



Birmingham Theological Seminary
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NT1160 Introduction to Biblical Aramaic Syllabus

Semester: Summer 2026

Course: NT1160 – Introduction to Biblical Aramaic

Day & Time: Monday, 7:30 – 9:30 PM

Room: A201/Virtual

Professor: Justin Richardson

Credits: 2

Email: justin@bts.education

Phone: (205) 789-7537

Prerequisite: Completion of OT1020: Beginning Hebrew I and OT1021: Beginning Hebrew II, or equivalent, is required. Students should possess a foundational understanding of Biblical Hebrew grammar, vocabulary, and syntax sufficient to support the study of Biblical Aramaic.

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to Biblical Aramaic, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and reading strategies for selected Aramaic portions of the Old Testament (e.g., Daniel and Ezra). Students will learn the linguistic and literary distinctives of Aramaic as compared to Hebrew, with attention to syntax and theological vocabulary. Ideal for students pursuing biblical languages or Old Testament specialization.

Course Objectives:

Cognitive (Content)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- **Identify and explain** the fundamental grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of Biblical Aramaic.
- **Compare and contrast** the linguistic features of Biblical Aramaic with those of Biblical Hebrew.
- **Translate and analyze** selected Aramaic passages from the Old Testament (e.g., Daniel and Ezra) with attention to grammatical and literary structure.

Affective / Motivational (Character)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:

- **Value and appreciate** the role of Biblical Aramaic in the canon of Scripture and its contribution to the theological message of the Old Testament.
- **Demonstrate increased confidence and motivation** in engaging the original languages of Scripture for study and ministry.

- **Cultivate attentiveness and discipline** in careful, detailed reading of the biblical text.

Volitional / Application (Competencies)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- **Apply grammatical and lexical knowledge** to accurately translate and interpret Biblical Aramaic texts.
- **Utilize appropriate tools and resources** (lexicons, grammars, and reference works) for independent study of Aramaic passages.
- **Integrate Biblical exegesis** into broader biblical interpretation, preaching, or teaching contexts.

Required Texts:

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)

Holladay, William L. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Van Pelt, Miles V. *Basics of Biblical Aramaic: Complete Grammar, Lexicon, and Annotated Text*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023.

Disclaimer: At Birmingham Theological Seminary, we aim to utilize textbooks that are aligned with a biblical, reformed worldview. At times, we assign textbooks that expose students to a range of perspectives and encourage thoughtful engagement. The fact that a book is required does **not** mean BTS endorses all of the author's views. We encourage you to read with discernment and evaluate every resource in light of Scripture and the seminary's confessional commitments.

Collateral or Recommended Texts:

Cook, John A. *Aramaic Ezra and Daniel: A Handbook on the Aramaic Text*. Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019.

Duke, Robert. *Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024.

Greenspahn, Frederick E. *An Introduction to Aramaic*. 2nd ed. Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Gzella, Holger. *Aramaic: A History of the First World Language*. Translated by Benjamin D. Suchard. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021.

Johns, Alger F. *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*. Rev. ed. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003.

Jumper, James N. *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic: An Annotated Answer Key*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003.

Keep Up Your Biblical Aramaic in Two Minutes A Day: 365 Selections for Easy Review.
Compiled and edited by Jonathan G. Kline. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017.

*Students are encouraged to make use of *Keep Up Your Biblical Aramaic in Two Minutes a Day* (Kline, ed.) as a companion to this course. Its short, daily readings offer a manageable and effective way to reinforce vocabulary and grammatical concepts. Even a few minutes of consistent engagement can significantly strengthen retention and confidence in reading Biblical Aramaic.

Köhler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Study ed. 2 vols. Translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson. Boston: Brill, 2001.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Biblical Aramaic Reader: With an Outline Grammar*. Leuven: Peeters, 2015.

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

Prattico, Gary D., and Miles V. Van Pelt. *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Rosenthal, Franz. *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*. 7th expanded ed. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2006.

Schuele, Andreas. *An Introduction to Biblical Aramaic*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Volume XVI: Aramaic Dictionary. Edited by Holger Gzella. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018.

Vance, Donald R., George Athas, Yael Avrahami, and Jonathan G. Kline. *Biblical Aramaic: A Reader & Handbook*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016.

Daily Dose of Aramaic: [Daily Dose of Aramaic - Daily Dose of Aramaic](#)

Course Requirements and Assessments:

- **Homework:** There will be weekly homework consisting of reading and exercises from Van Pelt, Miles V. *Basics of Biblical Aramaic: Complete Grammar, Lexicon, and Annotated Text*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023 (*BBA*). Homework will be graded in class weekly and will constitute 10% of the final grade.
- **Quizzes:** There will be weekly quizzes from *BBA* based on previous exercises. The format and content of each quiz will continue to build on what you learn each week. The general content of each quiz will contain grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and translation when appropriate. Total quiz scores will constitute 40% of the semester grade.
- **Midterm/Final Exam:** There will be two major exams in this course. The midterm exam will consist of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and translation from *BBA*, chapters 1-11. The final exam will consist of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary from *BBA*, chapters 12 – 22, and translation from the Biblical text. Collectively, the Midterm and the Final Exams will constitute 50% of the final grade.

Grading Weight & Comments

Course Requirement	Grade Weight	Comments
Homework	10%	There will be weekly homework consisting of reading and exercises from Van Pelt, Miles V. <i>Basics of Biblical Aramaic: Complete Grammar, Lexicon, and Annotated Text</i> . 2 nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023 (<i>BBA</i>). Homework will be graded in class weekly and will constitute 10% of the final grade.
Quizzes	40%	There will be weekly quizzes from <i>BBA</i> based on previous exercises. The format and content of each quiz will continue to build on what you learn each week. The general content of each quiz will contain grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and translation when appropriate. Total quiz scores will constitute 40% of the semester grade.
Midterm Exam	25%	The midterm exam will consist of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and translation from <i>BBA</i> , chapters 1-11.
Final Exam	25%	The final exam will consist of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary from <i>BBA</i> , chapters 12 – 22, and translation from the Biblical text.

Course Schedule:

Date	Agenda/Topic	Due on this Day/Date
6/1	Syllabus Review; Aramaic Phonological System: Chapters 1-3 of <i>BBA</i> , which cover the alphabet, vowels, and syllabification. With a few exceptions, much of this material is a review, given its similarities to Biblical Hebrew.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have reviewed the syllabus prior to class and acknowledged their agreement with its contents via Blackbaud. • Read <i>BBA</i>, Chapters 1-3: Alphabet, Vowels, and Syllabification.
6/8	Aramaic Nominal System: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 4-6: Nouns: Absolute, Determined, Construct	Quiz 1: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 1-3; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 1-3 Exercises
6/15	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 7-9: Conjunctions and Prepositions; Pronominal Suffixes; Pronouns	Quiz 2: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 4-6; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 4-6 Exercises
6/22	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 10-11: Adjectives and Numbers; Adverbs and Particles	Quiz 3: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 7-9; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 7-9 Exercises
6/29	Midterm Exam: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 1-11: Aramaic Phonological and Nominal System	Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 10 -11 Exercises
7/6	Aramaic Verbal System: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 12-13: Introduction to Aramaic Verbs: Peal Stem (Perfect)	No Homework/No Quiz
7/13	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 14-15: Peal Stem (Imperfect, Imperative)	Quiz 4: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 12-13; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapter 13 Exercises
7/20	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 16-17: Peal Stem (Infinitive Construct, Participle)	Quiz 5: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 14-15; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 14-15 Exercises
7/27	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 18-19: The Peil, Hithpeel, and the Ithpeel Stems; The Pael Stem	Quiz 6: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 16-17; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 16-17 Exercises
8/3	<i>BBA</i> Chapters 20-22: The Hithpaal and Ithpaal Stems; the Haphel Stem; The Aphel, Shaphel, and Hophal Stems	Quiz 7: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 18-19; Homework: <i>BBA</i> Chapters 18-19 Exercises
8/10	Final Exam: Aramaic Verbal System, <i>BBA</i> Chapters 12-22; Translation	No Homework/No Quiz

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on submitting papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

[NOTE: Standard BTS Attendance Policy is that students may not miss any more than three classes without a course penalty. Given the reality of distance-based students and video conference options, if students **clearly identify at the beginning of the semester that they will primarily be asynchronous students (depending on the digital recording of class because of a conflict with their schedule)**, then the student may attend without incurring a penalty for their “absences,” providing they are turning in all their work on time. Please see the BTS Faculty Handbook for more information on synchronous and asynchronous video conference students and policies and the commitments a faculty member agrees to when they teach a video conference or a live hybrid class]

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.

- Late assignments will incur a -3 point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

1: This outcome is not covered in this class

2: This outcome is only touched on in this class

3: This outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material

4: This outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)

5: This outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God’s word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God’s word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rationale (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Students directly engage and translate portions of Scripture in Aramaic, requiring sustained interaction with the biblical text as the central focus of the course.
Reformed Theology	3	The course engages theological vocabulary and concepts within the text, though Reformed theology is not a primary or heavily assessed focus.
Local Church	2	While the course supports future ministry, it does not include direct applied ministry projects in the local church.
Wisdom	3	Students develop discipline, attentiveness, and careful reading habits, though character formation is implicit rather than directly assessed.
Discipleship	2	The course contributes indirectly to discipleship through engagement with Scripture, but does not explicitly focus on discipleship practices or frameworks.
Communication	3	Students develop skills in translation and explanation of biblical texts, though formal teaching or preaching is not a primary assessment component.
Worldview	3	Exposure to biblical language and theology contributes to a deeper understanding of Scripture's worldview, though application is not heavily emphasized.
Leadership	2	The course provides foundational tools for future leadership in teaching and ministry but does not directly assess leadership competencies.