CLAS 181 – Art, Archaeology, and Society of the Holy Land
Spring 2018
Brandeis University
Tuesday & Friday 12:30 – 1:50 PM,
Instructor: Dr. Alexandra Ratzlaff
Office: Mandel 211
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Office Hours: Tuesday & Friday (10:00 – 11:30 AM)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
For archaeology in Israel the material remains of the past represent a fundamental aspect of people’s
identities and conception of place. In this course, we will survey the archaeological evidence for the
development of complex society in the Bronze Age through the hegemony of the Romans. Over this
long era, figures larger than life made history here: King Solomon, Judah Maccabee, Herod the Great,
and Constantine, among others. Their stories are set in time but also transcend it, and the land in
which they lived was itself transformed from mere geography to the Holy Land. We will address the
modern scholars who have conducted archaeological studies from the early days of Biblical
archaeology to the present situation that fosters some of the most interdisciplinary archaeological
research in the world. Our focus will be on the study of sites and remains that archaeologists have
recovered, consider the relationship of physical remains and written accounts, and learn how material
evidence in its varied forms of architecture, art, ceramics, and other objects, helps us better understand
ancient life. Discussions will also include recent debates about the future of the discipline and issues
of cultural heritage and public history.

LEARNING GOALS:
The learning goals for this class will concentrate on gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the
archaeology and society of the Holy Land from the Bronze Age to the Roman period, based on
various forms of material culture. Students will analyze art, architecture, and artifacts of the from
this region of the world, as well as the historical, political, and social contexts that produced the
material culture distinct to the relevant periods. To achieve these goals students will learn about the
geography and chronology of the Holy Land region, the cultural traditions of different groups, and
how the varied strata of society lived based on the objects they left behind. Students will become
adept in analyzing the symbolic meaning of art and architecture, learning how it can help us reveal
the social, political, and religious contexts for ancient civilizations. By approaching the topic from
multiple lines of inquiry and utilizing resources students will use analytical thinking skills to develop
a comprehensive view of the cultural development of different groups occupying the Holy Land.

GRADING/CLASS STRUCTURE:
Undergraduate
10% Participation (based on attendance and participation in class discussions)
25% One Research Paper (6-7 pages)
15% One Position Paper (2-3 pages)
50% Exams (1st and 2nd half of course) (short answer, slide ID, topical essay)
Graduate Participation (based on attendance, participation in discussions, and as discussion leaders) 10%
Two Position papers (3 pages) 20%
Site Research Paper (15-17 pages) 40%
Research Topic Presentation (15 min) 30%

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:


Supplementary Texts:


COURSE WEBSITE: [http://www.brandeis.edu/latte/](http://www.brandeis.edu/latte/)
*Please check LATTE regularly for announcements and class slides for review. Readings will be posted on LATTE.*

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS:
Attendance is mandatory: this class will rely on the participation of its members, therefore success in this class will depend on your attendance, participation, and preparation. Unavailable but reasonable absences should be explained in advance in writing. More than four (4) unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your final grade by one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+). More than six (6) unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your final grade by two full letter grades. Success in this class is dependent on students allotting time each week in preparation for class including readings, class discussions, papers, and preparation for exams.
*If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please contact me immediately to set up services.*
**Enrollment in this course implies that participants will adhere to all Brandeis University policies, including, but not limited to those set forth in the latest Rights and Responsibilities handbook – [“http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/”](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/)**
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week 1  Introduction to Class & Syllabus Review.  
(Jan. 12)  READ: Mazar: Preface, Chapter 1

Week 2  History of Archaeology in the Holy Land  
(Jan. 16)  READ: Finkelstein and Mazar: Archaeology and the Quest for Historical Israel in the Hebrew Bible (pp. 3-34)

(Jan. 19)  Canaanites and the Bronze Age  

Week 3  Late Bronze Age (Egyptians, International Age, Mycenaens, Empires)  

(Jan. 26)  Iron Age I: (Aegean, Sea Peoples, Philistines, and Frontiers)  

Week 4  Iron Age II (Monarchy, Alphabets, Religions, and Greek Merchants/Mercenaries)  
(Jan. 30)  READ: Mazar Chapters 9 and 10

(Feb 2)  The Tenth Century BCE  

Week 5  The Kingdom of Israel: Dan, Megiddo, and Samaria  

(Feb. 9)  The Kingdom of Judah: Beer-Sheva, Lachish, Arad  
READ: John S. Holladay, Jr., “The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: Political and Economic Centralization in the Iron II A – B (ca. 1000-750 BCE),” The Archaeology of

**Week 6**
(Feb. 13) **Philistia: Ekron/Miqne and Ashkelon**

(Feb. 16) **Destruction and Diaspora**

**Week 7 Holiday Vacation – Feb. 20/23**

**Week 8**
(Feb. 27) **The Land Beyond the River: Phoenicia and Amman (Tyre, Kedesh, ‘Iraq el-Emir)**

(March 2) **The Land Beyond the River: Samaria and Judah (Samaria and Jerusalem)**
**READ:** Magness, Holy Land, pp. 20-62 (chapters 2 and 3).

**Week 8**
(March 6) **After Alexander: Idumea, Amman, and Samaria (‘Iraq el-Emir, Samaria, Maresha)**

(March 9) **After Alexander: The Coast and the North (Dor, Kedesh, the Paneion, Dan)**

**Week 9**
(March 13) **Midterm Exam 1 (Undergraduate)**
(March 16) **Samaritans and Hasmoneans: Mt. Gerizim, Jerusalem, Jericho**
**READ:** Netzer, Palaces, pp. 11-39; S. Schwartz, "A Note on the Social Type and

**Week 10**  
(March 20)  
**Herod the Great: Samaria, Jericho, Masada, Caesarea, and Herodium**  

(March 23)  
**From Herod to the Revolt, part 1: Jerusalem and Qumran**  

**Week 11**  
(March 27)  
**From Herod to the Revolt, part 2: Caesarea Philippi, Omrit, Magdala, Gamla**  
**READ:** Magness, *Holy Land*, pp. 192-203 (chapter 9); A. Berlin, “Identity Politics in Early Roman Galilee,” *The Jewish Revolt Against Rome: Interdisciplinary*

**Week 12 Holiday Vacation – April 3/6**

(April 10)  
**The Nabataean Neighbors**  

(April 13)  
**Imperial life, part 1: Gerash, Aelia Capitolina, and Ascalon**  

**Week 13**  
(April 17)  
**Imperial life, part 2: Beth She’an, Sepphoris, Beth She’arim**  

(April 20)  
**Imperial religion: The Paneion, Omrit**  
Week 14  
(April 24)  
**Constantine and the Re-making of Jerusalem and Christian life in Byzantine times: Capernaum and Tabgha**


Week 14  
(April 26)  
**Jewish life in Byzantine times: Beth Alpha, Huqoq, Wadi Hamam**


**Final Exam (Exam #2 – undergrad)**

TBA