

## Introduction to Modern Hebrew Language and Culture

**Course code: HBR 101**

**Term and year: Fall 2023**

**Day and time: Tuesday, 18:30-21:15**

**Instructor: Aleš Weiss, Ph.D.**

**Instructor contact: ales.weiss@aauni.edu**

**Consultation hours: Tuesdays, 17:30-18:30 Faculty Lounge**

<b>Credits US/ECTS</b>	3/6	<b>Level</b>	Introductory
<b>Length</b>	15 weeks	<b>Pre-requisite</b>	None
<b>Contact hours</b>	42 hours	<b>Course type</b>	Required/Elective

### 1. Course Description

This course combines an introduction to Modern Hebrew with an exploration of the foundations of Judaism and Jewish culture. The language part of this course offers the basics of Modern Hebrew to beginners. Students will learn the Hebrew script both in its printed and hand-written form and develop basic reading and speaking skills. Emphasis is put on immediate verbal practice of learned grammar and vocabulary and its use within dynamic interaction in class. While practicing reading and listening skills students will be introduced to contemporary Israeli society and culture.

The second part of each unit is devoted to the exploration of important topics in Judaism and Jewish culture, such as life and year cycle, conceptions of God, written and oral Torah, main streams of Judaism, Zionism, and Israel. The course is designed to give students a firm foundation for the further study of Jewish or Israel studies.

### 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Read vocalized and simple unvocalized texts in Hebrew
- Acquire a basic vocabulary and grammar for simple conversations
- Understand simple Hebrew texts and dialogues dealing with basic topics of everyday life (family, leisure time, food, personal experiences, etc.)
- Use written form of Hebrew script confidently
- Demonstrate basic listening and speaking skills while interacting in everyday situations (greetings, requests, orientation, travelling, shopping).
- Demonstrate acquaintance with basic rules of Hebrew verb system
- Demonstrate acquaintance with the key topics in Judaism and Jewish life.
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of Jewish history.

### 3. Reading Material

#### **Required Materials**

All required materials will be available in the AAU Library or on NEO.

- Shlomit Chayat, Sarah Israeli, Hila Koblinger, *Ivrit min ha Hathala heHadash (The New Hebrew from Scratch)*, level 1. (Jerusalem: Akademon, 2013).
- Michael Fishbane, *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1988).
- Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

#### **Recommended Materials**

All recommended materials will be available in the AAU Library, on NEO or in other Prague libraries (National Library, Municipal Library) or through their on-line databases.

- David Biale, *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002).
- Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).
- Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).
- Ivan G. Marcus, *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).
- Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *Judaism, Great Religions of Modern Man* (New York: George Braziller, 1962).
- Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Judith Reesa Baskin and Kenneth Seeskin, eds., *The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture, Comprehensive Surveys of Religion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- A. Cohen and Jacob Neusner, *Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).
- Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck, *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

### 4. Teaching methodology

**Hebrew:** The classes will combine theoretical explanations of grammatical structures and vocabulary with in-class practice. Speaking Hebrew, even at the elementary level, will be an integral part of the classes.

Students will be required to participate actively in the lessons and complete regular written homework assignments. Quizzes on vocabulary and grammar will be taken by students through NEO. In the course schedule this section is marked as "A".

**Judaism and Jewish Culture:** This part will combine class instruction with multimedia materials and textual study depending on the topic. Raymond P. Scheindlin's *A Short History of the Jewish People* will be assigned as a weekly reading and the relevant chapter

will be shortly discussed in the classroom. Fishbane's *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions* students are required to read on their own. In the course schedule this section is marked as "B".

## 5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Session 1 5 Sept. 2023	<p><b>Topic:</b> Introduction / Consonants and vowels I</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Students will be provided information on the course, its objectives, evaluation methods and reasonable goals. Students will share their expectations for the course.</p> <p>A: Introduction into Hebrew language. Consonants and vowels I. Personal pronouns I. B: None</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Syllabus. <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> None</p>
Session 2 12 Sept. 2023	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants and vowels II / Jews in the World</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: Consonants and vowels II. Masculine and feminine nouns. B: Jews in the World – Selected demographical data</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 1 <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework I</p>
Session 3 19 Sept. 2023	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants and vowels II – review and practice / Tanach</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: Consonants and vowels II. Preposition particles. Definite article. B: Tanach – Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 2 <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework II</p>
Session 4 26 Sept. 2023	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants and vowels III / The Oral Torah</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: Consonants and vowels III. Plural nouns: masculine and feminine. Demonstrative pronouns. B: The Oral Torah. The concept of oral tradition and its authority.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 3 <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework III</p>
Session 5 3 Oct. 2023	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants and vowels III – review / The Idea of Election</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: Consonants and vowels III – review. Verb: Basic stem – pa'al, type ע"ו, present tense singular m. and f. Basic stem – pa'al type, strong verb, present tense singular m. and f. Negative verbal sentence.</p>

	<p>B: The Idea of Election – Different views of Election.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 4  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> B: Online quiz on Judaism I</p>
<p>Session 6 10 Oct. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants and vowels IV / Many faces of God</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Consonants and vowels IV. Verb: Basic stem – pa'al, type ע"ו, present tense plural m. and f. Basic stem – pa'al, type ל"ה, present tense.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 5  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework IV</p>
<p>Session 7 17 Oct. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Midterm Test / Shabbat</p> <p><b>Description:</b>  A: Midterm Test  B: Shabbat and its meaning in Halacha, Midrash, and Liturgy.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> None  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> None</p>
<p>24 Oct. 2023</p>	<p><b>Mid-term Break</b></p>
<p>Session 8 31 Oct. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants V / Year Cycle I</p> <p><b>Description:</b>  A: Consonants V. Verb pi'el, strong verb, present tense.  B: Year Cycle I – Holidays mentioned in the Torah.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 6  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework V</p>
<p>Session 9 7 Nov. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants V - review / Year Cycle II</p> <p><b>Description:</b>  A: Consonants V. Declarative and Negative nominal sentence. Definite article with preposition particle ב.  B: Rabbinic Holidays and Important Days of Jewish Calendar</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 7  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> B: Online quiz on Judaism II</p>
<p>Session 10 14 Nov. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants VI / Life Cycle</p> <p><b>Description:</b>  A: Consonants VI. Verb: basic stem - pa'al, type ל"א, present tense.  B: Life Cycle – From Birth to Death</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 8  <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework VI</p>
<p>Session 11 21 Nov. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants VI - review / The Jewish Denominations</p> <p><b>Description:</b></p>

	<p>A: Consonants VI – review. Preposition particles ם, ל</p> <p>B: The Jewish Denominations – History and presence of the Jewish Denominations. Major characteristics and trends.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 9</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework IX</p>
<p>Session 12 28 Nov. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Consonants VII / Zionism and Israel</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Consonants VII. Verb: basic stem - pa'al, type ל"א and פ"י, present tense.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 10</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> A: Online quiz and handwritten homework X</p>
<p>Session 13 5 Dec. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> General Review / Judaism as a Hermeneutical Tradition</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: A General review of syntax and morphology. B: Judaism as a Hermeneutical Tradition. We will explore the role of hermeneutics in Judaism.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Scheindlin, chap. 11</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> B: Online quiz on Judaism III</p>
<p>Session 14  12 Dec. 2023</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Final Exam / Discussion</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A: Final Exam B: Summary and Discussion</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> None</p> <p><b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> None</p>

## 6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Class participation	42	20%	Demonstrate basic listening and speaking skills (Hebrew). Demonstrate a basic knowledge of Judaism and Jewish history.	1, 2, 3
Home online quizzes on vocabulary and grammar	20	15%	Acquire a basic vocabulary and grammar knowledge for simple conversations.	2

Handwritten Homework	20	15%	Ability to use written form of Hebrew script confidently.	2
Midterm Hebrew exam (written)	24	15%	To understand, remember and actively use knowledge of grammatical structures, discussed vocabulary and phrases. Demonstrate basic listening skills.	2
Final Hebrew exam (written)	24	15%	To understand, remember and actively use knowledge of grammatical structures, discussed vocabulary and phrases. Demonstrate basic listening skills.	1,2
Quizzes on Judaism	20	20%	Demonstrate familiarity with key topics in Judaism, Jewish history, and Culture.	1,2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

## 7. Detailed description of the assignments

### **Assignment 1: Participation**

Regular attendance and active participation are fundamental for one's progress. Active participation in the classroom is essential feature of the class dynamics.

Hebrew: Each student will be regularly graded for her/his participation in the class. This includes collective verbal and textual practice and work in pairs or small groups. Students are expected to demonstrate their acquaintance with vocabulary, grammar and orthography dealt with in previous classes.

Judaism, History and Culture: Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, to have read attentively the assigned readings on Jewish history and demonstrate familiarity with key information contained therein. Students do not need to remember every detail; however, they should be able to outline major events in a proper order and understand their significance for Jewish history, culture, and religion.

The final grade is based on the average of weekly scores.

### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hebrew – Development of listening and speaking skills corresponding to course schedule	50%
Judaism and Jewish History - Awareness of issues dealt with in class and in assigned readings	50%

### **Assignment 2: Home online quizzes on vocabulary and grammar**

Home online quizzes on vocabulary and grammar are crucial for establishing a firm knowledge of the material. They are designed to help to memorize vocabulary and grammatical forms.

Each quiz will review materials from the past class and reinforce familiarity with previously learned consonants and vowels, grammar and vocabulary. It will include a demonstration of reading skills in form of quizzes or phonetical transcription from Hebrew to English, testing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and ability to write words or short sentences with the use of onscreen Hebrew keyboard. Each quiz will be graded, the final grade will be based on average of the weekly scores.

All quizzes should be submitted online no later than Friday noon of the week it is given.

#### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Timely completion of the tasks	30%
Demonstration of vocabulary and grammar knowledge	70%

### **Assignment 3: Handwritten Homework**

In order to learn the Hebrew script confidently a regular practice is necessary. This homework should primarily help students strengthen their familiarity with consonants and vowels dealt with in the past lesson and establish a firm connection between written and printed form of letters. This homework also presents an opportunity for vocabulary and grammar practice.

Students will be given a sheet with instructions for the handwritten homework at the end of every session, the sheet will also be available online on the course website. The homework will generally consist of:

- Practice of the written forms of new letters learned in the past class
- Using these letters in new words, short phrases, and sentences which are part of required vocabular, phraseology and grammar
- Practicing written form of letters on Hebrew words not included in the required vocabulary

Handwritten homework from the last week will be collected at the beginning of every Session. In case of student's absence, a photo/scan of the written homework can be submitted via email.

#### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Timely completion of the tasks	20%
Clear and proper handwriting	40%
Proper use of vocabulary and grammar.	40%

#### **Assignment 4: Midterm Hebrew exam (written)**

The Midterm Hebrew exam tests knowledge of all the vocabulary, syntax and morphology in sessions 1–6 as well as mastery of proper Hebrew handwriting. A student who regularly completes all homework and participates in in-class activities should not find the test difficult. The test will include following parts:

##### Listening and writing:

- Dictation
- Understanding simple conversation and filling in missing information

##### Textual part:

- Answering questions about information contained in a short text
- Filling in correct forms of nouns and verbs according to the context
- Completing sentences with appropriate pronouns and prepositions
- Filling in missing vowels
- Writing a short and simple image description (the minimal amount of words will be given)

The test will last 60 minutes.

#### **Assessment breakdown**

<b>Assessed area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary, syntax and morphology	40%
Listening and understanding	40%
Proper handwriting	20%

#### **Assignment 5: Final Hebrew exam (written)**

The Final Hebrew exam tests knowledge of all the vocabulary, syntax, morphology and orthography in sessions 1–12. By the time of the final exam, students should have mastered confidently the whole alphabet in its printed and written form. As the amount of vocabulary and grammar grows in course of time, it is especially important to complete homework regularly in order to pass the exam. The final exam will have a similar structure to the midterm exam:

##### Listening and writing:

- Dictation
- Understanding simple conversation and filling in missing information

##### Textual part:

- Answering questions about information contained in a short text
- Filling in correct forms of nouns and verbs according to the context
- Completing sentences with appropriate pronouns and prepositions
- Writing a short and simple text on a given topic (the minimal amount of words will be given)



The test will last 60 minutes.

### Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
To demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary, syntax and morphology	40%
Listening and understanding	40%
Proper handwriting	20%

### Assignment 6: Quizzes on Judaism

There will be three short quizzes on Judaism, Jewish history and culture. Quizzes consist of five questions on the readings and will be taken by students through NEO. They demonstrate that the students have completed the readings and are able to use the information in a creative way. Questions will be posed so as to avoid a simple answer by filling in the missing data. Rather, students are expected to process the information and see a broader historical picture, describe tensions between the "sacred history" and the presentation of an informed historical account, assume different perspectives on historical events, and understand the continuing relevance of described historical events, narratives and personalities for contemporary Judaism and Jewish culture.

Quizzes will also incorporate information given in the Judaism and Jewish Culture section of each session. During this part of every session, references will be made to information and ideas contained in Fishbane's *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions*. Students are expected to have read the book by the time when *Online quiz on Judaism III* will take place (5 December 2023). Questions in this last quiz on Judaism will assume the ability to combine information and perspectives contained in both required books on Judaism and Jewish Culture in addition to ideas discussed in the classroom.

Students will be able to use the texts of the readings and their notes while taking the test.

The quizzes should be submitted no later than Friday noon of the week it is given.

### Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstrate knowledge of basic data	60%
Ability to contextualize information	40%
Style and Use of Language	10%

## 8. General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

### Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

### **Attendance**

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

### **Absence excuse and make-up options**

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

**Late work:** No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

### **Electronic devices**

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

**Eating** is not allowed during classes.

### **Cheating and disruptive behavior**

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center**

Plagiarism is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin's White Paper 'The Plagiarism Spectrum' (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one's own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The "Aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at:  
<http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

### ***Course accessibility and inclusion***

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

## 9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95-100	<b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	<b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	<b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	65-69	<b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60-64	
F	0-59	<b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Aleš Weiss, PhD

Date: 3 April 2023

Approved by: Gerald Power, PhD

Date: 3 April 2023