

FIU Department of Religious Studies  
**Biblical Archaeology**  
**REL 3280**

Professor Erik Larson  
DM 303  
Office Hours: TR 11:00-12:15 and by appointment  
Email: [larsone@fiu.edu](mailto:larsone@fiu.edu)

Fall 2023  
TR 12:30-1:45  
(305) 348-3518

Objectives: This course will explore the nature, goals, and methods of biblical archaeology. A survey will be made of the most important sites and finds that have given us a new understanding of the world of the Bible. By the end of the course students will understand:

1. The relation of archaeology to Biblical studies.
2. The methods employed by archaeologists in their excavations.
3. Understand the geography of the Ancient Near East.
4. The general lines of development of civilization in the Near East from the Bronze Age through the Roman Age.
5. The most significant finds relating to the Bible and how they can improve our understanding of the Bible.

## **SYLLABUS**

Week 1. [August 22, 24] Introduction and Methods of Archaeology.  
Read: *TAB*, Intro and Chapters 1 & 2 pp. 1-32, *TI*, Intro and Chap. 1 pp. 6-20.

### **Quiz 1**

Week 2. [August 29, 31] The Geography of the Ancient World.  
Read: *TI*, Chapter 1 pp. 21-47, *DLBT*, Chapter 1 pp. 1-12.

### **Quiz 2**

Week 3. [September 5, 7] The Bronze Age, Part 1: Egypt and Babylon  
Read: *TAB*, Chapter 3 pp. 33-38.

Week 4. [September 12, 14] Bronze Age, Part 2: The Patriarchs  
Read: *TAB*, Chapter 3 pp. 38-48; *TI* Chapter 2 pp. 48-50; *DLBT* Chapter 4 pp. 65-85.

### **Quiz 3**

Week 5. [September 19, 21] Bronze Age, Part 3: Moses and the Exodus

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 4 pp. 49-63; *TI* Chapter 2 pp. 50-53

#### **Quiz 4**

Week 6. [September 26, 28] Bronze Age, Part 4: The Conquest

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 5 pp. 64-76; *TI*, Chapter 2 pp. 53-64, Chapters 6 & 7 pp. 148-180; *DLBT* Chapter 2 pp. 13-44.

#### **Quiz 5**

Week 7. [October 3, 5] Iron Age, Part 1: The Kingdom of David and Solomon

Read: *TAB*, Chapters 6 & 7 pp. 77-98; *TI* Chapter 3 pp. 68-81, Chapter 5 pp. 111-147, Chapter 10 pp. 204-233, Chapter 11 pp. 234-260; *DLBT* Chapter 3 pp. 43-62.

#### **Midterm Exam Open October 6-8**

Week 8. [October 10, 12] Iron Age, Part 2: The Divided Monarchy

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 8 pp. 99-114; *TI* Chapters 3 & 4 pp. 82-110; *DLBT* Chapters 5 & 6 pp 87-108.

#### **Paper 1 Due October 15**

Week 9. [October 17, 19] The Persian Period: Exile and Return

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 9 pp. 115-123; *TI* Chapters 8 & 9 pp. 181-203.

#### **Quiz 6**

Week 10. [October 24, 26] The Coming of the Greeks and Romans

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 10 pp. 124-136.

Handout Lee I. Levine, "The Age of Hellenism: Alexander the Great and the Rise and Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom" in *Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1999) pp. 231-264.

Handout Shaye J.D. Cohen and Michael Satlow, "Roman Domination: The Jewish Revolt and the Destruction of the Second Temple" in *Ancient Israel*, ed. Hershel Shanks (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1999) pp. 265-298.

#### **Quiz 7**

Week 11. [October 31, November 2] The City of Jerusalem

Read: Handout: John Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988) pp. 123-156.

Handout of Lee I. Levine, "Second Temple Jerusalem" in *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998) pp. 33-95.

Handout of Daniel Sperber, "Archeology and the City" in *The City in Roman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 149-187.

## Quiz 8

Week 12. [November 7, 9] Archaeology of the Life of Jesus, Part 1

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 11 pp. 137-151;

Handout: Sean Freyne, "The Social World of First Century Galilee" in *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) pp. 135-175.

John Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988) pp. 157-197.

## Quiz 9

Week 13. [November 14, 16] Archaeology of the Life of Jesus, Part 2

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 12 pp. 152-165.

## Quiz 10

Week 14. [November 21] Archaeology of the Early Church, Part 1

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 3 pp. 33-48.

## No Class November 22: Thanksgiving!

Week 15. [November 28, 30] Archaeology of the Early Church, Part 2

Read: *TAB*, Chapter 13 pp. 166-185.

## Paper 2 Due November 30.

## Final Exam Open December 1-8

### Textbooks:

James K. Hoffmeier, *The Archaeology of the Bible* (Oxford: Lion, 2008) = TAB

B. S. J. Isserlin, *The Israelites* ISBN: 9780800634261 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) = TI

Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* ISBN: 978-1589830424 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) = DLBT

|                 |              |     |
|-----------------|--------------|-----|
| <b>Grading:</b> | 10 Quizzes   | 40% |
|                 | Paper 1      | 20% |
|                 | Midterm Exam | 10% |
|                 | Paper 2      | 20% |
|                 | Final Exam   | 10% |

**Term Papers:** You will choose two topics from the list provided at the end of the syllabus, one from either A or B and the other from C or D. If you have an idea that is not on the list, you may

ask the instructor to get permission to write on it. Then you will write a short paper on each topic. The aim of the paper is to provide a detailed overview of the topic selected and how it relates to the Bible (if it does).

The papers should be about **4-6** pages in length, excluding bibliography, and be based on at least four sources. Three excellent resources for many papers will be the *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, and the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. But you cannot rely solely on these and should consult some of the books and articles listed in the bibliographies of these works or find others on your own. Each paper is to be double-spaced with 12 pt. font. The style should conform with either that of *MLA* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. In the body of the paper, you may use either footnotes or endnotes.

**Academic Honesty:** Each student is expected to do his or her own work. It is absolutely unacceptable to submit someone else's work as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. Thus, when in the course of writing your paper you quote or paraphrase an idea found in one of your sources you must give credit to the original author (usually by means of a footnote).

**Academic Conduct:** Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Examinations:** Both midterm and final examinations will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and short answer questions. The final examination is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

**Attendance:** An absolutely essential part of the course! Some material will inevitably be covered in class that is **not** to be found in the textbook so that each absence negatively affects your ability to do well on the tests.

**Syllabus Note on Internet Use in Research:** You may cite from the internet in your term papers, but you must be discerning. Anyone can post “information” on the internet, and thus some of what is there is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes even blatantly untrue. As in print collections in libraries, only scholarly articles on the internet are acceptable as sources for research papers.

Internet articles should ideally have authors. Some will list individual authors; others will list institutions as sources. The credibility of the information depends on the credibility of the source. Acceptable sources include individual scholars with academic credentials, educational institutions (e.g., Institute of Reformation History, Princeton University), publicly supported national or international institutions (e.g. the World Health Organization or the

National Institutes of Health) or other well known institutions with credible reputations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Childrens' Defense Fund). Most educational institutions have addresses which end with the letters "edu." You must use your judgment since many reputable institutions may not be well known by most students. Also, sometimes websites may list a university as the place from which the material emanates, but which does not sponsor or in any way support the information on that site. (You could set up a website that lists FIU as its origin, and purports that the Pope died last month and was replaced by a ringer!).

There will be some internet sources the reliability of which will be difficult to assess. Sometimes you must judge by the tone and range of an article. If it reads like a magazine or newspaper article and cites none of the sources it used, it is not scholarly. You should ask whether the article demonstrates balance: Does it attempt to tell all sides of the story? Does it ask critical questions of the material it covers? How well does its treatment accord with other treatments of the same material you have found? If you would really like to cite an internet article but have doubts about its acceptability, look up the institution or the author on the internet or in the library. Has the author or institution published any other works? Have those been reviewed or cited by other scholars?

When you cite from the internet, you must list the entire address on the web where you found the information and the date you accessed it. When applicable you must also note any search terms needed within the website to find this particular article when these do not appear within the address.

The following are some bibliographic entries:

Musa, Edward, "The Art of the Maya."  
<http://www.unescape.org/pop/journal/v1onaal.htm>. 4/27/23.

Zarabozo, Jamaal, "Is Family Planning Allowed in Islam?"  
<http://www.albany.edu/~ha4934/famplan.html>. 4/21/23.

## Topics for Papers

### First Half Topics:

**A. Ancient Near East:** Decipherment of Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Egyptian Execration Texts, Hammurabi and Babylon, Ebla, Mari, Nuzi, Ancient Egyptian Religion, The Hittites and Boghazkoy, the Hyksos, Ugarit, Cyprus, Mycenae, The Pyramids, The Amarna Letters and the Habiru, Philistines and Sea Peoples, Canaanite Religion, Damascus, Phoenicians, Zoroastrianism, Nebuchadnezzar and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Cyrus and Pasargadae.

**B. Ancient Israel:** Location and Excavation of Ai, Hazor, Lachish, Siege Tactics and Ancient Warfare, Excavations on Mt. Ebal, Solomon's Temple in its Near Eastern Context, Moabite Stone, Assyrian Empire, Hezekiah's Tunnel and Water Supply in Ancient Jerusalem, Signet Rings and Bullae, Silver Rolls from Ketef Hinnom, Elephantine Papyri.

### Second Half Topics:

**C. Second Temple Judaism and Life of Jesus:** Herod's Palace at Jericho, Herod's Building on the Temple Mount, Herodium, Herod's Palace at Masada, Herodian Caesarea, Chronology of Jesus' Life, Capernaum, Roman Money and Tax-Farming, Boats and Fishing on the Sea of Galilee, Caesarea Philippi, the Decapolis, Sepphoris, The Roman Practice of Crucifixion, Burial Practices in Jesus' Time, Location of Jesus' Crucifixion, Life of Pontius Pilate.

**D. Greek and Roman World:** Travel in the Roman World, Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, Books and Libraries in the Roman World, Godfearers, Synagogue of Sardis, Emperor Worship, Construction of Roman Roads, Athenian Acropolis, Areopagus of Athens, Philippi, Thessalonica, Asclepium of Corinth, Gallio and the Bema in Corinth, Catacombs of Rome, Tomb of St. Peter, Roman Forum, Arch of Titus.