



Russian icon: St. Peter and St. Paul

## **BI 509: Greek Translation**

Summer 2025

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### **Course Basics**

3 credit hours

Prerequisite: BI 502: Introduction to New Testament Greek

Optional Meetings Times (2x per week) to be determined based on students' and professor's availability

### **Course Description**

This course is an advanced study of the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of New Testament Greek in service of translation. It provides students practice both sight reading and translating the New Testament in its original language. The course engages the theory and practice of Bible translation, advances students' facility with Greek New Testament translation tools, and increases students' knowledge of Greek vocabulary.

The two texts from which passages are translated, the Gospel of Mark and the Letter to the Romans, have historically been attributed to the two figures pictured above, Peter and Paul, respectively.

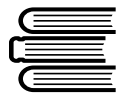
## Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this class will:

- Analyze and translate accurately moderate-to-difficult passages from the Greek New Testament
- Demonstrate the skill to sight translate passages of moderate difficulty from a critical edition of the Greek New Testament.
- Develop a working vocabulary of words occurring 20 or more times in the Greek New Testament.
- Demonstrate the ability to utilize a variety of Greek translation tools, including grammars, Bible software, lexica, concordances, and commentaries.

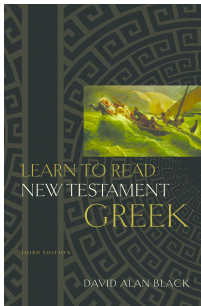
## Curricular Objectives:

- Be formed by, live in, and minister out of scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church (MDiv)
- Interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition (MDiv)
- Preach the Word of God with faithfulness and clarity (MDiv)
- Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission to the world (MAMD)
- Articulate and interpret key themes from the Christian scriptures in conversation with contemporary and ecclesial contexts (MAM)



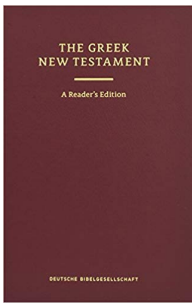
## Required Texts

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This is the grammar that we use in the Greek I course at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. In the process of translating you should find yourself returning to this (or another introductory grammar) to consult information on Greek forms and basic grammar.

David Alan Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, 3rd edition (B&H Academic, 2009) ISBN: 0805444939

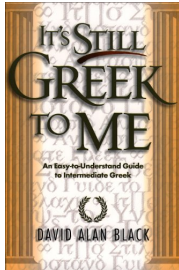


UBS 5th Revised Greek New Testament Reader's Edition  
(German Bible Society, 2015)  
ISBN: 1619706180

I very strongly recommend that you have open and work from this reader's edition of the Greek New Testament, which was also required for Greek I, as you complete translations for this class. One aim of this class is for students to develop a greater joy in translating Greek so that you might continue to do so after seminary. Developing the regular habit of reading from Greek New Testament will help to facilitate this enjoyment.

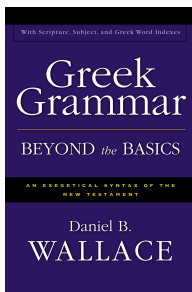
## Recommended Texts

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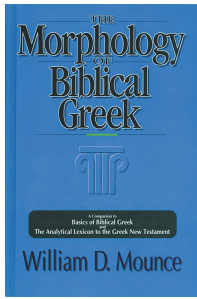
David Alan Black, *It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998)  
ISBN: 0801021812

This is an intermediate grammar and is used in the Greek Exegesis class. It provides more advanced categories and information of Greek grammar than is provided in the introductory textbook. It helps to facilitate a broader "translation palette" by providing different options for translating certain Greek concepts into English.



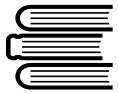
Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996)  
ISBN: 0310218950

This is an advanced grammar that provides even more information about Greek grammatical categories than does *It's Still Greek to Me*. I especially recommend this resource to students who have already taken Greek exegesis.



This resource provides information about why Greek words change (morph) the way that they do when they inflect for different tenses, voices, moods, cases, and numbers. It offers an "under the hood" look at Greek words and their component parts.

William D. Mounce, *The Morphology of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1994)  
ISBN: 0310226368



## Choose One

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Choose one of the three following lexica. I most strongly recommend the first on the list. It is the most comprehensive and user-friendly, which unfortunately makes it by far the most expensive:

**BDAG:**

Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition, revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). (BDAG) ISBN: 978-0226039336.

**LSJ:**

Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Simon Wallenburg Press, 2007). ISBN: 1843560267.

**Thayer's:**

Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody: MA: Hendrickson Academic, 1995). ISBN: 1565632095.

**Concise Dictionary:**

Warren C. Trenchard, *A Concise Dictionary of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). ISBN: 0521521114.



## BrainScape

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Brainscape will be used as one of the tools for developing intermediate to advanced Koine Greek vocabulary. I have created decks that contain Greek words ordered by the frequency that they appear in the Greek New Testament. These flashcards are built on

an algorithm that tracks your progress and has you study what is most relevant based on what you know and do not know. I strongly recommend downloading the Brainscape app on your phone and make practicing vocabulary flashcards a part of your daily routine. The beauty of the app is that you can study in short or long sessions, at your convenience. You do not need to have a paid account to utilize these flashcards, but, just as was the case with the Greek I class, you will need to register for a free account to utilize these flashcards.



## Specifications Grading and Categories

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This class uses what is called specifications or "specs" grading. Final grades are **not** determined by the collective score of weighted items. Rather, they are determined by the number of grade items that you successfully complete. Every grade item in the class can be revised and resubmitted until it is successfully completed.

There are three different categories of grade items in this class: vocabulary quizzes, translation assignments, and annotated translations.

| Grade     | Vocabulary Quizzes | Translation Assignments | Verses Translated in Annotated Translations |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>A</b>  | 16                 | 12                      | 40  |
| <b>A-</b> | 15                 | 11                      | 38  |
| <b>B+</b> | 14                 | 11                      | 36  |
| <b>B</b>  | 13                 | 10                      | 34  |
| <b>B-</b> | 12                 | 10                      | 32  |
| <b>C+</b> | 11                 | 10                      | 30  |
| <b>C</b>  | 10                 | 9                       | 28  |
| <b>C-</b> | 9                  | 9                       | 26  |
| <b>D+</b> | 8                  | 9                       | 24  |
| <b>D</b>  | 7                  | 8                       | 22  |
| <b>D-</b> | 6                  | 8                       | 20  |

## Vocabulary Quizzes

To achieve particular grades in the specs grading system, you must pass a certain number of vocabulary at an 85%. For example, to achieve a "C" in the class, you must successfully complete 10 of the 16 quizzes. Once you achieve an 85% on a quiz, the next quiz will become available.

All quizzes are closed-note, closed-book, and can be taken an unlimited number of times. Quizzes randomly populate questions from the respective frequency categories, so that when you re-take a quiz it will not be identical to the previous version that you attempted, though it will be drawing from the same bank of questions associated with that particular frequency. All quizzes are cumulative and contain twenty-five questions. The first twenty questions are "new" material, pulling from a bank of vocabulary words associated with that quiz's frequency, while the last five questions in the quiz are "old" or "review" material, pulling from previous frequency banks.

The best way to study for vocabulary quizzes is to practice Brainscape flashcards for the course daily. Both the flashcards and the quizzes are based on the frequency that words appear in the Greek New Testament.

Being able to recall quickly the English meaning of a Greek word makes the process of translation and sight reading far more enjoyable. One learning outcome for this class is expanding your Greek vocabulary. This chart indicates different levels of Greek competency, how much vocabulary ought to be memorized to reach that level of competency, and what percentage of words in the Greek New Testament are associated with a given frequency:

| Level        | NT Frequency | # of            |                     | Cumulative  |         |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|---------|
|              |              | Unique NT Words | # of Total NT Words | % of NT     | % of NT |
| Beginner     | 100x+        | 64              | 84,330              | 61%         | 61%     |
|              | 50-99x       | 248             | 26,554              | 19%         | 80%     |
|              | 25-49x       | 233             | 8,049               | 6%          | 86%     |
| Intermediate | 20-24x       | 96              | 2,109               | 2%          | 87%     |
|              | 15-19x       | 169             | 2,813               | 2%          | 89%     |
|              | 10-14x       | 316             | 3,687               | 3%          | 92%     |
| Advanced     | 9x           | 101             | 909                 | 1%          | 93%     |
|              | 8x           | 116             | 928                 | 1%          | 93%     |
|              | 7x           | 119             | 833                 | 1%          | 94%     |
|              | 6x           | 173             | 1,038               | 1%          | 95%     |
|              | 5x           | 228             | 1,140               | 1%          | 96%     |
| Superhero    | 4x           | 310             | 1,240               | 1%          | 96%     |
|              | 3x           | 465             | 1,395               | 1%          | 97%     |
|              | 2x           | 827             | 1,654               | 1%          | 99%     |
|              | 1x           | 1,928           | 1,928               | 1%          | 100%    |
| <b>Total</b> |              | <b>5,393</b>    | <b>138,607</b>      | <b>100%</b> |         |



## ***Translation Assignments***

Translation is both an art and a science that takes practice (and should be fun!). This class's translation assignments aim to develop your skills translating the Greek New Testament utilizing a variety of sources, as I hope you will do beyond this class. The purpose of these assignments is not to test your knowledge, but to give you practice using Greek tools.

There are 12 possible translation assignments. Successfully completing and self-correcting your translations will open the next translation assignment.

Translation assignments are open-book and open-note. You should use your full palette of resources while completing them: the Reader's Edition of the Greek New Testament, grammars, paradigm help sheets, STEP Bible, Greek dictionaries, etc. I do ask, however, that you not base your translation off of another translation (e.g. the NRSV), but that you attempt to translate the passage completely in your own words without recourse to other translations. It is okay if your initial translation comes out inelegantly or even as non-sensical in English. I would rather see you productively struggle with the Greek than get it all right on the first attempt.

Once you submit your first, "uncorrected" attempt at the translation, a video will be made available in which I walk through my translation of the passage. You can self-correct your translation on the basis of this video or by attending a Zoom meeting in which that particular passage is reviewed. Please indicate your corrections using a different color. Once you have corrected your initial translation, submit it to the second, "Corrected" dropbox.

Both initial submissions and corrections can be either electronic documents (Word or PDF, please) or they can be printed out and submitted as a photo or PDF of the handwritten work.

## ***Annotated Translations***

There are two annotated translations. The total number of verses that are successfully translated by the end of the course determines the letter grade for this particular category.

Annotated translations ask you to translate a substantial portion of text and make grammatical notes on your translation unassisted. Your translation should include several notes (these should be in the form of footnotes) on translation decisions that you have made in each verse. These notes should indicate what other options there might have been for the translation of that particular word or phrase, why you opted for the translation that you did, and, when relevant, the different grammatical classifications/categories for the translation options (i.e. the various categories presented and explained in a Greek grammar like *It's Still Greek to Me*).

Once you submit your annotated translation, it will be assessed by the professor indicating how many verses were successfully translated with notes. Upon receiving this assessment, you may revise your translation and notes in order to receive credit for more verses, if need be.



## Self-paced Schedule

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This course is self-paced and does not progress in a week-by-week manner. Rather, after each assignment or quiz is successfully completed, a new one opens. How far a student progresses in the different grade categories determines their final grade.

While the course does not progress in a week-by-week manner, specific translation assignments will be reviewed during specific weeks of the course during the optional synchronous meetings, according to the schedule below. The schedule also includes suggested grade items to be completed in particular weeks in order to receive an “A” in the class.

| Week         | Vocabulary     | Translation                          | Annotated Translation |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>One</b>   | Quizzes #1–5   | Assignments #1–2:<br>Mark 1:4–15     |                       |
| <b>Two</b>   | Quizzes #6–7   | Assignments #3–4:<br>Mark 1:16–28    |                       |
| <b>Three</b> | Quizzes #8–10  | Assignments #5–6:<br>Mark 2:1–12     |                       |
| <b>Four</b>  |                |                                      | Mark 5:1–20           |
| <b>Five</b>  | Quizzes #11–12 | Assignments #7–8:<br>Romans 1:8–17   |                       |
| <b>Six</b>   | Quizzes #13–14 | Assignments #9–10:<br>Romans 5:1–11  |                       |
| <b>Seven</b> | Quizzes #15–16 | Assignments #11–12:<br>Romans 8:1–11 |                       |
| <b>Eight</b> |                |                                      | Romans 8:18–38        |