

**Course Title:** The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their World

**Course Number:** TBD

**Semester** Summer **Year** 2012

**Pacific School of Religion**

**Day:** Monday-Friday, July 9-13. **Time:** 1:00-5:00 PM

**Instructor:** Jehon Grist, Ph.D., is Executive Director of Lehrhaus Judaica, the Bay Area School for adult Jewish education. He received his Ph.D. in ancient Near Eastern cultures from UC Berkeley after doctoral research at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and archaeological field research in Israel, the Gaza Strip, and Egypt. He has published articles and photos on the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, and the *Biblical Archaeology Review*. An instructor and assistant professor at UC Berkeley, and Cal State Fresno, Dr. Grist has spent the last 23 years administering Lehrhaus and teaching courses at various Jewish community and secular institutions in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

**Office Location:** TBD; Bade exhibit area preferred

**Office hours:** TBD

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**Course Description:** This course takes a decidedly holistic approach to understanding the scrolls in the context of their times. We'll begin with an overview of the history encompassing the scrolls, ca. 600 BCE-100 CE. From there, we'll journey from the Cairo Genizah to the Judean Desert to chronicle the story of the scrolls' discovery, and delving into current technologies used in scroll research. We'll also visit Qumran and the scroll caves to explore the physical environment of the texts and the people who produced many of them.

The heart of the course will focus on a survey of the key sectarian texts and copies of biblical books found in the scroll corpus. We will study each text in English translation, with reference to Hebrew/Aramaic terms where needed. We'll also engage in the detective work of discovering the full historical and theological significance of each text, and how it contributes to our understanding of the emergence of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. Finally, we'll explore the 'cutting edge': current controversies and breakthroughs in scroll research.

### **Required Texts:**

VanderKam, J. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*. 2d. ed. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010.

Abegg, M., Flint, P, et al. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*. Harper San Francisco, 2002.

Vermes, G. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Rev. ed. Penguin Classics, 2004.

### **Session Schedule and Assignments:**

*Recommended Reading Prior to First Session:* VanderKam, chapters 1, 5A, 7

**Monday, July 9: Background:** From Israelite religion to early Judaism and Christianity, ca. 600 BCE-100 CE; discovery of the scrolls, and scrolls research; archaeology of Qumran; Israelite religious artifact displays from the Bade Collection and discussion.

*Assignment for Tuesday:* VanderKam, chapters 2, 3, 4.

**Tuesday, July 10:** The archaeology of Qumran; who lived in/near Qumran and what did they believe? Introduction to Biblical and sectarian texts.

*Assignment:* Abegg, pp. 215-236 (I Samuel); 257-299 (Isaiah); Vermes, “Apocryphal Psalms (I), 301-307; Habakkuk Peshar (Commentary) (1QpHab); Jubilees fragments (+ contextual readings from later versions);

**Wednesday, July 11:** A Guided Tour of the Scrolls I: Biblical Texts/Commentaries, Apocryphal works and Pseudepigrapha. Among the texts we’ll visit: Isaiah Scroll, Samuel Fragments, Psalms texts, Biblical and non-Biblical; Habakkuk and the Habakkuk Peshar (commentary); Jubilees. A key goal in this session is to compare the differences and similarities between the Dead Sea Scrolls Biblical texts and the Septuagint Greek and Masoretic Hebrew versions. We will also explore how Biblical texts dating to the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE were re-interpreted centuries later to address contemporary concerns. Discussion time for student paper topics.

*Assignment:* Vermes: *Damascus Document* texts (127-154); *Community Rule* texts (97-126); *War Scroll* texts: MMT (221-30); *Temple Scroll* (portions); *Copper Scroll* (625-631).

**Thursday, July 12:** A Guided Tour of the Texts II: Essential Sectarian Works—Damascus Document, Community Rule, Temple Scroll, War Scroll, Miqsat Ma’aseh HaTorah (Some Torah Precepts), Copper Scroll. Themes to be discussed: eschatological similarities shared between Dead Sea Scroll texts and New Testament texts; Jewish mainstream and sectarian views on issues of Halakhah and calendar; the meaning of the Temple in the First Century. Discussion time for paper topics.

*Assignment:* VanderKam, chapters 5BC, 6, and recent articles for discussion tomorrow.

**Friday, July 13:** Special Topics and Current Controversies: the Scrolls and Early Christianity; Gabriel’s Revelation; Zoroastrianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls; Apocalypticism and Messianism. Students will present brief overviews of their paper topic approaches.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will be expected to develop a basic understanding of the key historical events and essential texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls era. Beyond basic content literacy, students will be asked to analyze and integrate data from multiple disciplines. Critical thinking skills will be employed in class presentations/discussions that explore and begin to answer a number of essential questions: how does the archaeology of the Qumran site inform our understanding of the scrolls, and vice versa; what do the Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about the final development of the Hebrew Bible; how do Dead Sea Scrolls apocalyptic texts inform our understanding of early Christian apocalyptic texts; how do we interpret and test new discoveries, like Gabriel’s Revelation; to what extent does Dead Sea Scrolls eschatology compare with modern Jewish and Christian versions?

Based on these discussion points and more, students will select, research, and write a 10-15 page paper on a closely defined topic. This paper will require presentation and analysis of specific scroll/s content, cognizant of relevant historical and archaeological context, leading to a synthesis that attempts to objectively explain the phenomenon considered.

**Requirements:** Portions of the course will be offered in seminar format with group discussion of specific texts covered in class. Oral participation will count for 20% of the final grade. By the end of the class, students will submit a 2-4 page reflection paper (20% of grade) on an instructor-approved topic, outlining the student’s current understanding of the topic, along with a brief outline of a 10-15 research paper (60% of grade) exploring the topic in greater depth, due 30 days after class concludes.

**Attendance Policy:** Because of the intense schedule of this course, attendance is expected for all sessions for students seeking unit credit. If a student knows that he/she will have to miss a single class day, the student must consult with the instructor to arrange an instructor-approved make-up plan.

**Grading and Plagiarism Policy:** Please consult: <http://www.psr.edu/grades> and <http://www.psr.edu/plagiarism-policy>.

**Incomplete Policy:** Please consult: <http://www.psr.edu/extensions-lapsed-time-rule>.

**Use of Technology in Classroom:** Use of laptops is permitted for note taking. For all other uses, please consult: <http://www.psr.edu/use-technology-classroom>.

### **English as Second Language (ESL) Policy**

1. Upon request by the ESL student to the PSR faculty, the faculty member will extend the deadline for papers one week to allow time for editing.
2. Upon request by the ESL student, PSR faculty will allow twice as much time for ESL students to complete in-class written exams.

### **The PSR curriculum aims to develop Progressive Christian leadership in students. A**

#### **Progressive Christian leader:**

1. Is rooted in Christian tradition
  - Has the ability to re-appropriate tradition for new times/places
  - Can critically analyze texts and traditions
2. Understands the contextual nature of knowing and understanding
  - Understands one's own perception is limited
  - Understands the reality and value of multiple perspectives
  - Understands ambiguity and complexity and can hold the tensions related to difference
  - can critically evaluate a context and respond
3. Is self aware/spiritually grounded
  - Has an engaged spirituality
  - Is self-reflective and reflexive
4. Works in partnership
  - Is actively involved in ecumenical and interfaith conversations
  - Appreciates the value of diversity and moves beyond appreciation to engagement
  - Is socially connected and can work collaboratively
  - Is competent in cross-cultural situations
  - Nurtures the development of leadership in others
5. Can envision and engage in the creation of a more just world
  - Holds a liberation perspective
  - Has a global consciousness
  - Works for social change and has a systemic perspective
  - Is involved in institutional transformation

