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**RE 200 / CL 222 / HY 200 – Excavating Israel:
The Archaeology of Ancient Judaism and Christianity**

Summer 2019, Block A (May 24 – June 24)

This course centers on student participation in archaeological excavations at Shikhin, an ancient Jewish village in the Galilee region of Israel. Through this field experience, students will gain training in essential methods and theories of archaeology as well as insights into the history, culture, politics and economics of the region during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. With an understanding of these contexts, students will examine the related histories of early Judaism, the ministry of Jesus, and Christian origins. In addition to their experience in the field, students will learn through assigned readings, regular evening lectures, excursions to other significant historical sites in the region, and a final weekend exploring Jerusalem. The course will be especially attentive to the benefits and challenges of correlating ancient literary sources, including biblical narratives, with the archaeological record.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this course, students will gain:

- A solid understanding of the history and culture of Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, including an awareness of the impacts of political shifts and conflicts.
- Perspectives on understanding Jesus' historical ministry that are grounded in studies of the society and culture of the Galilee region; a related awareness of the origins of Christianity within first-century CE Judaism.
- Familiarity with the geography of Roman Galilee, including architecture, trade networks, the intersection of urban and village communities, and related cultural cross currents.
- An orientation to key theories and methods in archaeology, with particular attention to the principles and practices of stratigraphic excavation.
- Experience pairing literary and material evidence, assessing their relative contributions to historical reconstructions.
- An awareness and appreciation of the diverse cultures and religious traditions present in modern Israel, as students reside in Nazareth and explore Jerusalem.

READINGS

All readings will be available as PDFs via Canvas, to print in advance of trip and/or read electronically; see schedule below.

EVALUATION

Each student's final course grade will be based on the following:

40%	Engagement (Participation, Attendance, Area Supervisor Evaluation)
10%	Discussion Lead
25%	Integrative Journal
25%	Final Essay

Engagement—students are expected to participate fully in excavations in the field and related course activities (pottery reading, evening lectures, weekend excursions). Students should not only be present, but they should also be engaged; the latter can be demonstrated through consistent effort, input, and questions (as relevant to each activity). Students should also recognize that excavating is a team-oriented enterprise; it is important that they contribute accordingly. In the field, each student will work with one primary area supervisor, who oversees a small team excavating in a particular square (4x4 meter area). At the conclusion of the excavation, the area supervisor will report briefly on the student's contributions to the square, including, but not limited to, consistent effort and engagement in the square's progress, appropriate application of digging methods, participation in data collection and analysis, periodic assistance with record keeping, and regular field-related chores (ex. pottery washing).

Detailed guidelines for the other course elements—Discussion Lead, Integrative Journal, and Final Essay—are available via Canvas.

SCHEDULE – Summer 2019

May 24 – Depart the United States for Tel Aviv, Israel (Ben Gurion International Airport)

May 25 – Arrive in Tel Aviv; meet up with group at the airport; travel together via vans to Hotel Galilee in Nazareth, our residence for the majority of our time in Israel

May 26 – Tour our excavation site, Shikhin, and the neighboring site of Sepphoris, an excavated ancient urban center, now a National Park.

May 27 – Begin excavations at Shikhin; this will continue every weekday through June 21

June 1 – Day excursion(s) to regional archaeological/historical sites

June 8 – Day excursion(s) to regional archaeological/historical sites

June 14/15 – Open weekend for optional student travel within Israel

June 21 – Depart Nazareth for Jerusalem

June 22 – Group visit to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem

June 23 – Day excursion to Masada, Qumran, and the Dead Sea

June 24 – Depart Jerusalem for Ben Gurion International Airport; return flights to the United States.

Typical Weekday Schedule

4:00am – light breakfast at the hotel

4:30am – depart hotel for field site

5:00am – excavations begin for the day

8:30am – second breakfast in the field
10:30am – fruit break in the field
12:00pm – complete work in the field and pack up for the day
12:30pm – return to the hotel
1:00pm – lunch
6:00pm – dinner
7:00pm – evening lecture

READING SCHEDULE

PRELIMINARY

- B. D. Ehrman, "What is the Bible? And Why is It So Hard to Understand?," in *The Bible: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-30.
- E. A. Cline, *Selections from Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 21-68.
- J. F. Strange, T. R. W. Longstaff, and D. E. Groh, *The Shikhin Excavation Project Manual for Area Supervisors*, revised by J. R. Strange (Samford University, 2016).

WEEK 1

- J. C. VanderKam, "The Time of the Second Temple," in *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Eerdmans, 2001), 1-52.
- J. R. Strange, "Kefir Shikhin," in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods, Volume 2: The Archaeological Record from Cities, Towns, and Villages*, eds. D. A. Fiensy and J. R. Strange (Fortress Press, 2015), 88-108.
- J. R. Strange, ed. *The Shikhin Reader: Mentions of Shikhin/Asochis in the Ancient Literature*.
- J. F. Strange, "Recent Discoveries at Sepphoris and Their Relevance for Biblical Research," *Neotestamentica* 34 (2000): 125-141.
- Z. Weiss and E. Netzer, "The Mosaics of the Nile Festival Building," in *Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture*, eds. R. M. Nagy, E. M. Meyers, and Z. Weiss (North Carolina Museum of Art, 1996), 127-131.

WEEK 2

- M. A. Chancey, "Introduction," in *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-23.
- E. M. Meyers and M. A. Chancey, "Herod the Great and the Introduction of Roman Architecture," in *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (Yale University Press, 2014), 50-82.
- J. K. Zangenberg, "Archaeological News from the Galilee: Tiberias, Magdala, and Rural Galilee," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 471-484.
- D. E. Oakman and J. A. Overman, "Debate: Was the Galilean Economy Oppressive or Prosperous?," in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods, Volume 1*:

Life, Culture, and Society, eds. D. A. Fiensy and J. R. Strange (Fortress, 2014), 346-365.

- L. I. Levine, "Art in the Second Temple Period and Its Aftermath," in *Visual Judaism in Late Antiquity* (Yale University Press, 2012), 31-65.
- J. F. Strange, "Nazareth," in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods, Volume 2: The Archaeological Record from Cities, Towns, and Villages*, eds. D. A. Fiensy and J. R. Strange (Fortress Press, 2015), 167-180.

WEEK 3

- E. M. Meyers and M. A. Chancey, "The Emergence of Christianity," in *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (Yale University Press, 2014), 174-202.
- R. Horsley, "Social Movements in Galilee," in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods, Volume 1: Life, Culture, and Society*, eds. D. A. Fiensy and J. R. Strange (Fortress, 2014), 167-174.
- A. M. Berlin, "Romanization and anti-Romanization in pre-Revolt Galilee," in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, eds. A. M. Berlin and J. A. Overman (Routledge, 2002), 57-73.
- J. Magness, "Tombs and Burial Customs," in *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit* (Eerdmans, 2011), 145-172 - Note: *The full chapter and extensive footnotes are included in the PDF; so, if you print, you might opt to include only the assigned pages.*

WEEK 4

- E. M. Meyers and M. A. Chancey, "Early Judaism and the Rise of the Synagogue," in *Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (Yale University Press, 2014), 203-238.
- S. S. Miller, "Jewish Sepphoris: A Great City of Scholars and Scribes," in *Sepphoris in Galilee: Crosscurrents of Culture*, eds. R. M. Nagy, E. M. Meyers, and Z. Weiss (North Carolina Museum of Art, 1996), 58-63.
- L. I. Levine, "The Zodiac and Other Greco-Roman Motifs in Jewish Arts," in *Visual Judaism in Late Antiquity* (Yale University Press, 2012), 317-336.
- J. Magness, "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 108-132.

Optional:

- M. Aviam, "Yodefat/Jotapata: The Archaeology of the First Battle," in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, eds. A. M. Berlin and J. A. Overman (Routledge, 2002), 121-133.
- E. H. Cline, "The Ark of the Covenant," in *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Bible* (National Geographic, 2007), 121-152.
- E. H. Cline, "On the Edge of Empires," in *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age* (The University of Michigan

Press, 2000), 101-115.

- H. G. Holum, "Caesarea's Temple Hill: The Archaeology of Sacred Space in an Ancient Mediterranean City," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 64 (2004): 184-199.
- T. Rajak, "Jewish Millenarian Expectations," in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, eds. A. M. Berlin and J. A. Overman (Routledge, 2002), 164-188.