

ARCH/HIST 301: Archaeological Survey of Jordan

Syllabus

Credits: 3 credit hours

Location: Amideast Jordan

Instructor:

Term and Year:

Course Hours:

Aims and Objectives of the Course

- Introduce students to the major archaeological sites and historical monuments found in Jordan, as well as the artifacts and material cultures of its peoples
- Place Jordan's sites and monuments within the broader context of biblical, Near Eastern, classical, and Islamic history and society
- Introduce students to Jordan's unique geography and diverse climates and landscapes, and how these have influenced the livelihoods and movements of people over the millennia
- Expose students to the ways in which the past is interpreted and utilized in the present, with implications for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in and beyond the Jordanian context
- Provide first-hand experience with Jordan's past through visits to major archaeological and historical sites as well as Jordan's national museum.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the major archaeological and historical periods, artifacts and monuments of Jordan's past, from the Neolithic beginnings of settled village life to the Ottoman forts that protected the pilgrimage route to Mecca until the early 20th century. While focusing on Jordan's important archaeological remains and impressive monumental sites, including the biblical-era sites of Ammon, Moab and Edom, the Nabataean city of Petra, the Greco-Roman ruins of Jerash and the early Islamic "desert castles" among others, the course places these sites in the broader context of the history, archaeology, and interpretation of the biblical world and the ancient, Hellenistic and Islamic Near East. It also examines how Jordan's unique geographic setting between "the desert and the sown" has influenced the lives and livelihoods of its inhabitants over the millennia. Course lectures are supplemented with visits to and/or assignments about archaeological and historic sites throughout Jordan, as well as the Jordan Museum.

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- contextualize Jordan's archaeological sites within the broader scope of the biblical world and the ancient, Hellenistic, and Islamic Near East
- understand how Jordan's geography and position has influenced its history and inhabitants
- identify the various historical periods in Jordan from the Neolithic era to the early 20th century
- identify archaeological sites and monuments throughout Jordan

Knowledge

This course is designed to assist students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge about:

- general archaeological methods, periods, and practices
- Jordan's archaeological sites and monuments from the Neolithic era to Ottoman Jordan and the First World War
- Jordan's unique geography and its influence on human history
- the non-neutrality of traditional site and artifact interpretation, the monumentalizing of history, and community-level approaches to archaeological heritage

Skills

This course is designed to assist students in acquiring or enhancing the following skills:

- identify various archaeological sites and monuments from Jordan's history
- develop analytical skills and awareness to engage with both written and archaeological sources to understand the past
- thoughtfully analyze archaeology's place in modern social, political, and economic contexts
- employ general archaeological methods and theories to the study of Jordan's archaeological record
- critically assess site and museum interpretations and projects centering heritage as a development enterprise

Attitudes

This course is designed to encourage development of the following attitudes:

- appreciation of the vast and rich archaeological record of Jordan
- curiosity about the roles of archaeology in the modern Middle East
- educated consideration of written texts and scripture through the lens of archaeology
- appreciation of the role that Jordan's location and geography has had on the inhabitants and development of the area
- appreciation of archaeology and all of its adjacent fields and their spaces as critical to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion

Required Readings

1. David Kennedy and Robert Bewley, *Ancient Jordan from the Air* (CBRL: London, 2004); abbreviated here AJA.
2. Additional weekly readings will be determined by instructor. PDFs of each week's readings (as well as other course materials and assignments) will be posted to the LMS course page.

Assessment Overview

Description	Weight	Due Date
Attendance and Engagement	10%	Continuous
Assignments	25%	Assignment 1: Assignment 2: Assignment 3: Assignment 4:
Response Paper	25%	Week 14

Midterm Exam	20%	Week 8
Final Exam	20%	Week 15

Attendance & Engagement

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and come prepared to participate fully in class activities. Students are further expected to be on time for all classes. Arriving late for class is disrespectful of both the instructor and fellow students.

Beyond being in class on time, expectations of student engagement that are accounted for in this portion of the grade include both quality and quantity: full involvement in in-class exercises, class discussions, active listening and asking questions, and proactively seeking additional help during office hours if needed. Throughout the semester, there are a number and variety of program activities that are mandatory for all students. They are announced in advance and reminders are sent. Failure to attend mandatory program activities therefore reflects negatively on students' attendance and engagement grade.

Assignments

Four take-home assignments that involve interacting with, visiting, and reporting on different aspects of Jordan's geography, history, and archaeology.

Response Paper

A 5-7 page paper due at the end of the semester that addresses one of three promoted essay questions/issues (see below).

Midterm Exam

A midterm exam will be given in class and will include all the material covered in the class, readings, and assignments up to that point.

Final Exam

A final exam will be given in class and will cover **all** the material, topics and subject matter covered during the course of the semester.

Course Schedule

Week	Class Work	Readings	Exams, Assignments
Week 1	Orientation		
Week 2	Introduction and Jordan's Physical and Cultural Geography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course and syllabus overview 2. Jordan's physical and cultural geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Introduction," and "The Land and Its People," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 23-26, 27-39. • John Oleson, "Water Supply in Jordan Through the Ages," in <i>The Archaeology of Jordan</i> (Sheffield: 2001), pp. 603-614. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alison Betts, "Pastoralism," in <i>The Archaeology of Jordan</i> (Sheffield: 2001), pp. 615-619. Carol Palmer, "Traditional Agriculture," in <i>The Archaeology of Jordan</i> (Sheffield: 2001), pp. 621-629. Tina Niemi, "The Life of the Dead Sea," <i>BAR</i>, Jan/Feb 2008. Mark Rowe, "A Flower in the Desert," <i>Geographical</i>, March 2012. 	
Week 3	<p>What is Archaeology?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Intro to archaeological methods, theories, and periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Chronology and Rulers," and "History," in <i>AJA</i>, p. 11, pp. 41-48. Jodi Magness, "Introduction," in <i>The Archaeology of the Holy Land</i> (Cambridge: 2012), pp. 1-19. "Digs Go Digital," <i>BAR</i>, January/February 2009. Shimon Gibson, "Save Endangered Landscapes," <i>BAR</i>, March/April 2008. Glenn Corbett, "GIS in Archaeology," <i>Bible History Daily</i> blog, July 2012. Neil Asher Silberman, "Measuring Time Archaeologically," <i>BAR</i>, November/December 1989. Russell Adams, "Archaeology in Jordan: A Brief History," in <i>Jordan: An Archaeological Reader</i> (Equinox: 2008), pp. 1-6. 	Assignment #1: Google Earth Assignment
Week 4	<p>Jordan's Prehistory</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan's Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures at the dawn of civilization The rise (and fall) of the first cities + preview of Petra/Nabateans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Prehistory: Hunters-Gatherers to Farmers," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 63-78. 	
Week 5	<p>The Canaanite Bronze Age in Jordan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan in the first international age <p>Biblical Archaeology: Problems and Potentials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Bronze Age," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 79-97. Watch <i>The Bible's Buried Secrets</i> 	

	1. The Bible as History		
Week 6	<p>The Biblical Kingdoms: Ammon, Moab, and Edom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ancient Israel's Neighbord: Ammon, Moab, and Edom 2. Gods and religions during the time of ancient Israel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Into History: Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 99-119. 	
Week 7	<p>Jordan and the Hellenistic World</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greeks and Romans in the Near East Jerash and the Decapolis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Greeks and Romans," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 147-170. 	
Week 8	Visit to Jordan Museum		<p>Midterm Exam</p> <p><i>Assignment #2: Jordan Museum Scavenger Hunt</i></p>
Week 9	Break		
Week 10	<p>Petra and the Nabataean Kingdom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who were the Nabataeans? 2. Petra: A trip through the Nabataean capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Nabataeans," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 121-145. 	
Week 11	<p>Nabataen and Roman Arabia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thamudic and Safaitic Inscriptions and Drawings 2. Roman Arabia to the rise of Islam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Nabataeans," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 121-145. 	<i>Assignment #3: Reading Thamudic Inscriptions</i>
Week 12	<p>Early Christian and Byzantine Jordan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The history and archaeology of Jesus and early Christianity 3. Jordan's Christian monuments and mosaics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Christian Roman Jordan," in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 195-216. 	

Week 13	Early Islamic and Medieval Jordan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The spread of Islam in Arabia, Palestine, and Transjordan 2. The Crusades in historical and archaeological contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Early Islamic Jordan,” in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 217-237. • “Crusaders, Saracens and Mamluks,” in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 239-255. 	
Week 14	Ottoman Jordan until the First World War <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ottoman pilgrimage forts and the Hijaz Railway 2. Visit to Jordan’s History Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Ottoman and British Empires,” in <i>AJA</i>, pp. 257-276. 	<i>Assignment #4: Class Scavenger Hunt</i> Response Paper Due (see below)
Week 15	Final Exams		
Week 16	Reflection Week		

Response Paper Topics

Before the end of Week 14, you will submit a 1700-2000 word (double-spaced, 12pt) response to one of the three prompted essay questions below, each of which asks you to think about and address an issue relevant to the history and archaeology of Jordan and/or Israel/Palestine. While you are expected to do background reading and research, this is not intended to be a “research paper” but rather an opportunity for you to give serious thought and consideration to a site, period, culture, concept, or topic that intrigued you during the course of the class and/or your travels through Jordan. Papers should include a short annotated bibliography of at least five references with brief 1-2 sentence summaries of the relevance of each reference for the chosen topic.* If necessary, responses may include 2-3 images or figures.

*NOTE 1: annotated summaries are NOT included within the overall word count

*NOTE 2: references should be from **scholarly/reputable books**, journals, blogs and online resources. In other words, references to Wikipedia and comparable websites will not be accepted as part of the annotated bibliography. If in doubt, ask the instructor.

Archaeology in its Modern Context

The practice of archaeology in Jordan and Israel/Palestine exists in the context of modern social, political, and economic realities. What is the meaning and significance of archaeology for various stakeholders, including local communities, different political/religious/ethnic groups, governments/regimes, citizens, tourists, and scholars (both local and foreign), to name a few? Do these various interests understand the results of archaeology in similar ways, or are there significant

differences in their points of view? What are the various economic, social, and political factors that might explain some of the similarities and differences? Address one or more of these issues using specific examples and/or case studies that intrigue you.

The Challenge of Nature

Throughout antiquity and into the present, Jordan has often been described as a marginal desert country with few natural resources, making regular human subsistence challenging and unpredictable. Jordan's ancient (and modern) peoples developed a range of strategies, techniques, and resources to meet nature's challenge, including (but certainly not limited to) agro-pastoralism, pastoral-nomadism, intensive water harvesting, participation in and facilitation of trade, and the exploitation of available resources like copper, bitumen, salt, and sugar. Focusing on a particular period, culture, site, or region, provide a general introduction to one or more of these strategies and how past peoples successfully employed it to the benefit of society.

Archaeology and History

Historically, the archaeology of Israel/Palestine and Jordan has been understood and interpreted in light of textual, historical, and scriptural sources, particularly the Bible and the works of ancient Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, Christian and Muslim authors. Discuss a situation in which archaeology presents a dramatically different picture of ancient society or events than the one reflected in historical and textual sources and evaluate why the two sources might differ. Is one viewpoint to be preferred over the other, or are there ways to reconcile the two?