

## **I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

A study of modern archaeological methods and discoveries in the Bible lands and the ways they advance understanding of biblical history, religion, and literature. Focus is on the archaeology of both the Old and the New Testaments.

## **II. COURSE RATIONALE**

The Living Word of God, revealed first by the written Word, is the Christian minister's only unique message to the world. As we come to know the written Word better, it should follow that we come to know the Living Word better, and thus are able to minister Christ and His Word more effectively.

As a significant part of its content, the Bible reports many events from ancient western Asia, primarily Canaan/Israel/Judah, and from the New Testament world of the Roman Empire. Assuming the reality of ancient nations and cities, it refers to ancient cultures in matter-of-fact ways. The Bible takes much for granted in the knowledge base of its hearers and readers. But for us, two thousand and more years removed from these events and these cultures, much remains wholly or partially a puzzlement.

Over the last two hundred years, much new information has come to light to advance our understanding of biblical history and cultures. No new field of inquiry has been more rewarding in this respect than has archaeology; it illumines historical epochs and everyday life, the military movements of great kings, and the focus of humble proverbs. God approached God's ancient people in their everyday lives; we read in the Bible of God's faithfulness to them. As we understand better the lives of the ancients to whom God's words of assurance and instruction came, our own faith in God's trustworthiness grows stronger. In our day, the best tool for understanding the life and culture of God's ancient people is archaeology and the abundant fruits of its labors.

## **III. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- A. Identify and discuss major tools, methods, techniques, and results of the archaeological enterprise.
- B. Identify and discuss the importance of the major sites of biblical archaeology.
- C. Set forth and discuss the importance of archaeology for our understanding of the Bible and its world.

**IV. REQUIRED TEXTS**

- A. Currid, John D. *Doing Archaeology in the Land of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- B. Hoerth, Alfred J. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- C. McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.

**V. STUDENT EVALUATION**

Your course grade will be determined by the following:

- A. Class attendance is an important component of the course. Three absences will lower any course grade; four absences will result in failing the course.
- B. Participation in a one-day field trip to a local archaeological site is a prerequisite to earning a grade of "A" in the course.
- C. Nine 600-word summary reports of archaeological methods, sites, surveys, or personalities will be due according to the schedule in VII., below.
- D. A 3,500- to 4,000-word written report on an archaeological site, due May 4, will comprise a major percentage of the course grade. Choice of site must be cleared with the professor. Report must include a bibliography (not included in word count) of publications relating to the site.

*N.B.:* On issues of mechanics, form, style, etc., the Seminary uses Kate Turabian's stylebook, available from the Seminary bookstore. Papers not meeting graduate-level standards cannot earn a grade of "A." A summary of the most common issues is appended to this syllabus; you should use it.

**VI. SCHEDULE OF COURSE READING AND DISCUSSION**

Feb. 2 – Syllabus; course introduction; geography of the biblical world

Feb. 9 – Currid, entire text

Feb. 16 – Hoerth, chapters 1-4

Feb. 23 – Hoerth, chapters 5-9

Mar. 2 – Hoerth, chapters 10-14

Mar. 9 – Hoerth, chapters 15-20

Mar. 16 – Reading and Research Week

Mar. 23 – McRay, Introduction and chapters 1-2

Mar. 30 – McRay, chapters 3-4

Apr. 6 – McRay, chapters 5-6

Apr. 13 – McRay, chapters 7-9

Apr. 20 – McRay, chapters 10-11

Apr. 27 – Local site visit

May 4 – Major reports due; synopses shared with class

## VII. SCHEDULE OF ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

Nine of eleven reports are required; unless otherwise noted, minimum length of each is 600 words. If you submit ten or eleven reports, the lowest one or two grades will be dropped in calculating your course grade. The site visit scheduled on or around April 27 will count as the last “report”; it is not optional.

- Feb. 9 – Identify/define the words, numbers, and other features of Currid’s Figure 4 (p. 73). This may be in the form of a list, but conclude with a short discussion of the importance of a “top plan.” This report may be shorter than 600 words.
- Feb. 16 – Discuss whether and how archaeology illuminates, confirms, and/or “proves” the Bible.
- Feb. 23 – Summarize the main arguments for both the earlier and the later dates of the Exodus, and suggest which is (or may be) the more persuasive for you.
  
- Mar. 2 – Summarize Bryant Wood’s evidence for correlating the archaeology of one destruction of Jericho with Joshua 6.
- Mar. 9 – Map/diagram and discuss the city plan of Sennacherib’s Nineveh *or* Hezekiah’s Jerusalem, *or* Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon.
- Mar. 16 – Reading and Research Week; no report due.
- Mar. 23 – Discuss the various means of supplying New-Testament-era cities with water.
- Mar. 30 – Describe one of Herod’s major building projects within the Holy Land.
  
- Apr. 6 – Summarize the archaeological arguments in favor of Jesus’ crucifixion and burial at/in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre *or* against the Garden Tomb site.
- Apr. 13 – Present archaeological information *beyond* that found in McRay on one city, or one feature within a city, discussed in McRay, chapters 7-9.
- Apr. 20 – Discuss the contribution of the Roman road system to the spread of the Christian Gospel within the Empire.
- Apr. 27 – Local site visit; not optional; counts as final weekly report.
  
- May 4 – Major reports due; synopses shared with class.

**BECOMING A BETTER ACADEMIC WRITER**  
**Avoiding common mistakes and uninspired usages**  
**in formal academic writing**

**Correct:** Use past and past perfect tenses when discussing historical persons and events.

Moses approached the bush; he had seen nothing like this before!

**Incorrect:** Do *not* use the so-called “historical present.”

Moses approaches the bush; he hasn’t seen this before!

**Correct:** *Never* split *any* infinitive: Jack learned *never* to split an infinitive.

**Incorrect:** His professor could count on Jim to *always* split his infinitives.

**Likewise**, it is poor usage in most situations to split an auxiliary verb from its main verb, or a verb of being from a predicate adjective.

**Good usage:** Really having done her best, Jill retired from the scene.

**Poor usage:** Having really done her best, Jill retired from the scene.

**Good usage:** Recently having discovered she really is excellent at debating,  
Jill plans to try out for the debate team.

**Poor usage:** Having recently discovered she is really excellent at debating,  
Jill plans to try out for the debate team.

An exception can be “not”: I am *not* going to write, seriously, “I am going, not, to write this sentence.” or, “I not am going to write this sentence”!

**Correct:** Write complete sentences; use at least a subject and a predicate in each clause.

Sarah wrote at least a paragraph in her Bible-study journal every day.

**Almost always incorrect:** An incomplete sentence *almost* always is incorrect.

Always promising herself to really do it tomorrow.

**Common issues involving the use of apostrophe:**

**Correct:**

boys, meaning “more than one boy”

boy’s, meaning “belonging to one boy”

boys’, meaning “belonging to more  
than one boy”

its, meaning “belonging to it”

it’s, meaning “it is”

**Incorrect:**

boys’, meaning “more than one boy”

boys/boys’, meaning “belonging to one  
boy”

boy’s, meaning “belonging to more than  
one boy”

it’s, meaning “belonging to it”

its, meaning “it is”

**A common issue with commas and periods:**

**Correct:**

He said, “It’s over.”

He said, “It’s over,” and left.

(This is American usage; British, Canadian, and many others are opposite.)

**Incorrect:**

He said, “It’s over”.

He said, “It’s over”, and left.



**Correct, referring to Deity:**

He, Him, His, You, Yours, Thy, Thine

(Lowercasing of *all* pronouns referring to Deity also is correct; just be consistent.)

**Always incorrect, referring to Deity:**

Himself

**Correct:** Bible, biblical

**Incorrect:** bible, Biblical

**Correct:** None dares do it.

(Hint: "None" equals "no one.")

**Incorrect:** None dare do it.

**Correct:** They do their own thing.

(Don't introduce a number usage problem to solve a gender usage problem.)

**Incorrect:** Everyone does their own thing.

**Correct/refined:** as though

**Incorrect/inelegant:** as if

**Correct/refined:** concerning, regarding

**Abominable:** as to

(I do not judge, as though academically inferior, people who say, e.g., "As to that, we all are entitled to our own opinions and usages," but in writing I find this an execrable usage, and these *are* tips to help you in writing papers for my courses. A word to the wise . . .)

**Prune your prose judiciously:**

**Effective:** Many people lived there.

**Much less effective:** There were many people who lived there.

**Effective:** He said she was alive.

**Less effective:** He said that she was alive.

**Always check Turabian or Chicago for correct usage of ellipses:**

**Correct:** The three dots themselves *always* are separated by two single spaces: . . .

What precedes and follows depends on what is left out of the quotation.

**Always Incorrect:** Microsoft Word's default ellipses; they do *not* know this issue.

**Always place biblical references in the text, enclosed in parens, never as footnotes.**

**Always place punctuation after the second parenthesis, not before the first:**

**Correct:** "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

**Incorrect:** "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

**These commonly are misused and/or misspelled--*always* check before submitting:**

affect/effect; prophecy/prophesy; than/then; whose/who's; might/may; to/too/two;  
for/four/fore; Canaan; Isaac; Israel; Ezekiel; Brueggemann; canon; desert

**These commonly are misused--*always* check before submitting:**

"Jew/Jewish" instead of Israel/Israelite before end of Northern Kingdom, 721 B.C.;

"church" instead of Israel in Old Testament period; "Palestine" before A.D. 135