

OT 410-3 Israel/Palestine: Travel Seminar
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
J-Term 2023

Class Meetings: January 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12: 9am-12pm
Travel Dates: January 16-28, 2023

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Course Description

This travel seminar introduces students to topics related to Israel and Palestine including geography, Old Testament archaeological sites, sites related to Jesus, the history of Jerusalem including the major events in the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as they relate to the city, and to the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Through visits to archaeological sites, museums, and holy places in Israel and Palestine, and listening to a variety of people living in the land today, students will learn about the complex history of the region: the growth of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam side by side, and the impact of religious groups upon the culture. We will contemplate not only the past but the interreligious and intercultural situation today, the sources of conflict, and the strategies by which a wide variety of people seek to live day by day. The course is largely based on experiential learning.

Course Objectives Or Dreams

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Identify and describe major events, influential groups, and changes during Israel and Palestine's long history from 1000 BCE through the present.
2. Articulate their own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry.
3. Demonstrate a capacity for ecumenical and interreligious relations.
4. Develop a mental map of the times, places, and people that comprise much of the Holy Land, including the Galilee region, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.
5. Participate thoughtfully and compassionately in discussion of historical, faith, cultural, and political issues raised in our travels.

These course objectives relate to various degree programs' student learning outcomes including: MDiv SLO #1: Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and the ability to use critical skills and educated imagination to interpret it in contemporary social and cultural contexts.

MDiv SLO#6: Students can articulate own theological perspective, mindful of the global, multicultural, multireligious context of contemporary ministry.

MAR SLO#1: Students will be able to interpret Scripture critically and imaginatively.

MAR SLO#3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary.

Required Readings

Please purchase or find access to the following books. I like to offer CHOICES so read carefully below about selecting one from options. Choose your own adventure! (or read them all!)

A. Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine, 1996). Foundational history of the area. No choice.

B. Choose one of three books by Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, whom we will meet while in Bethlehem. *Bethlehem Besieged* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004). *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible Through Palestinian Eyes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2014). *The Politics of Persecution: Middle Eastern Christians in an Age of Empire* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021).

C. Choose one book about the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

A) Ari Shavit. *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2013).

B) Sayed Kashua. *Native: Dispatches from an Israeli-Palestinian Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2016).

C) Ben Ehrenreich. *The Way to the Spring: Life and Death in Palestine* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016).

D) Yossi Klein Halevi. *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor* (New York: Harper, 2018).

D. Please bring one of the following books on the trip with you:

Luker, Lamontte M. *An Illustrated Guide to the Holy Land for Tour Groups, Students, and Pilgrims* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013). OR

John A. Beck *The Holy Land for Christian Travelers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

You are not required to read this book before the trip. But if you want to read it in preparation, that's fine too. It's a quick way to access information about sites from the tour bus.

E. This totally OPTIONAL book could be read a few months AFTER the trip:

Martin, James. *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (New York: HarperOne, 2014).

Other readings listed in the course schedule below will be posted on Canvas.

Assignments & Evaluation

1) Active, constructive participation in travel seminar events and reflection meetings while in Israel and Palestine (50% of final grade).

Active, constructive participation involves going with an open mind and heart—open to others in the group and their reflections and needs, and open to those we meet on the journey, even when we find ourselves differing with them in opinion or sensibility. We will learn through a discipline of reflection, not reaction; of dialogue, not passivity or monologue; and of thoughtful respect.

2) Pilgrimage Journal (30% of final grade)

Students are asked to purchase a physical journal and make weekly entries into it before and during the pilgrimage in January. For the preparation component of the course, the journal will contain 3 types of entries (organized as you wish).

First, students will develop a **timeline** of the major historical, religious, and cultural events/persons/ movements in the history of Jerusalem (and by extension, Israel/Palestine) from 1000 BCE to the present. Using roughly 1 page of journal paper for each 2-3 centuries in time, students will chart out the history, religion, and culture of Jerusalem (and Israel/Palestine) including major figures, political events, religious events, etc. Students should bring to each class session their developing timeline to participate in discussions.

Second, students will take **notes on assigned readings** to increase retention of material and to use later during the pilgrimage. These notes can be in any format or style. The journal will be a place to jot down interesting tidbits or important points as you read.

Finally, students will write **pilgrimage reflections** related to the course content. These are spiritual reflections on the material discussed in class.

Students will continue to keep a journal while on the travel seminar. This journal should be a travel log, a place of spiritual reflection, a site of questions. There are no specific requirements or particular prompts/questions for this section of the journal except that students should record at least one entry for every day of the pilgrimage. Upon our return from the pilgrimage, students will select a few pages from the journal to photocopy and turn in with a 2-page final summary of some of the major learnings from the trip based on the journal entries. Due Feb. 3rd.

3) “Presentation” to Louisville Seminary Community. (20% of final grade)

This time of sharing will take one of two specific forms:

3a) Chapel Service Worship Design. Chapel service Date TBD

3b) Lunchtime Presentation to Seminary Community, Date TBD, probably Feb.

Students will choose one of these options and work with others to complete the project.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty: All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:
American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.
Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Inclusive Language: In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing and speaking, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

Policy on late work: All written assignments are due on the date given in the syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

Course Schedule

January 3

Introduction to course & syllabus

Pilgrimage, *homo viator*

Geography/Topography

Biblical Places, Modern Lines

Terminology: Palestine, Israel, West Bank, Gaza

Required Readings:

Reader, Ian. *Pilgrimage: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 20-30. [Canvas]

Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A. *Pilgrimage-The Sacred Act: Journey to the Center of the Heart* (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2013): 18-27, 196-198. [Canvas]

Recommended, Optional Reading:

Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A. *Pilgrimage-The Sacred Act: Journey to the Center of the Heart* (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2013): 106-133. [Canvas]

Journal Due Today: 1) No timeline information yet. 2) notes on pilgrimage readings. 3) Why are you going on this pilgrimage? What do you want to experience, see, hear, touch while on your journey? What do you want to learn before you go? What does pilgrimage mean to you? 4) What do you imagine the land of Israel looks like? What images do you have from your (childhood or adult) church experiences? Do you often think about Israel as a land of the past (i.e., Jesus or ancient Israelites) or a contemporary land (Israelis and Palestinians) or both?

January 4

Archaeology/ Old Testament Places: Megiddo & Jericho

Old Testament history of Jerusalem

Required Readings:

Armstrong, Karen, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, chapters 2-5 (skim the Introduction and Chapter 1)

Cargill, Robert R. *The Cities That Built the Bible* (New York: HarperOne, 2016), 99-109. [Canvas]

“Jericho,” in Laughlin, John C. H. *Fifty Major Cities of the Bible* (London: Routledge, 2006), 156-162. [Canvas]

Galor, Katharina and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 28-47. [Canvas]

For further information on “biblical archaeology,” see Eric H. Cline, *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Journal Due Today: 1) timeline started using Armstrong book mostly. 2) notes on readings about major OT cities.

January 5

Jesus Sites: Galilee

Required Readings:

Reed, Jonathan L. *The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 54-64, 74-77. [Canvas]

Crossan, John Dominic & Jonathan L. Reed. *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (New York: HarperOne: 2001), 57-60, 65-70. [Canvas]

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 194-198, 201-203. [Canvas]

Journal Due Today: 1) some timeline work if necessary. 2) notes on readings. 3) What do you most want to see in the Galilee and why? How do the readings for this week provide a different/fuller picture of Jesus' ministry in Galilee?

January 10

Jesus Sites: Jerusalem

Required Readings:

Armstrong, Karen, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, 129, 134-135.

Reed, Jonathan L. *The HarperCollins Visual Guide to the New Testament* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 78-99. [Canvas]

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 140-156. [Canvas]

Galor, Katharina and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 76-87. [Canvas]

One great resource for the Jesus sites, combing archaeological information with exegetical reflections, is Crossan, John Dominic & Jonathan L. Reed. *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (New York: HarperOne: 2001).

Journal Due Today: 1) timeline work. 2) notes on Jerusalem. 3) Reflection some on Jerusalem as sacred space for Christianity but NOT Jesus' main area of ministry or hometown. Perhaps he only visited Jerusalem once. Why is Jerusalem important to you as a Christian?

January 11

Islamic Jerusalem, Crusades, and Ottomans

Three Sacred Sites, Three Religions, One City: Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Western Wall, Dome of the Rock

Required Readings:

Armstrong, chs. 11-13

Galor, Katharina and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 155-163. [Canvas]

Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 323-328, 350-356. [Canvas]

Visit this website: http://english.thekotel.org/kotel/about/what_is_western_wall/

Journal Due Today: 1) timeline work based on Armstrong. 2) notes on Islamic period and these three sacred sites 3) Reflect some on Christianity's violent history. Is Christianity a violent religion? Have we always been violent? How might this history affect our relationships with Muslims today? 4) Write some reflections on "sharing." Three major world religions share the city of Jerusalem. They all see it as sacred space; they all worship daily in the Old City of Jerusalem. What are the potential benefits and/or conflicts to this situation?

January 12

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Required Readings:

Armstrong, ch 17

March, Eugene. *God's Land on Loan* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 30-61. [Canvas]

Mitri Raheb book

contemporary Israeli-Palestinian Conflict book

Journal Due Today: 1) timeline information based on Armstrong. 2) notes on March's reading. 3) Reflect some on how and what you know about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Where have you heard about it? What feelings and understandings do you bring about Israelis and Palestinians on this trip?