vs. Niphal challenge).  
  - Going over Assignment due  
  - Introducing Hiphil

Week 10
*no class Monday, Oct 24*

Wednesday, Oct 26  
Reading due: Hackett ch. 21 (pp. 127-133)  
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 132-133  
Class activities:  
  - Grammar activity (Qal vs. Niphal vs. Hiphil challenge).  
  - Going over Assignment due  
  - Introducing Hophal, friend of Hiphil
Thursday, Oct 27
Reading due: Hackett ch. 22 (pp. 134-139)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 138-139
Class activities:
  - Vocabulary activity (pp. 137-138)
  - Going over Assignment due
  - Introducing Piel and its friend Pual

Week 11
Monday, Oct 31
Reading due: Hackett ch. 23 (pp. 140-147)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 146-147
Class activities:
  - Vocabulary and Number activity (pp. 144-146)
  - Going over Assignment due
  - Introducing Hitpael (a.k.a. Piel’s other friend)

Wednesday, Nov 2
Reading due: Hackett ch. 24 (pp. 148-154)
Assignment due: Exercises from pp. 152-154
Class activities:
  - Going over Assignment due
  - How to parse verbs and annotate a translation.

Thursday, Nov 3
Reading due: See assignment below
Assignment due: Parsing and translation annotation exercise, Genesis 1:1-5
Class activities:
  - Going over Assignment due
  - Introducing third-weak verbs, review of what is a root?

Week 12
Monday, Nov 7
Reading due: Hackett ch. 25 (pp. 155-167)
Assignment due: Exercises pp. 166-167
Class activity:
  - Grammar activity: paradigm recitation (graded; paradigms pp. 156, 158, 159, 162, 163)
  - Going over Assignment due
  - Introducing first-nun verbs and other ‘irregular’ verbs
**Wednesday, Nov 9**
Reading due: Hackett ch. 26 (pp. 168-180)
Assignment due: Exercises pp. 178-180
Class activity:
- Grammar activity: review paradigms (pp. 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176)
- Going over Assignment due

**Thursday, Nov 10**
Reading due: Review paradigms from ch. 26 (pp. 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176)
Assignment due: Prepare for Grammar and vocabulary activity
Class activity:
- Grammar and vocabulary activity (graded; all ch. 26)
- Your translation adventure (examples handed out in class) **due Mon, Nov 28.**
  (proposal of translation adventure project by Thurs, Nov 17)
- Introducing first-weak verbs

**Week 13**
**Monday, Nov 14**
Reading due: Hackett ch. 27 (pp. 181-192)
Assignment due: Exercises 190-192
Class activity:
- Going over Assignment due
- Beginning in class translation of 2 Sam 7:1-9 (pp. 139-147 of van Pelt and Pratico)
- Introducing middle-weak verbs

**Wednesday, Nov 16**
Reading due: Hackett ch. 28 (pp. 193-205)
Assignment due: Exercises pp. 203-205
Class activity:
- Grammar activity (paradigms pp. 196, 197, 198, 199, 200)
- Going over Assignment due
- Continuing in class translation of 2 Sam 7:1-9 (pp. 139-147 of van Pelt and Pratico)

**Thursday, Nov 17**
Reading due: Review paradigms from ch. 28 (pp. 196, 197, 198, 199, 200)
Assignment due: Finished translation of 2 Sam 7:1-9
Class activity:
- Grammar activity (graded; paradigms pp. 196, 197, 198, 199, 200)
- Share Translation Adventure project proposals
**Week 14**  
*no class Monday, Nov 21* (Prof. at SBL/AAR Conference; optional make-up class will be Final Exam review session Dec 8)

*no class Wednesday, Nov 23-Thursday, Nov 24*

**Week 15**  
**Monday, Nov 28**  
Reading due: None  
Assignment due: *Translation Adventure Project*  
Class activity:  
- *Translation Adventure presentations*

**Wednesday, Nov 30**  
Reading due: Hackett ch. 29 (pp. 206-213)  
Assignment due: Exercises pp. 211-213  
Class activity:  
- Vocabulary activity (pp. 210-211)  
- Going over *Assignment due*  
- Introducing geminate verbs

**Thursday, Dec 1**  
Reading due: Hackett ch. 30 (pp. 214-227)  
Assignment due: Exercises pp. 224-227  
Class activity:  
- Going over *Assignment due*  
- Introducing Biblical Poetry

**Week 16**  
**Monday, Dec 5**  
Reading due: Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* pp. 1-17 (online)  
Assignment due: Translate and annotate Psalm 93:1-5 (online)  
Class activity:  
- Understanding biblical poetry: the poetic structure of Psalm 93:1-5

**Wednesday, Dec 7** (Last day of class)  
Reading due: See assignment due.  
Assignment due: Translate, annotate, and give structure of Psalm 98:1-9 (online)  
Class activity:  
- Psalm 98  
- What to expect for the final exam.

**Thursday, Dec 8** (Optional study session)

**Final exam:** Thursday, December 15, 9:15 am - 12:15 pm
7. Course Policies

Laptops and Cellphones: Use of laptops and cellphones are not permitted in the class at any time.

Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend class and participate (this includes preparing for class by completing the expected reading and assignments).

Absence from exams: The midterm exam is scheduled for October 6, 2016. If you have an excused conflict with this exam date, notify me as soon as possible. I will allow in these cases a makeup midterm exam. An excused conflict is defined as a) an excused absence from me, obtained within the first two weeks of the course; b) an emergency or sudden illness. In the case of sudden illness, I expect a note from the health center or a physician. In the case of a different type of emergency, a makeup midterm exam is at my discretion. Absence from the final exam is a matter handled by the registrar’s office.

Late Assignments: As outlined above, assignments should be completed on time. Regular assignments (exercises from the book) are graded in-class by your peers. The same goes for regular mini-quizzes and vocabulary/grammatical activities in class. This system allows you to go over the exercises multiple times. If your assignment is not completed on time, I will need to grade it outside of class. Additionally, each day the assignment is late, it loses 10% of its total possible grade. This policy holds as well for the Translation Adventure.

Academic Honesty: You are each responsible for your own work. You will be responsible for the content and quality of your own individual assignments. If you produce and submit work that is not your own, you will have violated Brandeis University’s policies on academic integrity. You are responsible for making yourself familiar with and following the University’s policies on academic integrity (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentslife/sdc/ai). Allegations of violations of this policy will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for potential referral to the Student Judicial System. If sanctioned, you could be failed from the course and suspended from the University.

Special Accommodations: If you are a student with an officially documented disability at Brandeis and wish to have a reasonable accommodation in this class, you should contact me immediately.

This syllabus, its policies, and course schedule are subject to change.