

Jerusalem University College –Westmont Fall 202011 Program–

The Geographical and Historical Settings of the Bible Geography and History of Israel as it Impacts the Bible and Modern Life  
~~343 weeks;~~ **4 credit hours**

**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

While this course will begin while still in Europe the primary focus will be an intensive ~~three~~<sup>four</sup>~~three~~-week academic study integrated with field studies designed to introduce the student to the geography, history and archaeology of Israel. Regional studies ~~with include~~ overnight field studies, on-site lectures, preparatory lectures at the campus, in depth discussions with Jews, Palestinians and Christians living in Israel, and required map work prior to arrival all help the student to apply the geographical context of the land to biblical studies and the current Israeli/Palestinian Issues.

The main<sup>A strong</sup> emphasis of this class is geography and its influence upon the history that we read in the biblical text. Because most of the historical events described in the Bible are found in the Old Testament, there is an Old Testament thrust to the class. However, much New Testament material is included, particularly in Jerusalem, Galilee and along the Dead Sea. The regions visited in the field studies include Benjamin, Judah, the Shephelah, Philistia, Ephraim and Samaria (if conditions permit), the Sharon Plain, the Jezreel Valley, Galilee, the Sea of Galilee, Bashan (the “Golan Heights”), the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea, the Negev (both biblical and greater). ~~and for students opting to go to Jordan, trips also include the regions of Gilead, the Madaba Plateau, Moab and Edom.~~ The order of these field studies (and their examinations) is listed on the calendar.

The second emphasis is to understand the rise of Zionism and its effects on a variety of people post-Ottoman empire. Before arriving in Israel/Palestine, we will discuss the European involvement in the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the resulting complications in the creation of the State of Israel/Palestinian issues of modern day Israel. As so as we travel through Israel/Palestine, the land we will discuss -the impacts both that the biblical and political history and geography of Israel of the land have had on modern life in Israel/Palestine. Field studies will engage life behind the Security Wall in Bethlehem, graffiti as protest art or voyeuristic tourism, Bedouin life in registered and unregistered villages in the Negev. Field trips specifically designed to do this include home stays in the Bethlehem area (life behind the Separation Wall/Security Fence), a visit to a Palestinian refugee camp as well as a visit to a Kibbutz, lectures with the Druze along the Syria, Lebanon, Israel border, overnight in a West Bank settlement (with lectures, meetings and discussions with members of the settlements), and a visit to the Palestinian National Council (with a lecture from the Palestinian Negotiating team); Druze experience in the contested Golan Heights, and Israel’s national security in the Middle East.

**2. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

As you study and travel this land, you will gain a library of impressions that will help you lay a foundation for a more thorough understanding of God’s word in its geographical and historical context. You will also begin to understand the depth and complexity of the issues that challenge

modern life in the nation of Israel with their roots in the land and history of Israel. After taking ~~three~~ ~~four~~ ~~three~~ weeks to “pack” this material into your learning experience, you will spend a lifetime “unpacking” as you continue your biblical studies and Bible reading and better understand from both the Israeli and Palestinian perspectives the difficulties of resolving the issues that have dominated the region for decades.

Thus, our objectives for this class are:

- a) ~~to e~~ Experience, enjoy and develop a love for the land of the Bible.<sup>23</sup>
- b) ~~to a~~ Acquire a basic knowledge of the geology, geography and hydrology of the land of the Bible and their bearing on patterns of human settlement, communication, defense and historical development, ~~especially~~ during the days of the Bible through to the present.
- c) ~~to b~~ Better appreciate the geographical and historical perspective from which the psalmists, prophets and gospel writers wrote. In doing so, to better understand the message of God’s word and gain spiritual insights for our lives and His service.<sup>24</sup> ~~and~~
- d) ~~to l~~ Locate the ~~Bible~~ biblical narrative in time and space.<sup>25</sup>
- e) ~~to v~~ Develop the ability to think globally and view complex issues through the eyes of those living in the land not just from outside a western perspective.
- f) ~~to u~~ Understand the cultural, political, historical, economic and religious practices that lead to differing viewpoints of the current political situation.
- g) ~~M~~ To move beyond the stereotypes and understand the various people groups within the borders of Israel.
- h) Discuss what justice for all would mean for modern Israel.

### 3. Westmont Thinking Globally GE Requirement:

This course meets the Thinking Globally requirement of the Westmont General Education Program. The description is as follows:

- a) ~~DD~~  
Students will connect their experience in Europe and their knowledge of WWI and WWII with the experience of living in a multi-religious and multi-cultural context in Israel.
- b) **include multiple perspectives arising from these connections.**  
Students will have direct interactions with Christian Palestinians, Muslim Palestinians, Jerusalem Arab residents, Jewish Israelis, Bedouin, and Druze. The course will help students learn to listen compassionately as non-Westerners explain their personal experiences, political viewpoints, and religious beliefs. Students will demonstrate their level of mastery in their final paper in which they compare and contrast Israeli and Palestinian cultures.
- c) **evaluate the impact of global processes on various world contexts and life experiences.**  
In meeting and hearing from articulate spokespeople from both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives, students will be able to contrast their own Western thinking versus the non-Western thinking they encounter in how they view the modern situation. They should be able to demonstrate their growing understanding in both the impression reports and the two papers.
- d) **explore the ethical demands for Christians in light of the topic under study.**  
1. ———

While solving the issues modern Israel faces is beyond the scope of the course, the students will hear ideas from those involved and especially in their second paper be asked to propose their own solutions to the situation.

### 34. COURSE MATERIALS

The following items will be used in the class:

- a) a Bible in a modern translation such as NKJV, NASB, RSV or NIV (not a paraphrase)
- b) James M. Monson, *Regions on the Run*. Rockford, IL: Biblical Backgrounds, 1998
- c) Steven P. Lancaster and James M. Monson, *Regional Study Guide*, with supplement. Rockford, IL: Biblical Backgrounds, 1999-2001.
- d) Regional Study Maps 1-7
- e) *Historical Geography Notebook*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1998.
- f) *Foundations Map*, JUC
- g) Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry. "The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction." 2nd Edition. Pluto Press: London, 2008.
- h) Tolan, Sandy. "The Lemon Tree, An Arab, A Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East." Bloomsbury, USA, 2006

The following items are helpful for additional information, and are available in the JUC library:

- a) Denis Baly, *The Geography of the Bible*. New and Revised ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- b) Yohanan Aharoni, Michael Avi-Yonah, Anson F. Rainey and Ze'ev Safrai, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1993. (Republished in 2002 as *The Carta Bible Atlas*).
- c) Carl Rasmussen, *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- d) Paul H. Wright, *Greatness, Grace & Glory: Carta's Atlas of Biblical Biography*. Jerusalem: Carta, 2008.
- e) Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land*. 4th ed. Oxford Archaeological Guides, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- f) Efraim Orni and Elisha Efrat, *Geography of Israel*. 4th rev. ed. Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1980.

~~Relief maps (1:250,000, 1:100,000 and 1:50,000) and geology maps (1:250,000) are particularly helpful for those who want to seriously study of the land of the Bible. Maps which are particularly helpful for this course can be purchased at the following locations in Jerusalem:~~

- ~~-1 Shneur Cheshin Street (the street that goes to the Russian Compound)~~
- ~~-13 Helene HaMalka Street.~~

### 45. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- a) **Attendance**-- Because of the nature of the course, attendance at all class sessions and on all field studies is required except for approved medical reasons.
- b) **Readings and Map Work**—You must prepare your pre-assigned *Regions on the Run* and *Regional Study Maps* map work and complete all assigned readings before class time. Bring all of your map materials and the *Historical Geography Notebook* to all class sessions, including field studies. The completed *Regional Study Maps* and *Syllabus Maps* must be turned in at the time of the final exam. ~~Auditors must complete all map work.~~
- e) ~~**Paper**— There will be a five to seven page paper. Your impression reports should be of help with this. There are two main concepts you should address in the paper. The first is to compare and contrast the cultures of the Palestinians and the Israelis. How did their histories influence them? How does each culture influence how they view similar events (give specific examples). The second is to discuss ideas you would have to help resolve~~

~~It is a right to be able to field study in a way that will be the most interesting and~~  
day of field study (a four day field study requires four impression reports). There should be an emphasis on how you have been changed by what you have seen. These are personal reflections and read by the professor for interest but not content. The impression reports will be due during the class period of the exam for the corresponding field study. The impression reports can be either typed or hand-written, but the length should be the equivalent of one single-spaced typed page for each.

~~f)d) Exams--~~ There are three exams, one after each week of the program. These are noted on the calendar. You are responsible for the preview lectures and field study information for each exam.

~~e)e) Paper--~~ There will be a five to seven-page paper. Your impression reports should be of help with this. There are two main concepts you should address in the paper. The first is to compare and contrast the cultures of the Palestinians and the Israelis. How did their histories influence them? How does each culture influence how they view similar events (give specific examples). The second is to discuss ideas you would have to help resolve the situation in a way that would establish justice for both groups. It should be written in a way that you would be willing to have anyone you met during the time in Israel read it.

~~Auditors must write all impression reports.~~

## 56. FIELD STUDIES

- a) You must bring your map materials and the *Historical Geography Notebook* with you on field studies (only the *Historical Geography Notebook* is necessary for the half-day walking field studies in Jerusalem).
- b) Please note the departure time for every field study on the calendar, and plan ahead so that you can be on time for the departures. ~~We don't have very much time once in the field, and every minute counts.~~
- c) ~~Each student must stay with the class and not wander off unless allowed to do so by the professor. Please be careful when "wandering!" Injuries have occurred in the past!~~
- d) You will be asked to help set up picnic lunches and take the empty containers back to the JUC kitchen on our return. Please take the initiative to help out in any way possible to make our field studies enjoyable.
- e) A first-aid kit will be along for all field studies. Notify your instructor if you have any medical need while on the trip.
- f) ~~The use of personal stereos, walkmans, iPods, CDs, etc., on the bus during our field studies is strictly forbidden. The entire field study day is considered class time, whether we are on a site or on the bus.~~
- g) Modesty kits are needed for certain sites on certain days, as indicated in the calendar.

## 67. FINAL GRADE

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following percentages:

~~100%~~ -- Impression Reports

~~2530%~~ -- Completion of assigned *Syllabus Maps* and *Regional Study Maps*, including in-class and personal markings

15% -- Paper

560% -- Exams (you will receive a certain number of points for each exam. These will be totaled and factored as a percentage of your final grade).

The following grading scale will be used:

<b>Undergraduates:</b>	
A-	90-93
B+	83-86
B	83-86
B-	82-80
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	72-70
D	60-69
F	59