

**BISR9303 SUPERVISED READING COLLOQUIUM:  
BIBLICAL BACKGROUNDS**

**New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
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**Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**Course Purpose, Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies**

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity, the focus core value for this year, in that it enhances the student's ability to interpret the Bible accurately. Characteristic Excellence is addressed in that the student should exhibit excellence in the ability to interpret Scripture. Servant Leadership is modeled in classroom demeanor. This course primarily addresses the competency of Biblical Exposition by preparing the student to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.

**Course Description**

This Ph.D. reading colloquium in Biblical Backgrounds in Interpretation covers general works related to biblical backgrounds in the field as well as the specific areas of Old Testament and New Testament studies. The student is expected to read thoroughly the assigned material and to participate actively in the discussions of the material. Written reviews and/or summaries of the works are expected.

**Required Textbooks**

See Bibliography (except for multi-volume reference works).

**Course Requirements**

The student will:

1. Read and review the required texts as stipulated in the schedule below.
  - a. Each student will prepare four book reviews. The reviews will consist of the following: bibliographic data about the author, the thesis/purpose of the book, a summary of the development of the thesis, a critique of the book, and a synopsis of 2 reviews of the book from scholarly journals. The reviews of the more lengthy books should be 4-5 pages, single-spaced.
  - b. Each student will read the books being reviewed by fellow students in order to discuss the books during the meeting. Thus reviews should be submitted to the

professor and to fellow students a minimum of 2 days in advance of the colloquium meeting.

2. Participate actively in the discussion of the readings.
3. Attend every meeting. Because of the nature of the course, no absences are allowed. If emergency situations dictate an absence, the student will schedule a make-up session with the professor. Work is still due the day scheduled even if the student is absent. Any student missing more than one meeting must repeat the colloquium.

### **Student Learning Outcomes: Goals and Objectives**

1. Students will comprehend the roles of historical, archaeological, socio-cultural, and literary background materials in the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments.
2. Students will value the necessity of bridging the temporal and cultural gaps between contemporary society and the biblical period.
3. Students will read extensively in the primary literature of the Ancient Near East and Greco-Roman worlds.
4. Students will apply their knowledge and comprehension of the background of the Bible including: archaeology, historical geography, religion, manners and customs, historical and social setting, and the literature of the ancient world to the process of interpreting and communicating the Bible accurately.

### **Colloquium Schedule**

#### **Sept 3 Meeting One - Introduction / Methodologies & Literature**

DeSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity*

King, Philip and Lawrence Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible*

Levy, Thomas, ed. *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*.

Bailey, Kenneth. *Jesus Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*.

Each student will read the following sections of

Flavius Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*: Books XI-XX

*Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 1-300.

## **Oct 1 Meeting Two - Old Testament Archaeology**

### Book Reviews

Kenneth Kitchen. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Eerdmans, 2003.

James Hoffmeier, *The Archaeology of the Bible*

BenTor, Amnon and R. Greenberg. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*

Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE*

Stern, Ephraim. *Archaeology and the Land of the Bible, II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 BC)*.

## **Oct 29 Meeting Three - ANE and Greco-Roman Religions**

### Book Reviews

Hess, Richard. *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*.

Malina, Bruce. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*

Snell, David C. *Religions of the Ancient Near East*.

Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*

Walton, John. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*

## **Dec 3 Meeting Four - New Testament Archaeology**

### Book Reviews

Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*

McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*

Reed, Jonathan. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*

Snodgrass, Anthony M. *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*.

Snodgrass, Anthony. *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **HISTORY**

- Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), 1981.
- Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquities of the Jews: Complete and Unabridged*. CreateSpace, 2013.
- Niswonger, Richard. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Provan, Iain, V. Philips Long, Tremper Longman III. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003.

### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

- Ben-Tor, Amnon and R. Greenberg. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Hoerth, Alfred. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Hoffmeier, James. *The Archaeology of the Bible*. London: Lion UK, 2008.
- Jeffers, James. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999.
- Mazar, Amihai. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1990.
- McRay, John. *Archaeology and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Reed, Jonathan. *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence*. Trinity Press, 2002.
- Snodgrass, Anthony M. *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*. NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2006.
- Stern, Ephraim. *Archaeology and the Land of the Bible, II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 BC)*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

### **SOCIAL SETTINGS**

- DeSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Eerdmans, 2003.
- King, Philip and Lawrence Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

Malina, Bruce. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.  
Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*.  
Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven: Yale University, 2009.

Walton, John. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the  
Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

## **OTHER**

Kitchens, Kenneth. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Vanderkam, James and Peter Flint. *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance For  
Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperOne,  
2004.

Vermes, Geza. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Baltimore: Penguin, 2012.

## **REFERENCE VOLUMES**

Arnold, Clinton. Editor. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary on the New  
Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002

Hallo, William and Lawson Younger. *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions,  
Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World*. 3 vols.  
Leiden: EJ Brill, 2003.

Sparks, Kenton L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background  
Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005.

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