

**COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES  
RELIGION PROGRAM: RELI 4850 C & 5850 Y**

**Re-Constructing Religion: The Integration of Archaeology & Text in Studying Biblical Israel**

**Prof. Shawna Dolansky**

**Office:** Paterson 3a60 **Office Hours:** Thursdays 11:30-1:00

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The study of ancient religions relies on information derived from textual and material remains. However, these records tend to be incomplete and fraught with interpretive difficulties. This course will examine various methodological and interpretive frameworks that have been used to write the religious history of ancient Israel based on the biblical text in combination with – and sometimes in opposition to – the findings of archaeology. Additional focus will be on the biases at work in a variety of theoretical approaches, including theological, feminist, literary, anthropological, and historical perspectives, and how to integrate them in a cross-disciplinary methodological strategy in the analysis and integration of evidence to reconstruct and understand ancient Israelite religious experience. Essentially, this is a course about critical thinking in the reconstruction of religious history. How do we know what we know?

**Evaluation**

*4850 students:*

1. 9 weekly reflection papers on the readings, approximately 2 pages in length, worth 5% each for a total of 45%
2. presentation of conclusions re integration of archaeology & text (each with a specific focus TBD), worth 10%
3. term paper expanding on the presentation topic, based on research and reflection, due April 17, worth 25%
4. attendance and constructive participation, worth 20%

*5850 students:*

1. 7 weekly reflection papers on the readings, approximately 3 pages in length, worth 5% each for a total of 35%
2. individual presentations (combining lecture and discussion leadership), 2 @ 10% each, total 20%
3. term paper write-up of presentation research, due April 17, worth 25%
4. attendance and constructive participation, worth 20%

**Schedule**

**Thur. Jan. 7 Introduction to the course**

READ: Brandfon, “Archaeological Views: Digging a Hole and Telling a Tale” (on CULearn)

READ: Na’aman “The Trowel vs. the Text” (on CULearn)

Defining terms: “history” and “religion”

Are all biases bad? Is scholarly objectivity possible?

Theory and method in archaeology, history, & religious studies

**Thur. Jan. 14 Israel in its Ancient Near Eastern Context**

Before class: watch 2 hr documentary at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

READ: “Syria-Canaan” and “Israel” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Near Eastern Religions* (on CULearn)

*Reflection paper: Assess and critically evaluate scholarly methods, goals, and assumptions at work in integrating archaeology and text to reconstruct ancient Israelite religious history in the NOVA documentary and scholarly articles.*

**Thur. Jan. 21 Methods in Reconstructing Israelite Religion**

READ: Z. Zevit, “Surveying Paths: An Essay about Humanities, Religion, History, and Israelite Religions” (on CULearn)

*Reflection paper: Summarize and assess Zevit’s approach to reconstructing Israelite religion.*

**Thur. Jan. 28                    Genesis: The World of the Patriarchs and Its Authors**

READ: Robert Miller, "Israelite Life before the Kings" (on CULearn)

READ: [http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/mcnutt\\_ancientIsrael.shtml](http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/mcnutt_ancientIsrael.shtml)

READ: Genesis (all); Proverbs 31

*Reflection paper: What does it mean to reconstruct biblical society with a "social science method"? Apply McNutt's method to your reading of Genesis – what conclusions might you draw about ancient Israelite society in reading the biblical text from a social science perspective?*

**Thur. Feb. 4                    The Historicity of the Exodus**

READ: Exodus 1-20

READ: B. Halpern, "The Exodus from Egypt: Myth or Reality?"

READ: B. Malamat, "Let My People Go and Go and Go and Go - Egyptian records support a centuries-long Exodus"

READ: R. Hendel, "The Exodus in Biblical Memory"

READ: B. Halpern, "Eyewitness Testimony"

*Reflection paper: If we had only the archaeological evidence and no biblical story, would anyone postulate a historical exodus? If not, is the enterprise of trying to bring archaeology and text together to reconstruct a historical exodus, as some scholars do, fraught with methodological difficulty from the outset? Why or why not?*

**Thur. Feb. 11                    The Emergence of Israel in Canaan**

SKIM: Joshua, Judges

READ: "From Wilderness Wandering to the Promised Land" on CULearn

READ: Amnon Ben-Tor, "Who Destroyed Canaanite Hazor?" on CULearn

READ: William Dever, "The Search for History in the Bible" on CULearn

*Reflection paper possibilities (please note that all of the above readings are required in order to do a thorough job on any of the questions below):*

- 1. Do you agree with the "Wilderness Wandering" author's conclusions? What might you change, or add to them? Do you think anything more definitive can be said about the origins of Israel?*
- 2. Why is it important to understand the historicity of the exodus and Israel's origins in terms of reconstructing Israelite religion? How might perspectives on the historicity of the exodus affect one's reconstruction of Israelite religion from both text and artifact?*
- 3. Critically evaluate Dever's model for the emergence of Israel, and the methods by which he developed it.*

**Thur. Feb. 18                    BREAK WEEK**

**Thur. Feb. 25                    The United Monarchy**

READ: 2 Samuel (all)

READ: N. Na'aman, "The Interchange Between the Bible and Archaeology" (on CULearn)

READ: Y. Garfinkel, "The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism" (on CULearn)

READ: "Kings of Controversy" (on CULearn)

READ: "A Centrist" (on CULearn)

READ: "Dever vs. Finkelstein" (on CULearn)

READ: Philip Davies <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/dav358019.shtml>

And for fun (**optional**, but if you read it check the comments @ bottom too)

- <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/gar368025.shtml>

And - B. Halpern "Erasing History" (on CULearn)

*Reflection paper: What are the issues involved in the debates over the existence and potential dating of the united monarchy? What place does methodology have here? Whose methods seem the most sound to you, and why?*

**Thur. Mar. 3 Israelite Religion - Bible**

READ: Lev 1, 6-7, 10-20, 22, 25; Deut 1-7, 10-14, 17-18, 22, 26-32

READ: Jeffrey Tigay, "What's in a Name?" (on CULearn)

LISTEN: "The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel" [The Bodies of God and the World of II.mp3](#)

*Reflection Paper: With reference to the assigned readings, how do we understand "religion" in ancient Israel? How would the ancient Israelites have understood and applied such a term?*

**Thur. Mar. 10 Israelite Religion – Archaeology**

*Grad Presentation & Discussion Leadership: on distinguishing ethnicity in the archaeological record (extra readings for presenter TBD)*

READ: Ephraim Stern, "Pagan Yahwism" (on CULearn)

READ: Uzi Avner, "Sacred Stones in the Desert" (on CULearn)

READ: William Dever, "A Temple Built for Two" (on CULearn)

READ: J. G. Taylor, "Was Yahweh Worshiped as the Sun?" (on CULearn)

*Reflection Paper: What can archaeology tell us about the religion of ancient Israel? Does it correct an idealized (yet never realized) biblical picture, or add to our knowledge of real religion as it was practiced and described in the Bible?*

**Thur. Mar. 17 Goddesses & The Interpretation of Religion**

*Grad Presentation & Discussion Leadership: on interpreting "religious" artifacts (extra readings for presenter TBD)*

READ: R. Hestrin, "Understanding Asherah – Exploring Semitic Iconography" (on CULearn)

READ: S. Ackerman, "Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving?" (on CULearn)

READ: Conkey & Tringham, "Archaeology and the Goddess: Exploring the Contours of Feminist Archaeology"

READ: S. Dolansky, "Re-Figuring Fertility Figurines: Fetishistic Functions of the Feminine Form"

*Reflection Paper: your choice*

**Thur. Mar. 24 Official vs. Popular/Household Religion**

*Grad Presentation & Discussion Leadership: on categorizing ancient religion via archaeology (extra readings for presenter TBD)*

READ: H. Shanks, "The Persisting Uncertainties of Kuntillet 'Ajrud" (on CULearn)

READ: H. Shanks, "Idol Pleasures" (on CULearn)

READ: H. Shanks, "Is the Bible Right After All? BAR interviews William Dever, Part II" (on CULearn)

READ: S. Ahituv, "Did God Have a Wife?" (on CULearn)

*Reflection Paper: your choice*

**Thur. Mar. 31 Women and Religion**

*Grad Presentation & Discussion Leadership: on reading gender into the archaeological record (extra readings for presenter TBD)*

READ: S. Ackerman, "Digging up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology" (on CULearn)

READ: C. Meyers, "Engendering Syro-Palestinian Archaeology: Reasons and Resources" (on CULearn)

READ: A. Faust, "Pottery Talks: What Ceramics Tell Us About the Social World of Ancient Israel" (on CULearn)

READ: J. A. Hackett, "Can a Sexist Model Liberate Us?" (on CULearn)

*Reflection Paper: your choice*

**Thur. Apr. 7 Conclusions: The Integration of Archaeology and Text**

*Undergraduate Presentations (20 min each): on methodology in the study of ancient religions – each student will select the topic covered during one of the previous weeks (excluding the last 4) and explore in more depth (extra readings TBD in consultation with prof), presenting the various arguments, perspectives, evidence, and methods of interpretation brought to bear on the subject, and some conclusions about the integration of archaeology and text in the topic s/he has explored.*

# REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

## COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

## PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

## GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

## WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 7, 2015**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2016**.

## REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 6, 2015** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2016** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

## PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

## ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library