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Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies  
Daily Life in Ancient Israel in Relation to the Environment  
2005  

**Course Syllabus**  

MES 251WR/JS 251WR/REL 370WR/OT 698-000: **DAILY LIFE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL**

**Course Objectives:**
- (*) To introduce the student to the different aspects of daily life during the period of the Israelite tribal confederacy and the monarchy (1200-586 BCE). These aspects include the economy, different occupations and means of livelihood, cultural, social and religious activities, different art modes, etc.
- (*) To examine the interaction between the Israelites and their ecology. Questions to be raised concern the relationship of the Israelites to their environment, the benefits they reaped and/or the damage they caused.
- (*) To develop certain skills related to research and the dissemination of knowledge including identification of source materials, critical analysis of data, presenting results in written and in oral forms (reports, papers).

Students are expected to do the readings ahead of time, attend all classes, and participate in class discussions. Primary sources to be used are the Bible and archaeology. Secondary sources are the required textbooks, books on reserve, and additional handouts.

**THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE POST-FRESHMAN WRITING REQUIREMENT.**

**Textbooks:**  
*Oxford Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press).

**On Reserve:**  
Zeev Herzog, *Archaeology of the City* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Institute of Archaeology, 1997)  
Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmann, 1997)
Session 1
Introduction to the Course and the requirements

Session 2
Introduction: The Land and its Natural Resources; Textual and Material Sources; The People – *Daily Life*, 1-11

**Topic 1 - Economy: Agriculture, Herding, and Trade**
3 Land Use - *Agriculture*, 3-44; 143-162; *Daily Life*, 25-28
4 Field Crops; Orchards and Vineyards; Vegetables - *Agriculture*, 47-99; 101-139; *Daily Life*, 28-29
5 Herding - *Daily Life*, 29-30; *Every Living Thing*, 39-85; *Manners & Customs*, 16-18

Trade - *Daily Life*, 55-59; *Bible* - 75*-76*

**Topic 2 - The Israelite Kitchen, Diet & Health**
6 Food and Diet - *Daily Life*, 63-74; *Manners & Customs*, 19-20
7 Health - *Daily Life*, 74-80; *Manners & Customs*, 125-126

**Topic 3 - City Planning & Housing**
8 The Village - *Daily Life*, 13-21; *Bible*, 69*-73*; *Manners & Customs*, 41-49
9 The City - *Daily Life*, 43-54; *Manners & Customs*, 102-115

**Topic 4 - Religion, Cult, Temples**
10 Early religious practices - *Daily Life*, 24-25; *Manners & Customs*, 26-28; 75-85; *Bible*, 76*-78*; 141*-142*; *Every Living Thing*, 211-30
11 Religion in Monarchical Times - *Daily Life*, 54-55; *Manners & Customs*, 138-144; *Bible* - 146*-147*; 148*-153*;

**Topic 5 - Social Behavior, Laws & Customs**
12 Early Practices - *Daily Life*, 21-24, 80-83; *Manners & Customs*, 3-13; 20-26; 28-31; 67-74; *Social World*, 1-21; 82-131; 142-154
13 Urban Society - *Manners & Customs*, 115-120; 130-138; *Social World*, 199-236; *Bible* - 73*-75*

**Topic 6 - Death, Burials & Cemeteries**
14 Early Practices - *Daily Life*, 83-84; *Manners & Customs*, 11-14; 74-75
15 Urban Society - *Manners & Customs*, 127-130

Spring recess
Spring recess

16 Oral presentations on selected topics

Annotated bibliography is due.

**Topic 7 - Music**
17 At Home and in Public - *Daily Life*, 87-93; *Manners & Customs*, 123-125

**Topic 8 - Occupations**
18 Agriculturalists, Herders, Traders, Seafaring - *Social World*, 37-66
19 Wine and Oil Making - *Agriculture*, 110-114; 119-126
20 Weaving, Dyeing, Leather, Metallurgy, Pottery, etc. - *Daily Life*, 30-35

Outline (with bibliography) is due.

**Topic 9 - Warfare**
21 Early Times - *Daily Life*, 35-41; *Manners & Customs*, 31-32; 60-66
22 During the Monarchy - *Daily Life*, 59-61; *Manners & Customs*, 144-150

**Topic 10 - Women in Israelite Society**
23 The Place of Women - *Daily Life*, 109-126; *Manners & Customs*, 10-11; 120-122; *Social World*, 22-36; 67-81; 132-141; 176-186; *Bible, Proverbs* 31:10-31

*First draft (with bibliography & outline) is due.*

**Topic 11 - The Rich & Powerful**
24 Kings, Priests, Nobility - *Social World*, 155-175; 187-198
25 Palaces and Other Accommodations - *Daily Life*, 49-51

**Topic 12 - Art & Writing**

*Final paper is due.*
27 Oral presentations on selected topics
The course uses a Blackboard site where session outlines, illustrations, leading questions, announcements, and other materials are posted.
The course uses a LearnLink (LL) conference for two-way communication.
Final grade includes (1) weekly reports (30%); (2) oral presentations (15%); (3) research paper (30%); (4) environmental matters (15%); and (5) book review (10%).
Extra credit is available by attending lectures on archaeological topics and submitting a 1-2 page report.
Graduate students will be assigned additional work.

**Weekly reports:** (30%)
Every Thursday, students are required to submit a 2-3-page report on the readings and issues discussed in class during the previous two sessions. Each report should include citations and a bibliography using the Author/Date style.

**Environmental Matters:** (15%)
Before every session, each student is supposed to submit via LL an environmentally related question or observation for discussion connected with the session. Questions can arise from the readings. Each submitted question or topic gets one (1) point; a topic or question that will be considered in class earn two (2) points. Students can make more than one submission.

**Oral Reports:** (15%)
Will be assigned for Sessions 16 and 27.

**Final paper:** (30%)
Final paper (15-17pp) is due on Session 26.
- Annotated bibliography is due on Session 16.
- Outline is due on Session 20.
- First draft is due on Session 23.

**Book review:** (10%)
Can be written on any of the books consulted for the paper.

NO EXTENSION GIVEN FOR ANY OF THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Attendance**
   It is the Department policy that attendance in class is required. Absences may be excused for medical reasons (with a note from your doctor or health service), for participation in official school functions (with a note from the Dean) or by prior arrangement with the instructor with the instructor's consent. Three (3) or more unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one-half letter grade for each three unexcused absences.

2. **Participation**
   Students are expected to do all readings and come prepared to take part in class discussions.

3. **Weekly reports and Final paper**

4. **Oral presentation**

5. **Consideration of Environmental matters**

6. **Book review**
ALL CELLPHONES AND PAGERS MUST BE TURNED OFF BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOM.
The honor code is strictly observed in this course including plagiarism.