

**Huntingdon College**  
**Adult Degree Completion Program**

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**COURSE NUMBER: REL401**  
**COURSE NAME: Special Topics-Bible**  
**Spring 2009, Session I, Shelby**

**INSTRUCTOR'S NAME:** Dr. John Brannon

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an examination of the history and literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the people that wrote them. Through these writings we will encounter the faith perspectives of persons traditionally associated with the Essenes in order to gain perspective on their particular contribution to the Judaism of the first centuries BC (BCE) and AD (CE). Of interest as well will be the Dead Sea Scrolls' contribution to our understanding of Christianity, in particular, as well as the relationship of Christianity and Judaism in general. In addition, we will explore the continuing significance of these writings for our understanding of the biblical canon. Archaeology of Qumran and some results of its findings will also be considered.

**PREREQUISITE:** none

**TEXT REQUIRED:**

Magness, Jodi, The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Eerdmans Publishing, (see **Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

VanderKam, James C, The Dead Sea Scrolls Today, Eerdmans Publishing, (see **Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

VanderKam, James C. and Peter Flint. The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity, Harper Collins, (see **Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

Martinez, Florentino Garcia, et al. The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English, Eerdmans Publishing (see **Huntingdon College booklist for edition and ISBN**)

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:** The student, upon completion of this course, should be able to:

- define terminology used in the academic study of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- demonstrate an understanding of the basic historical development of the scrolls and the sect(s) that produced them
- demonstrate an understanding of basic methodological approaches used in the interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- demonstrate an understanding of basic areas of debate and controversy in the current academic study of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- describe various literary forms in the Dead Sea Scrolls and their usage
- explain basic theological themes that appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls

- evaluate these writings in their relation to the people that held them sacred

The instructor, in addition to the assigned texts, should be able to help students achieve these goals through constructive criticism, encouragement, class lectures and discussion, and availability for student consultation.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA:**

For each class, each student must come prepared with a one-page, typed reflection of the assigned reading. Identify 1 or 2 issues, based on your assigned reading, that you think would be beneficial for the class to discuss. Briefly explain why you think the issue should be discussed. Pose a possible question for each issue you choose. Avoid asking questions that seek factual answers. For example, “How many scrolls were found in Cave 4?” would be a factual question. If you have such questions, then go find the answer in your texts or other resources! **Your questions should be interpretive or evaluative.** For example, “How did the Essenes understand the concept of Messiah?” is an interpretive question. “To what degree should the biblical canon be considered authoritative in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls?” is an evaluative question. Be prepared to present what you believe to be significant issues and your reasons for posing the question(s). NOTE: This requirement implies that students should complete all readings and assignments, scheduled for that class, before coming to class.

The Mid-term Exam will consist of questions (usually in the form of essay or short answer) derived from the readings and discussions throughout the course up to that exam. The exam will be given in class at week three.

The Final Exam will consist of questions (usually in the form of essay or short answer) derived from the readings and discussions throughout the course. The exam will be given in class at week five.

A research paper will be due at the beginning of Module 4. The paper will be 10-15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, and properly footnoted/endnoted with bibliography and title page. The paper should contain an appropriate thesis resulting from a topic of interest that pertains to the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

<b>Grading Elements</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
5 Reading Reflections	20%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Research Paper	30%
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100%</b>

**GRADE POINT EQUIVALENTS** - Describe the point range for each letter grade.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59-below

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

**Absences and Tardiness – All students are required to attend the first session.** Those who do not attend the first session will be automatically dropped from the course. Students with more than one absence will receive an "F" for the course. Since this class meets only five times, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing three weeks of a regular term. If you cannot attend a class you must let the instructor know via email as soon as possible. In case of absences you are responsible for obtaining all handouts and assignments. Tardiness may result in a deduction in your class participation grade. Excessive tardiness may count as an absence.

**Participation** –Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation requires students to come to class prepared to actively participate, which makes the classroom experience more meaningful. However, participation is not just speaking out in class. The contributions made by the student should be related to the course content and meaningful to the class discussion.

**Late Assignments** – Explain whether late assignments will be accepted and what penalty might be imposed if the assignment is late. Also specify what assignments can be turned in late. This will allow the student to make informed decisions.

**Accommodation of Special Needs-** Huntingdon College makes every reasonable accommodation for disabilities that have been processed and approved through our Disability Services Committee in accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to request disability-related services at Huntingdon College, students must self-identify to the Disabilities Intake Coordinator, Camilla Irvin, and provide appropriate and up-to-date documentation to verify their disability or special needs. After the accommodations have been approved by the Disability Services Committee, the 504 Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Olenik Dorman, will notify your professor(s) of the committee's decision. If you have any questions regarding reasonable accommodation or need to request disability-related services, please contact Disability Services at (334) 833-4432 or e-mail at [disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu).

**Academic Honesty** –Plagiarism is literary theft. Failure to cite the author of any language or of any ideas *which are not your own creation* is plagiarism. This includes any text you might paraphrase, as well. Anyone is capable of searching the Internet or any printed media; your research paper is intended to broaden your knowledge, stimulate your creativity, and make you think, analyze, and learn. It is not consistent with the College Honor Code, nor with scholarly expectations to submit work which is not the product of your own thinking and research. Severe penalties will result upon the submission of any work found to be plagiarized, including potential failure of the entire course. It is easy and simple to properly cite all sources used in your paper. Take no risks – cite your sources.

**First Night Assignment -**

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1: The Dead Sea Scrolls Discovered**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, upon completion of this module, should be able to:

- Describe the context and content of the Dead Sea discoveries
- Explain the methods used to date the scrolls
- Understand the nature and development of Qumran archaeology

- Evaluate the association of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Essene Hypothesis

### Student Preparation

- Reading
  - *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (henceforth, *Meaning*): 3-84, 239-254
  - *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (henceforth, *Today*): 1-27, 71-119
  - *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (henceforth, *Archaeology*): 1-46
- Reading Reflection
  - Written reflection due at beginning of class
- Research
  - Begin thinking about research paper topics; begin search for sources

### Major Points for Discussion

- Qumran and the surrounding caves
  - Discovery and identification of the site
- Dating and conserving the Scrolls and site
  - Paleography and archaeology
  - Carbon 14, mass spectrometry, and DNA
  - Reconstruction and preservation of the Scrolls
- Qumran Archaeology
  - Assumptions and goals
  - Controversies regarding the inhabitants of the site (Essenes?)
- Essene Hypothesis
  - Essenes – Who were they?
  - Qumran Essenes
  - Essenes and the Scrolls

### Classroom Activities

1. Introduction of class: instructor and student introductions, overview of syllabus, goals of the course
2. Overview of the Scrolls discovery: Identification and preservation, archaeology, methods of dating, the Dead Sea region
3. Small group activity: Have each group examine a copy of 2-3 Dead Sea Scrolls in the original language. Look for similarities in handwriting, breaks in the parchment, possible gaps in the text. Without understanding the language (like most early scroll discoverers) how might you identify your discovery's importance? How would you begin to investigate your find?
4. Small group presentations: How did each group go about their work – similarities, differences?
5. Overview of Jewish groups of the first centuries BC (BCE) and AD (CE): Intro. to the Essenes, Essene association with Qumran, Essene association with the Scrolls
6. Small group activity: Distribute literature of various religious (Christian?) denominations. Ask each group to identify the denomination responsible for writing the literature. What assumptions are made about each denomination? How does the literature examined agree or disagree with those assumptions?
7. Class discussion: What factors do you think played key roles in the minds of ancient writers and their identification of Qumran with the Essenes?

8. Revisit the student learning outcomes for the module; summarize important points; final Q&A, preview of Week 2

## **Week 2: The Biblical Scrolls**

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, upon completion of this module, should be able to:

- Describe the ancient sources on which our contemporary Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) depends
- Explain the relationships shared between the biblical scrolls and our contemporary versions of the Old Testament
- Understand the development of the contemporary biblical canon and apocryphal writings alongside the “canon” of biblical scrolls
- Evaluate the nature of the contemporary Old Testament canon in light of the Scrolls’ discovery

### **Student Preparation**

- Reading
  - *Meaning*: 87-205
  - *Today*: 29-43
  - *Archaeology*: 47-104
- Reading reflection
  - Written reflection due at beginning of class
- Research
  - Paper topics and sources should be finalized; thesis development should be underway

### **Major Points for Discussion**

- The Old Testament
  - The Canon
  - Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint
  - Subdivisions of the Old Testament (Torah, Prophets, Writings)
  - Theories of textual development
- The Biblical Scrolls
  - The discoveries
  - Textual variants (similarities/differences)
  - The Scroll “canon”
- The Apocryphal/Pseudepigraphical Scrolls
  - Define Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
  - “Canonical” status among the scroll collection?
  - Known and unknown writings and their contexts
- Qumran Archaeology Revisited
  - Buildings of Qumran and various periods of occupation
  - Importance of pottery and architectural style

### **Classroom Activities**

1. Review of Module 1 (questions, comments, concerns)
2. Class discussion: The Old Testament canon, its subdivisions, and its sources  
Theories of textual development
3. Small group activity: Given the various theories of textual development, discuss the

nature of the Old Testament as “divinely inspired.” If the “canon” for the Essenes was different from, but similar to, our Old Testament, should it also be considered a result of divine inspiration? Why or why not?

4. Class discussion: the biblical Scrolls, including the texts discovered and the differences between biblical scrolls and Old Testament texts. What methods, interpretations, etc., can we use to account for the differences?
5. Small group activity: In your opinion, what is the major significance of the “biblical” Scrolls for study of the Old Testament text?
6. Report from small groups
7. Class discussion: Periods of building and occupation at Qumran – What do pottery and architecture have to do with identification of the site and the people who lived there?
8. Revisit the student learning outcomes for the module; summarize important points; final Q&A; preview of Week 3

### **Week 3: The Non-Biblical Scrolls**

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, upon completion of this module, should be able to:

- Describe various key texts among the non-biblical Scrolls found at Qumran
- Explain how these texts may help us understand the theology of the Qumran Essenes
- Understand the differences and similarities between the Qumran Essenes and their contemporaries within Judaism in general, based on these scrolls
- Evaluate the methods used by the Qumran Essenes to interpret scripture

#### **Student Preparation**

- Reading
  - *Meaning*: 209-238, 255-308
  - *Today*: 43-70
  - *Archaeology*: 105-162
- Reading Reflection
  - Written reflection due at beginning of class
- Research
  - Each student will submit a one sentence, typed thesis statement at the beginning of the module
- Study for Mid-term Exam
  - Mid-term exam will be given at beginning of module

#### **Major Points for Discussion**

- The Non-Biblical Scrolls
  - The Temple Scroll
  - 4QMMT
  - The Damascus Document
  - The Rule of the Community
  - Other selected texts (commentaries and rewritten scripture)
- Qumran Theology/Beliefs
  - God, law, eschatology, messianic hope
- Qumran Essenes and their Jewish contemporaries
  - Review of Jewish groups of the period and their identification in the scrolls
  - Key figures of the Qumran sect

- The Teacher of Righteousness
  - The Wicked Priest
  - The Liar
  - The Lion of Wrath
- Where did the Qumran sect originate?
- Biblical interpretation at Qumran
  - Legal and narrative interpretation (define pesher)
- Qumran Archaeology revisited
  - Sacredness of space, the group, and their purity as evidenced in meals, toilets, and ritual baths (miqva'ot)

### **Classroom Activities**

1. Review of Module 2 (questions, comments, concerns)
2. Mid-term exam
3. Class discussion: The Temple Scroll, 4QMMT, the Damascus Document, and the Community Rule as representative non-biblical scrolls; Qumran theology/belief; Qumran Essenes within Judaism; biblical interpretation at Qumran
4. Small group activity: Distribute all thesis statements submitted at beginning of class to persons other than their respective authors. Have each person within their group read the thesis statement and “interpret” what the statement is trying to say. Take note of the ways (methods) used to interpret each statement. Write comments regarding the interpretive process on the page with the thesis statement.
5. Class discussion: Meals, toilets, and ritual baths at Qumran
6. Revisit the student learning outcomes for the module; summarize important points; final Q&A; preview of Week 4

### **Week 4: The Scrolls and the New Testament**

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, upon completion of this module, should be able to:

- Describe the relationship shared between the New Testament and the Scrolls
- Explain the major similarities and differences that appear when the Qumran Scrolls are compared with major New Testament figures and theological ideas
- Understand the convergence or divergence of major topics (e.g., Messianism, resurrection, etc.) among the Scrolls and the New Testament
- Evaluate the importance of Scroll study to the understanding of New Testament history and theology

#### **Student Preparation**

- Reading
  - *Meaning*: 311-378
  - *Today*: 159-185
  - *Archaeology*: 163-187
- Reading Reflection
  - Written reflection due at beginning of class
- Research
  - Rough drafts of research papers should be completed

#### **Major Points for Discussion**

- The Scrolls and New Testament texts

- The Gospels and the Scrolls
- Acts and Paul's letters and the Scrolls
- Revelation and the Scrolls
- The Scrolls and New Testament figures
  - Jesus and the Scrolls
  - John the Baptist and the Scrolls
  - The Messiah(s) and the Scrolls
- The Scrolls and New Testament practices and theology
  - Shared property, meals, calendar
  - Resurrection and 4Q521
  - Eschatology
- Qumran Archaeology revisited
  - Women and the Qumran community

### **Classroom Activities**

- 1) Review of Module 3 (questions, comments, concerns)
- 2) Class discussion: the Scrolls and the New Testament
- 3) Small group activity: Groups are given selected New Testament texts. What new insights or discoveries can be made by evaluating the text against what you have learned from study of the Scrolls?
- 4) Class discussion: the Scrolls and major New Testament figures
- 5) Small group activity: What are your ideas on Messianism? Why do you think your ideas are different from the Scrolls, even though both are primarily based on the Old Testament?
- 6) Class discussion: the Scrolls and New Testament practices and theology
- 7) Small group activity: What are your ideas on resurrection? Compare your understanding to selected New Testament texts and 4Q521.
- 8) Class discussion: Women and the Qumran community
- 9) Revisit the student learning outcomes for the module; summarize important points; final Q&A; preview of Week 5

### **Week 5: Controversy and the Scrolls**

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The student, upon completion of this module, should be able to:

- Describe the major controversies surrounding the discovery and publication of the Scrolls
- Explain the role played by key figures in the discovery and publication of the Scrolls
- Understand the difference between Scroll study and sensationalism
- Evaluate the claims of various scholars regarding the Scrolls, their history, and publication

#### **Student Preparation**

- Reading
  - *Meaning*: 381-403
  - *Today*: 187-201
- Reading Reflection
  - Written reflection due at beginning of class
- Research
  - Final drafts of research papers due

- Study for Final Exam
  - Final exam will be given at beginning of module

### **Major Points for Discussion**

- Controversies surrounding the discovery and publication of the Scrolls
  - 1947-1989 (Preliminary work and the editing team(s))
  - slow rate of publication and its consequences
  - 1989 to the present (Emmanuel Tov)
  - Key figures and increasing sensationalism (Solomon Zeitlin, John Allegro, Hershel Shanks, et al)
  - Key figures and their scholarly contributions to the study of the Scrolls (Eleazar Sukenik, Yigal Yadin, Frank M. Cross, John Strugnell, Roland de Vaux, Emmanuel Tov, et al)

### **Classroom Activities**

1. Review of Module 4 (questions, comments, concerns)
2. Final Exam
3. Class discussion: the Scrolls controversy (1947-Present)
4. Small group activity: Discuss the enduring sentiment of conspiracy surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls in light of their appearance and/or implication in such sensational literature as *The DaVinci Code*, the *Gospel of Judas*, *The Jesus Family Tomb*, et al. Why do you think that the Scrolls are still involved in such sensationalism?
5. Revisit the student learning outcomes for the module; summarize important points
6. Revisit the student learning outcomes for the course; final questions and comments