

Religion and Archaeology
RLST 332
Fall Semester 2012
MWF 2:10 – 3:00 PM

Instructor: Dr. Susan Cohen
Office: 2-161 Wilson Hall
Office hours: MW 9:30- 11:30 AM or by appointment.
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Goals of the course:

- 1) To examine the interface between religion and archaeology in order to understand how archaeological interpretation becomes subject to religious belief and/or how religious belief may affect archaeological interpretation.
- 2) To examine the history of this interconnection between religion and archaeology as it developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 3) To apply knowledge of these interconnections and interactions to specific case studies in archaeology in order to examine and evaluate the scholarly arguments regarding the history of the human past.

Course Policies:

- 1) This is a course about religion and the relationship between religion and archaeology. This is **NOT** a class that teaches religious doctrine or that is taught from a religious perspective. We will be examining religion and its connection with archaeology in **an academic and secular setting**, and all religions, religious beliefs, and religious interpretations of events, texts, and archaeological remains will therefore **be open to questioning, examination, interpretation, criticism, and discussion**. An open mind and a willingness to examine new ideas and new methods of understanding the history of religions and the development of religious traditions are essential. **This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.**
- 2) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the *Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines*, or make an appointment with the professor or with your TA to discuss the problem. **Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification, or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

Required texts: *Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins edition.
Cline, E. *Biblical Archaeology. A Very Short Introduction*.
Dever, W.G. *Did God Have a Wife?*
Additional readings on D2L.

Course requirements: participation and assignments	10%
three response papers	30% (10% each)
two papers	40% (20% each)
final exam	20%

Assigned Readings:

All of the readings for each week are listed at the end of each week's lectures on the syllabus. You should have finished reading everything for that week by Friday's class session and be prepared to use information from the readings for the class discussion. In addition, relevant material from the biblical text will be listed, using standard biblical citation format (if you don't know what this is or how to understand it, ASK!); again, you should have read these passages and thought about how/why they might be relevant to the weekly topic.

Participation and Assignments:

There will be different discussion questions and/or short assignments handed out throughout the semester prior to certain class sessions. You should come to class with those assignments completed and be prepared to use them as part of the class discussion and activities on that day.

Response Papers:

There will be **three** response papers due during the semester, on any of the themes discussed in class. The main themes of the class and the relevant discussion questions will be handed out in the first week of the semester. You may choose which three topics you like the best, or find most intriguing, etc., and write a short (two-three page) response paper that addresses the question; for whichever topic you choose, the paper will be due in class on the Friday of the week that subject is discussed. The paper should utilize the lectures and readings for that week.

Essays:

There will **two essays**, of lengths to be designated on the assignment, on topics raised by the class that examine the interconnections between religion and archaeology. These essays will be due on **Friday 5 October** and **Friday 16 November**.

Final Exam:

The **final exam** for this course will be due on **Monday 10 December**. The final will be comprehensive for the semester.

Note:

This class assumes knowledge of the academic and scholarly approach to biblical criticism as it is practiced in most university settings. The biblical text is regarded as being composed of writings produced by different groups of humans, living in different places, with different perspectives, beliefs, and ideas, which were written over a large span of time, long after the events described, and subject to constant revisions and adjustment.

Course Schedule:

Week One:

Aug. 27: Introduction

Aug. 29: Course overview: archaeology and religion

Themes and discussion questions for response papers handed out in class.

Aug. 31: Archaeology in the ancient Near East: history and background

Reading: Cline, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 1-39.

Silberman, "The Lure of the Holy Land," D2L.

Week Two:

Sept. 3: **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY. NO CLASS**

Sept 5: Archaeology in the ancient Near East: biblical archaeology

Sept 7: **NO CLASS**

Reading: Cline, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 40-68.

Wright, "Biblical Archaeology," D2L.

Dever, "Syro-Palestinian Archaeology and Biblical Archaeology," D2L.

Mazar, "On Archaeology, Biblical History, and Biblical Archaeology," D2L.

Week Three:

Sept. 10: Archaeology: method, theory, practice

Sept. 12: Archaeology: artifacts and architecture

Sept. 14: **Assignment 1 due in class.**

Archaeology: interpretation and perspective

Reading: Gibson, "Archaeology," D2L. Pp. 370-377 required (read the rest only if you feel like it).

Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, Chapter 3.

Method Handouts, D2L

Week Four:

Sept. 17: Patriarchal traditions: religion

Sept. 19: Patriarchal traditions: archaeological evidence

Sept. 21: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and patriarchal traditions

Reading: Wright, "The Founding Fathers," D2L.

Finkelstein and Silberman, "Searching for the Patriarchs," D2L.

Biblical passages: Gen. 12-13, 20-21, 23, 26, 28

Week Five:

Sept. 24: "Conquest" traditions: religion

Sept. 26: "Conquest" traditions: archaeological evidence

Sept. 28: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and conquest traditions

Reading: Wright, "Conquest," D2L.
Finkelstein and Silberman, "The Conquest of Canaan," D2L.

Biblical passages: Josh. 1, 6, 8, 10-12, 24.

Week Six:

Oct. 1: The Monarchy: text and archaeology

Oct. 3: The Monarchy: archaeology

Oct. 5: **FIRST PAPER DUE**

Reading: Wright, "The Golden Age," D2L.
Finkelstein and Silberman, "The Memories of a Golden Age," D2L.
Finkelstein, "King Solomon's Golden Age: History or Myth?" D2L.

Biblical passages: 2 Sam. 5-8; I Kgs. 4, 6-7.

Week Seven:

Oct. 8: Archaeology and imagery: image, icon, idol

Oct. 10: Archaeology and imagery: polytheism

Oct. 12: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and imagery

Reading: Lewis, "Syro-Palestinian Iconography and Divine Images," D2L.
Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, Chapter 8.

Biblical passages: Ex. 20:4, 32; Num. 21:4-9; Dt. 4, 12:1-4; I Kgs. 12; II Kgs. 18:1-6
Is. 44:9-20; Jer. 10:1-10.

Week Eight:

Oct. 15: Archaeology and imagery: male and female representation

Oct. 17: Archaeology and imagery: Yahweh and his Asherah

Oct. 19: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and imagery

Reading: Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, Chapters 6-7.

Week Nine:

Oct. 22: Archaeology and belief: burials and religion

Oct. 24: Archaeology and death: ethics and interpretation

Oct. 26: **Assignment 2 due in class.**
Discussion on archaeology, religion, and mortuary traditions

Reading: No author, "Introduction," D2L
Ilan, "Mortuary Practices at Tel Dan in the Middle Bronze Age," D2L

Week Ten:

Oct. 29: Archaeology, imperialism, nationalism

Oct. 30: Archaeology and nationalism: Masada and more

Nov. 2: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and nationalism

Reading: Silberman, "The Race for a Relic," D2L.
Silberman, "Power, Politics, and the Past," D2L.
Silberman, "The Fall of Masada," on D2L.
Whitelam, "Inventing Ancient Israel," on D2L.

Biblical passages: Gen. 12, 23; Dt. 4, 6-7, 12; Josh. 24

Week Eleven:

Nov. 5: Archaeology and the New Testament: archaeology of Jesus

Nov. 7: Archaeology and the New Testament: Dead Sea Scrolls

Nov. 9: Discussion on archaeology, religion, and the New Testament

Reading: Cline, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 98-114.
Qumran readings, D2L.

Biblical passages: Lk. 2:1-20, 4: 1-37, 7:1-7; 8:1-39; Matt. 27.

Week Twelve:

Nov. 12: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Nov. 14: Fabulous and exciting guest lecturer: Dr. Sara Waller

Nov. 16: **SECOND PAPER DUE**

Week Thirteen:

Nov. 19: Archaeology and the New Testament: the Coptic Gospels

Reading: Pagels, "Introduction," D2L.

Nov. 21: **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Nov. 23: **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Week Fourteen:

Nov. 26: Archaeology and falsification: data and publication

Nov. 28: Archaeology and falsification: fakes and forgeries

Nov. 30: **Assignment 3 due in class.**

Discussion on archaeology, religion, and falsification: the James Ossuary

Reading: Cline, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 115-129.

Golan, Authenticity Testimony, D2L.

Goren, Authenticity Examination, D2L.

Goren and Silberman, Faking Authenticity, D2L.

Ossuary new articles, D2L.

Week Fifteen:

Dec. 3: Archaeology and religion: other fun topics

Dec. 5: Archaeology and religion: ongoing problems

Dec. 7: Archaeology and religion: conclusions

Reading: Joffe, A., "The Changing Place of Biblical Archaeology," D2L.

Bunimovitz and Faust, "Re-Constructing Biblical Archaeology," D2L.

Week Sixteen:

Dec. 10: **FINAL EXAM DUE**