

Archaeology and the Bible

Religious Studies 1AB3

Fall 2019

Instructor: John Van Maaren, Ph.D.

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Office: University Hall B129

Office Hours: Mon., Wed. by appointment

Class Periods

Time: Mon., Wed., 2:30–3:20

Place: MDCL 1309

Tutorial 01

Time: Wed., 1:30–2:20

Place: KTH 109

Tutorial 02

Time: Wed., 12:30–1:20

Place: KTH 109

Teaching Assistant: Channah Fonseca-Quezada (fonsecaa@mcmaster.ca)

COURSE INFORMATION

Course description

What is archaeology? What is the Bible? How have these two things been used to illuminate one another in the past, and in what ways do they continue to do so today? These questions provide the driving focus of this course. Part of our task will be to delve into the world of “biblical archaeology,” a fascinating, controversial area combining archaeological and biblical study. As a result, we will explore and seek to understand together how the discipline of biblical archaeology developed, and continues to influence study of the Bible. After getting our bearing with basic concepts, the course will be structured around some of the real or purported “big discoveries” in biblical archaeology over the past century. These have often caused firestorms of controversy in the media, within religious communities, and for the personalities associated with the discoveries. It is hoped that we will all emerge from this course with not only a robust knowledge of these interesting topics, but also a keen critical awareness of how to judge related claims from the media, academics, and others.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to

- Outline archaeological principles and method
- Recount prominent examples where archaeology intersects with the Bible
- Discuss ways that archaeological discovery has impacted biblical understanding
- Compare and contrast the impact of competing contemporary interests on archaeology related to the Bible

Course Resources:

- A serviceable, up-to-date Bible (including the New Testament, and preferably Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books). One of the following versions is suggested if you don't already have one available:
The Harper Collins Study Bible. Fully Revised and Updated (NRSV trans.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.)
The Oxford Study Bible (NRSV trans.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992 or newer)
The New Interpreter's Study Bible (NRSV trans.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)
The Catholic Study Bible (NAB trans.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 or newer)
- We will also use a number of resources through the library website and e-reserves. These are listed in the course schedule and will be described further as the course progresses

Course Assessment:

The components, to be completed by each student and evaluated by the instructor and TA, are as follows:

- Attendance at lectures and tutorials (13% of final evaluation)
Your presence during *both* lectures *and* tutorials forms a fundamental part of the learning process in this course, and consequently a significant portion of your grade will be based on your regular attendance. I encourage you to look at this as an easy way to boost your overall evaluation, rather than a burden. As will be explained further in class, we will use *kahoot it* for live classroom participation and attendance.
- Weekly quizzes (40%)
In conjunction with every week's readings, lectures, and tutorials, you must also complete a relatively short weekly quiz. The format of these will be short-answer (up to a few sentences), and they will be conducted through Avenue at the end of each week. Quizzes will open every Wednesday at 4:00 pm and must be completed by the following Thursday night at 11:00 pm. Between these times, you may take the quiz at your convenience. Quiz questions will address material from the preceding Monday and Wednesday's assignments and class period. The rubric for grading your answers is as follows. You must fulfill all of these criteria in order to receive full credit:
 1. The content must be correct, evaluated according to our readings, the lectures, and tutorial discussions.
 2. Answers must be on topic and cover fully the scope of the quiz question.
 3. Answers must be written clearly, so that the meaning is not ambiguous to the reader.
 4. Answers must be grammatically correct.*The first quiz will take place on the second week of class, between Wed., Sept. 11, and Thurs., Sept. 12.
- Short writing (essay) assignments (35%)
Over the course of the term, you will also need to complete three somewhat longer writing assignments, focused on the topics provided below. These assignments are meant to foster deeper thinking about, and interaction with, topics related to the course, and to give you a chance to write in a more extended way. They will also require a measure of independent research of the topics on your part. Each essay will be evaluated according to its own rubric, to be posted on Avenue in advance of the assignment being due. Below is a basic description of each topic, which will be explained more fully on Avenue in due course.
 1. *The ethics of biblical archaeology* (Up to 1,000 words; due Tuesday, October 1 at 9:00 pm; 10%)
While special interests impact all study of the past, biblical archaeology is especially shaped by contemporary interests, whether religious, ideological, or political. In this essay, you will discuss one ethical issue related to biblical archaeology including how it has impacted biblical archaeology and outline what you see as a responsible ethical stance.
 2. *Forgeries in biblical archaeology* (Up to 1,000 words; due Tuesday, October 29 at 9:00 pm; 10%)
A major issue in the archaeological world – and especially the world of biblical archaeology – is that of professional forgeries. In this essay you will unpack the phenomenon of forgeries by describing this issue and some of the forces behind it, focusing specifically on one or two examples of certain or possible forgery.
 3. *Summative evaluation* (Up to 1,500 words; due December 10 at 9:00 pm; 15%)
By this point in the term you have familiarized yourself with many of the issues and controversies pertaining to archaeology and the Bible, as well as a wide assortment of archaeological material. In this essay, you will reflect on the basic question of the course: What does archaeology offer—or not offer—those interested in better understanding the Bible?
- McMaster Museum of Art (MMA) coin project (12%)
One part of this course is a visit to the MMA (near the Mills Library) with a small group of 10-15 classmates for a guided tour of their ancient coin collection. The visit will be tailored to our class topic, and led by Dr. Spencer Pope of the Department of Classics (Channah or I will also be along). You will be required to check your schedule and sign up for a slot early in the semester. The visits will take place in November, and will be in lieu of one of your usual tutorial meetings. 4 of the 12% allotted for this visit is based simply on your attendance and active participation in the session. The remaining 8% is based on a small (up to 1,000 words) assignment that you will complete after the session, to be handed in on Avenue. In the two-part assignment, you must

Date	Description/Assignment
Wed., Sept. 18	What is the Bible 2? Theories of composition Assigned Reading for Next Class: Hershel Shanks, "First Person: The Big Debate," BAR 28:06 (Nov/Dec 2002) Philip Davies, "The Search for History in the Bible" BAR 26:02 (Mar/Apr 2000) Alexander Joffe, "Critique: Review Damns BAS's Ancient Israel," BAR 29:03 (May/Jun2003) Daniel Lazare, "False Testament: Archaeology Refutes the Bible's Claim to History," Harper's Magazine (March 2002) 39-47 [available through the library website; instructions posted on Avenue] Steven Feldman, "First Person: Is the Bible a Bunch of Historical Hooyey?" BAR 28:03 (May/Jun 2002)
Mon., Sept. 23	Biblical archaeology: A battleground Assigned Reading for Next Class: George Ernest Wright, "Israelite Daily Life," The Biblical Archaeologist 18:3 (Sep 1955): 50-79 [available through library website] Steven Fine, "Why Bone Boxes?" with "Sidebar: The Tomb of Caiaphas," BAR 27:05 (Sep/Oct 2001) Stephanie Hegarty, "The Myth of the Eight-Hour Sleep," BBC Magazine (22 Feb, 2012)
Wed., Sept. 25	Everyday life in the "biblical world" Assigned Reading for Next Class: Genesis 11:27-12:9; Exodus 1:1-5:22 and 13:17-15:21; Joshua 1:1-6:27; 8:1-8:35; 10:40-13:7; Judges 1:1-3:31 The Merneptah Stele (text available on Avenue)
Mon., Sept. 30	The origins of Israel 1: The biblical account of Israel's beginnings and the conquest of Canaan Assigned Reading for Next Class: Yigael Yadin, "Israel Comes to Canaan: Is the Biblical Account of the Israelite Conquest of Canaan Historically Reliable?" BAR 8:02 (Mar/Apr 1982) Anson Rainey, "Inside, Outside: Where Did the Early Israelites Come From?" BAR 34:06 (Nov/Dec 2008)
First writing assignment due Tuesday, Oct. 1 at 9:00 PM!	
Wed., Oct. 2	The origins of Israel 2: The contribution of archaeology Assigned Reading for Next Class: 1 Samuel 15-20; 2 Samuel 5-12; 1 Kings 1:1-2:12 Read the full English translation of the "House of David" inscription on page 13 of the following article: Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment," Israel Exploration Journal 45.1 (1995): 1-18. [available through library website] P. Davies, "'House of David' Built on Sand: The Sins of the Biblical Maximizers," BAR 20:04 (Jul/Aug 1994) A. Rainey, "The 'House of David' and the House of the Deconstructionists," BAR 20:06 (Nov/Dec 1994) Yosef Garfinkel, "The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism," BAR 37:03 (May/Jun 2011) "Archaeologists Say They Found Town where future King David Took Refuge from Saul," Times of Israel (8 July, 2019)
Mon., Oct. 7	The monarchical period 1: Was there a King David? Assigned Reading for Next Class: 1 Kings 2:13-12:19 Eilat Mazar, "Did I find King David's Palace?" BAR 32:01 (Jan/Feb 2006) Avraham Faust, "Did Eilat Mazar Find David's Palace?" BAR 38:05 (Sep/Oct 2012) "Archaeologist: Thick Wall Found at Lachish Indicates King Solomon's Son Built It," Times of Israel (23 April, 2019)

Date	Description/Assignment
Wed., Oct. 9	<p>The monarchical period 2: If there was a David, what about Jerusalem?</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class: 1 Kings 12:20-16:34; 2 Kings 12:17-23:37 Hershel Shanks, "Face to Face: Biblical Minimalists Meet Their Challengers," BAR 23:04 (Jul/Aug 1997) Frank Moore Cross, "King Hezekiah's Seal Bears Phoenician Imagery," BAR 25:02 (Mar/Apr 1999) John Monson, "The New 'Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel," BAR 26:03 (May/Jun 2000)</p>
Oct. 14-20 Mid-term recess	
Mon., Oct. 21	<p>The monarchical period 3: Solomon and the "First Temple"</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class: 2 Kings 24-25; Jeremiah 1:1-2:37; 21:39-39:10 Karl Lawson Younger Jr., "Israelites in Exile," BAR 29:06 (Nov/Dec 2003) R. Wright, "Lachish and Azekah Were the Only Fortified Cities of Judah that Remained," BAR 8:06 (Nov/Dec 1982) H. Shanks, "Destruction of Judean Fortress Portrayed in Dramatic Eighth-Century B.C. Pictures," 10:2 (May/Apr 1984) "Seal from First Temple Period Found at Kotel Supports Biblical Accounts," Jerusalem Post (1 Jan., 2018) "Evidence of the Babylonian Conquest of Jerusalem Found in Mount Zion," EurekAlert (11 Aug., 2019)</p>
Wed., Oct. 23	<p>The exile of Israel and Judah 1: The rise of Assyria and Babylon</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class: Daniel 1; Ezra 1-6; Nehemiah 1:1-8:12; Haggai Eric Meyers and Mark Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i> (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2012), 1-10 [ebook through library website] Hershel Shanks, "Controversy: Academic Debate Crosses the Lines," BAR 30:05 (Sep/Oct 2004) Eilat Mazar, "The Wall that Nehemiah Built," BAR 35:02 (Mar/Apr 2009)</p>
Mon., Oct. 28	<p>The exile of Israel and Judah 2: The return to Judah (Yehud) and the "Second Temple"</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class: Flavius Josephus, Judean Antiquities, Book 12:327-339 2 Maccabees 2:19-10:9 [in "Apocrypha" section of Protestant or ecumenical Bibles, all Catholic bibles, or online: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops] Meyers and Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i>, 11-49</p>
Second writing assignment due by Oct. 29 at 9:00 PM!	
Wed., Oct. 30	<p>The Greeks, "Hellenism," and the Hasmonean Revolt</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class: Flavius Josephus, Judean Antiquities, Book 18:11-25 Flavius Josephus, Judean War, Book 2:119-166 Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i>, 108-132 "Moving about at Qumran," BAR 37:05 (Sep/Oct 2011) Sidnie White Crawford, "Scribe Links Qumran and Masada," BAR 38:06 (Nov/Dec 2012) Eric Cline, "The Masada Mystery" Aeon (2017) "Some notable first-century BCE Palestinian Jews with Greek Names" Mosaic (24 Oct., 2018) "Hundreds of Hellenistic-Period Seal Impressions Discovered at Maresha, Israel" Hebrew Union College (4 Sept., 2018)</p>

Date	Description/Assignment
Mon., Nov. 4	<p>Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls 1: The site of Qumran and the Essene sect</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>L. Schiffman, "A Short History of the Dead Sea Scrolls and What They Tell Us," BAR 41:03 (May/Jun 2015)</p> <p>Hershel Shanks, "Is He Headed to Jail?" BAR 40:05 (Sep/Oct 2014)</p> <p>Emanuel Tov, "Searching for the "Original Bible": Do the Dead Sea Scrolls Help?" BAR 40:04 (Jul/Aug 2014)</p> <p>"Five Reasons You Shouldn't Buy that Ancient Artifact" Forbes (12 June, 2015)</p>
Wed., Nov. 6	<p>Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls 2: The texts and their importance</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>Matthew 1:18-4:25; Luke 4:14-6:11; John 6:22-29; Acts of the Apostles 8:1-9:31; 13:1-19:10</p> <p>Meyers and Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i>, 203-238</p> <p>Aviam, Kuwabara, Hasegawa, & Paz, "A 1st–2nd Century CE Assembly Room (Synagogue?) in a Jewish Estate at Tel Rekhesh, Lower Galilee." Tel Aviv 46:2019. [read sections on pgs. 128-29, 133-35, 139-41]</p> <p>Joey Corbett, "New Synagogue Excavations in Israel and Beyond," BAR 37:04 (Jul/ Aug 2011)</p>
Mon., Nov. 11	<p>The ancient synagogue and Jewish worship in Greco-Roman times</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>Luke 1:5-38; 18:31-21:38; John 7:1-8:20; Acts 1:1-4:22</p> <p>Biography of Herod the Great (note that it continues on a second page) at livius.org</p> <p>Flavius Josephus, <i>Judean Antiquities</i>, Book 17:168-199</p> <p>Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i>, 147-56</p> <p>"New Discovery in Jerusalem's City of David: 2,000-year-old Pilgrimage Road." Jerusalem Post (28 June, 2019)</p>
Wed., Nov. 13	<p>The coming of the Romans, Herod the Great, and the Jerusalem Temple</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>Meyers and Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i>, 62-82</p> <p>Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i>, 187-89</p>
Mon., Nov. 18	<p>Herod the Great's projects outside of Jerusalem</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 3:1-6; 6:14-29; 12:13-17; Luke 3:1-20; 9:7-9; 13:31-35; 23:6-16; Acts 12:1-13:3</p> <p>Meyers and Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i>, 113-38</p> <p>Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i>, 133-47, 156-69</p>
Wed., Nov. 20	<p>Herod the Great's successors (the "other" Herods and Roman officials) and Jerusalem beyond the Temple</p> <p>Assigned Reading for Next Class:</p> <p>Matthew 4:1-17; Mark 1:1-20</p> <p>Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i>, 192-203</p> <p>Mark Chancey and Eric Meyers, "Spotlight on Sepphoris: How Jewish Was Sepphoris in Jesus' Time?" BAR 26:04 (Jul/Aug 2000)</p>
Mon., Nov. 25	<p>No class (visit to McMaster Museum of Art coin collection in lieu, as scheduled)</p>
<p>MMA coin collection written response due by Nov. 26 at 9:00 PM!</p>	

Date	Description/Assignment
Wed., Nov. 27	Early Roman Galilee Assigned Reading for Next Class: Luke 23:13-24:53 Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i> , 230-253 Acts News Network video summarizing the discovery of the “James Ossuary” Hershel Shanks, “Predilections—Is the “Brother of Jesus” Inscription a Forgery?” <i>BAR</i> 41:05 (Sep/Oct 2015) Trailer for movie "The Tomb of Jesus" (2007) Trailer for movie "The Resurrection Tomb Mystery" (2012) “Findings Reignite Debate on Claim of Jesus’ Bones,” New York Times (4 Apr., 2015) Joel Baden and Candida Moss, “Jesus’ Tomb Story: Does the Evidence Add Up?” CNN (9 Apr., 2015) Joel Baden and Candida Moss, “New Clues Cast Doubt on ‘Gospel of Jesus’ Wife,” CNN (31 Mar., 2015)
Mon., Dec. 2	The archaeology of Jesus and his family in recent popular culture Assigned Reading for Next Class: Meyers and Chancey, <i>Alexander to Constantine</i> , 139-73 Magness, <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i> , 230-53 Watch short video of the Arch of Titus project (Yeshiva University) “Researcher Identifies ‘Oldest Handwriting of a Christian’ in Ancient Papyrus Letter,” Newsweek (15 July, 2019)
Wed., Dec. 4	The First and Second Jewish Revolts, and the subsequent fallout for Jews and Christians
Third writing assignment due by Dec. 10 at 9:00 PM!	

COURSE POLICIES:

Nota bene: Staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will not date-stamp or receive papers and other assignments.

Academic integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. The academic credentials that you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is knowingly to act or fail to act in a way that results, or could result, in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

*Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and can be easily avoided by simply citing the source of your information whenever there is any doubt. *Please* be sure to do this – better safe than sorry!

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically through Avenue, where it will be run through turnitin.com to check for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to turnitin.com; however, the instructor will still assure (by other means) that standards of academic integrity have been upheld. To see the turnitin.com policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>).

Modifications to this course

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

E-mail communication

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

McMaster Student Absence Form

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 25% of the course grade). Please note that this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 3 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 25% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO) Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.