

**HST 481: From Alexander to Bar Kochva: The Holy Land in the Graeco-Roman Period. (Seminar in ancient history)**

Tu Th 10:20 AM - 11:40 AM

106B Berkey Hall

Instructor: Prof. Noah Kaye e-mail: kayenoah@msu.edu Phone: (517) 884-4952

Office: 341 Old Horticulture Office Hours: T & Th 12:30-1:30

One way of conceiving of our subject(s):

*“The history of Christianity’s beginnings is part of the history of Judaism in antiquity, and both are part of the history of Greco-Roman culture.”*

-- Wayne Meeks

When did the Judeans become the Jews? What were the Maccabees really fighting for? Was the war with Rome, which resulted in the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, an inevitable consequence of the clash between Judaism and Hellenism? Who was the cruel and chameleon Herod the Great? What was everyday life like in the Galilee of Jesus of Nazareth? These are some of the questions explored in our seminar, which tracks the development of Judaism under the Hellenistic regimes of the Ptolemies, Seleukids, and Hasmoneans, including the millennialism of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran) community and the violent sectarianism of Roman Judea. The course will emphasize the historical and cultural geography of the Holy Land during a period of great change. Another focus will be relations between Judeans/Jews and others, such as Samaritans, Phoenicians, Nabateans, and Edomites/Idumeans. Students can expect a significant archaeological component, as well as visits to the 360 room in the Digital Scholarship Lab (virtual trips to Jerusalem, the desert fortress of Masada and elsewhere), as well as to Special Collections, where we will examine MSU’s Samaritan Pentateuch and ancient synagogue inscription, a fascinating window on to the making of the Hebrew Bible as we know it today.

**LEARNING GOALS**

- To contextualize Second Temple Judaism within the development of ancient Judaism and early Christianity.
- To engage with the complexity of sectarianism, political and socio-economic conflict within Judean society under the Hasmoneans and Herodians.
- To analyze the impact of Hellenistic and Roman imperialism on Jewish history.
- To contend with the contingency of the emergence of Scripture as we know it in this period.
- To use archaeological reasoning to evaluate reconstructions of Second Temple period life and belief.

[The 5C's of historical thinking](#)

Change over time

Causality

Context

Complexity

Contingency

[The 5R's of Historical Events and Phenomena](#)

Revealing: of some aspect of the past.

Remarkable: noted as significant to people living at the time and later.

Remembered: important at some stage in history to collective memory of groups.

Resonant: how deeply were people's lives affected? Affected long after?

Resulting in change: had consequences for the future.

*Importance*

*Profundity*

*Quantity*

*Durability*

*Relevance*

## CLASSTIME

**Tuesdays** may be a little more lecture-intensive, laying out the historical narrative for the week's unit. However, as a group, we will formulate questions to organize our exploration of primary sources and archaeology to be examined on Thursday.

**Thursdays**, our readings generally come from the course packet reader and Magness, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land*. We let the ancient sources and stones speak for themselves, examining how we know what we know.

## BOOKS

- Magness, J. *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon's Temple to the Muslim Conquest*, Kindle ed. (Cambridge, 2012)

- Cohen, S. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, 2014)
- Course packet (primary sources)

## ASSESSMENTS

- 3 exams, ascending value (15%, 25%, 30%), 2nd exam draws 1/5 material from 1st; 3rd exam draws 1/3 from other 2 exams.
- Attendance (recorded) and Participation (5%). Instructor's evaluation of participation is inevitably subjective. There are multiple ways to participate.
- Paper (25%)

### Text Option

#### A. *1 and 2 Maccabees*

- How do 1 and 2 Macc understand the relationship between events taking place inside/outside Judea?
- Do 1 and 2 Macc give us the same sequence of events for crisis and rebellion? In which respects do they differ, and does it matter? If so, how?
- How do the Biblical "intertexts" of 1 (or 2 Macc) affect presentation of narrative? Do they call into question historical value?

#### B. Flavius Josephus

- In which respects, if any, is Josephus a credible source for historians? The siege of Masada may serve as a case study.
- What is Josephus' attitude to Herod, and is it fair?
- Why did the Great Revolt happen, according to Josephus, and is his explanation coherent and compelling?

### Archaeology Option

#### A. Samaritan Topic

- True or false: "The Samaritans were not the true sectarians."

#### B. Jerusalem Topic

- What can burial customs and tombs in the area of Jerusalem tell us about Second Temple Judaism?

#### C. Site Topic

- Pick an archaeological site of your choice (suggestions to be posted, such as Jaffa, Tel Dor, Sepphoris, Tiberias, Mount Gerizim, Qumran, Gerasa/Jerash), which exhibits significant remains from the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods (or, at least, two of the three). Describe, analyze, and explain the most important elements of change in the archaeological record.

[For more ideas use gazetteer, such as <http://moses.creighton.edu/vr/core/about.html>; <https://daahl.ucsd.edu/DAAHL/Home.php>]

## **POLICIES**

### *Before Class*

We come to class having read and reflected upon the assigned readings.

### *In Class*

We respect decorum and the learning environment. That means coming to class on time. That also means that barring exceptional circumstances the use of electronic devices is not permitted in class. If you need to make or take an urgent call or send such a message, please step outside. Always bring the day's reading to class, as we will be referring to it frequently in our discussions.

Also: "MSU welcomes a full spectrum of experiences, viewpoints, and intellectual approaches because they enrich the conversation, even as they challenge us to think differently and grow. However, we believe that expressions and actions that demean individuals or groups compromise the environment for intellectual growth and undermine the social fabric on which the community is based."

<https://acadgov.msu.edu/faculty-statement-campus-climate-diversity-and-inclusion>

### *After Class*

Review, review, reflect, reflect, engage with Google Slides. Follow your curiosity

### *Plagiarism policy of MSU:*

"If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, it is his or her responsibility to take appropriate action.

Depending on his or her judgment of the particular case, he or she may give a failing grade to the student on the assignment or for the course."

### *The Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge:*

"As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor in ownership is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do."

## READING

### WEEK 1 Iron Age Israel (1200-586 B.C.E.)

Tues. Jan. 7

- Magness, Ch.2, The Iron Age, “Historical Background”
- Short introduction to Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel:  
<https://www.ancientjewishreview.com/articles/2019/8/5/introducing-the-hebrew-bible-and-the-history-of-ancient-israel>

Thurs. Jan. 9

- Cohen, “Periodization and Perspective,” pp. 6-12 and Ch. 6, “Canonization and its Implications”
- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 2.2.4, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, all of 2.4, 2.5.2-5, 2.5.9, 2.6.4 [Selections, Tanakh]
- Watch short video on land of Israel/Palestine, familiarize yourself with topographic map:  
<https://ancient-world-project.nes.lsa.umich.edu/israel-palestine/videos/introduction/>

### WEEK 2 The Persian Period and Alexander the Great (586-323 B.C.E.)

Tues. Jan. 14

- Magness, Ch. 3, Babylonian/Persian Periods, “Historical Background: General/Palestine”

Thurs. Jan. 16

- **Coursepack:** Ezra 1, 3-7, 9-10.1-18, Nehemiah 1-2, 4-7.7, 8, 12-13
- Magness, Ch. 3, Babylonian/Persian Periods, “Archaeology, Material Culture”

### WEEK 3 The Early Hellenistic Period: Ptolemies and Seleukids (323-167 B.C.E.)

Tues. Jan. 21

- Magness, Ch. 4, Early Hellenistic Period, “Historical Background: General/Palestine”

Thurs. Jan. 23

- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 4.3.2 [Ben Sira 50]; Josephus *AJ* 12.129-59.
- Magness, Ch. 4, Early Hellenistic Period, “Archaeology”

### WEEK 4: The Maccabean Crisis

Tues. Jan. 28

#### Test 1

Thurs. Jan. 30

- Magness, Ch. 5, The Late Hellenistic (Hasmonean) Period, “Historical Background: General/Palestine”
- **Coursepack:** 2 Maccabees 2:19–10:8; 1 Maccabees 1-4; 5.55-6; 7-9:22 [full text of both included]

### WEEK 5 The Hasmoneans

Tues. Feb. 4

- Cohen, Ch. 2, “Jews and Gentiles”
- **Coursepack:** 1 Maccabees 10-14; 16:11-23 [use full text of 1 Macc under Week 4]; Josephus *AJ* 13.230-300; 398-432

Thurs. Feb. 6

- Cohen, Ch. 3, “Practices and Beliefs”
- Cohen, Ch. 4, “Institutions”

**Special Collections Library Visit, Chamberlain Warren Samaritan Collection**

### WEEK 6 Herod the Great

Tues. Feb. 11

- **Coursepack:** Josephus *AJ*:

14.8-13, 54-63, 69-76, 86-91, 143-44, 158-84, 268-70, 324-36, 355-69, 381-89, 394-99, 482-91.

15.5-13, 88-103, 161-64, 179-201, 233-46, 277-79, 292-98, 317-19, 323-41, 380-90.

16.6-15, 27-30, 121-41.

Thurs. Feb. 13

- <https://ancient-world-project.nes.lsa.umich.edu/israel-palestine/videos/masada/>
- Magness, Ch.7, The Early Roman Period, Jerusalem [All]

**360 Room Visit, Digital Scholarship Lab, west wing of Main Library Fl 2**

### WEEK 7 The Herodians

Tues. Feb. 18

- **Coursepack:** Josephus *AJ*:

17.146-65, 188-205, 213-18, 250-53, 299-314, 342-55.

18.26-38, 55-62, 85-95, 106-8, 161-68, 224-56, 298-309.

19.326-33, 354-66.

Thurs. Feb. 20

- Magness, Ch.8, The Early Roman Period, Caesarea, Samaria-Sebaste, etc. [All]

**360 Room Visit, Digital Scholarship Lab, west wing of Main Library Fl 2**

**Visit with librarians about Paper**

## WEEK 8 Sects 1, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes

Tues. Feb. 25

- <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/main-articles/pharisees>
- <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/related-articles/sadducees>
- **Coursepack:** Josephus *AJ* 18.11-25

Thurs. Feb. 27

### Test 2

## WEEK 9 Sects 2: Christians

Tues. March 10

- Cohen, Ch. 5 “Sectarian and Normative”

Thurs. March 12

- **Coursepack:** NT: Mark 1-13; Matthew 1-7, 18.10-35, 19, 22.15-46, 27-28; 1 Cor. 9:16; Josephus *AJ* 18.63-64  
**Annotated bibliography for paper due [D2L submission by Friday, March 13 at 5pm]**

## WEEK 10 Sects 3: The Dead Sea Scroll Community of Qumran

Tues. March 17

- Magness, Ch. 6, Archaeology of Qumran and Dead Sea Scrolls [All]
- <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/places/main-articles/dead-sea-qumran>
- <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/places/related-articles/dead-sea-scrolls-community>
- Optional: PBS Nova, “Dead Sea Scroll Detectives” (2019): <https://www.thirteen.org/programs/nova/dead-sea-scroll-detectives-pph1dn/>

Even more optional: [https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive?locale=en\\_US](https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive?locale=en_US)

Thurs. March 19

- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 6.3 [classical sources on Essenes, *Damascus Document*, *Rule of the Community*]; Schiffman, 7.3.3 [*The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*]

## WEEK 11 Early Roman Judea

Tues. March 24

- **Coursepack:** Josephus *AJ* 20.1-14, 97-136, 154-88, 205-58

Thurs. March 26

- **Coursepack:** Josephus *AJ* 20.34-53, 92-96
- <https://apnews.com/8650651db50949ce88361f8c12e02012> [Tomb of the Kings (Helena of Adiabene?)]

## WEEK 12 The Great Revolt

Tues. March 31

- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 9.1.1-9.1.8 [Sources on Great Revolt]

Thurs. April 2

- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 9.1.9-9.2-3 [Sources on Great Revolt]

## WEEK 13 Bar Kochva

Tues. April 7

- Magness Ch. 12, From 70 C.E. to Bar Kochva Revolt, and Ch. 13, Aelia Capitolina [All, both]

Thurs. April 9

- **Coursepack:** Babatha Archive
- Optional (images and family tree): <https://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/cmurphy/courses/sctr026/prep/01b.htm>

## WEEK 14 Rabbis & Synagogues

Tues. April 14

- Cohen, Ch. 7 “Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism”
- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 10.1.1 [[Rabbinic traditions on the Pharisees], 10.3.1 [Teaching of the Oral Law], 10.4.2 [On restitution for fire], 10.5.3 [Power of Aggadah]

Thurs. April 16 [First day of Passover]

- **Coursepack:** Schiffman 9.3.2 [Ein Gedi synagogue inscription], Schiffman 9.3.5 [Theodotus inscription]; Josephus, *Vita* 276-282
- Magness, Ch. 14, Roman and Late Antique Period Synagogues in Palestine [All]
- Optional: [https://www.academia.edu/40064600/Inside\\_the\\_Huqoq\\_Synagogue](https://www.academia.edu/40064600/Inside_the_Huqoq_Synagogue)

## WEEK 15 Late-Roman, Early Byzantine Holy Land

Tues. April 21

- Magness, Ch. 15, Byzantine/Early Christian Period, “Historical Background”



- PDF posted to D2L, Gerson Cohen, “Talmudic Age.” Taking the reading as retrospective overview of the course, try the following study tips:
  1. Pick out key terms of historical significance. Use a) [www.bibleodyssey.org](http://www.bibleodyssey.org) & b) oxfordreference.com, <http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/record=b4875471~S39a> to elaborate your knowledge.
  2. Build a timeline of key events by identifying events highlighted both in this reading and in the course.
  3. Identify key arguments in Cohen’s narrative of the long period of time from the Babylonian destruction of the First Temple to the establishment of the authority of the Rabbis in the “Talmudic Age,” ending around 500 C.E. Compare these arguments to those found in other course materials. How do they agree or disagree?

Thurs. April 23

### TEST 3

#### Paper due:

Friday May 1, 11am [D2L submission]

### RESOURCES

*Oxford Bible Commentary*: <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/lib/michstate-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3052723>

#### *The Cambridge History of Judaism*

Volume 1. The Persian Period: <https://doi-org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1017/CHOL9780521218801>

Volume 2. The Hellenistic Age: <https://doi-org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1017/CHOL9780521219297>

Volume 3. The Early Roman Period: <https://doi-org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1017/CHOL9780521243773>

Volume 4. The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period: <https://doi-org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1017/CHOL9780521772488>

Josephus online

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/>

Oxford Study Bible online:

<http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/record=b13352468~S8a>

# SPRING EVENTS 2020

1

**Book discussion of *The Lion's Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky***  
**Dr. Ken Waltzer** will lead a discussion of Dr. Susie Linfield's book in anticipation of the author's visit on January 17. Complimentary copies of the book are available in the Serling Institute for faculty, students and community members to read before the discussion.  
**Monday, January 13, 4:30-6:00 PM | Wells Hall B-342**

2

**Jonathan Netanyahu lecture, "The Lion's Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky"**  
**Dr. Susie Linfield** will lecture on her new book, *The Lion's Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky* (Yale University Press, 2019). The book is the winner of the Jewish Book Council distinction, formerly known as the Natan Book Award. Susie Linfield has been a professor in the journalism department of New York University since 1995. A former editor at the *Washington Post* and the *Village Voice*, she has written for a wide variety of publications, including the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, *Dissent*, and the *New Republic*.  
**Friday, January 17, 10:00-11:30 AM followed by catered lunch for participants | Wells Hall B-342**

3

**Hebreo: The Search for Salomone Rossi**  
 An evening in collaboration with the College of Music, devoted to the music of Salomone Rossi (ca. 1570-1630). Rossi is the leading Jewish composer of the late Italian Renaissance, who is most famous for his *Songs of Solomon*, a beautiful collection of originally composed music for Hebrew psalms and prayers. The evening will include the 45-minute documentary *Hebreo* by Joseph Rochlitz, followed by a musical performance and Q&A with singers from the Israeli vocal ensemble **Profeti della Quinta** who are featured in the film: Doron Shleifer, Roman Melish, Lior Leibovici, Jacob Lawrence, Loic Paulin, Elam Rotem, and Ori Harmelin.  
**Monday, January 27, 7:00-8:30 PM | Residential College of Arts and Humanities Theater**  
 (Basement of C-20 Snyder Phillips, 362 Bogue St, East Lansing, MI 48825)

4

**Yiddish Between Worlds**  
**Dr. Margot B. Valles** (MSU) will chair a panel bringing together three scholars of Yiddish who are 2019-2020 Frankel Institute Fellows exploring the theme of "Yiddish Matters" at the University of Michigan. **Dr. Dov-Ber Kerler** (Dr. Alice Field Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies at Indiana University) is a contemporary Yiddish poet and ethnographer who is currently exploring the relationship between Yiddish poetry and the status of Yiddish today. **Dr. Jack Kugelmass** (Professor of Anthropology and the Melton Legislative Professor at the University of Florida) is a cultural anthropologist who studies Jewish identity and ethnography, particularly through travel narratives. **Dr. Eli Rosenblatt** (Northwestern University) works on racial politics and Ashkenazi identity through Yiddish literature. Together the panelists will explore Yiddish writing and culture in diverse contexts.  
**Thursday, February 6, 7:00- 8:30 PM | Wells Hall B-342**

5

**Annual Rabin/Brill Lecture, "Holocaust by Bullets: Model for the Modern Genocide"**  
**Father Patrick Desbois**, Yahad-In Unum and Georgetown University  
 Meticulous Nazi records of Jews killed in the death camps identify fewer than half of the Holocaust's victims. When, where and how were the other victims killed? Father Patrick Desbois has sought and found the answers to these questions. Father Desbois' books will be available for purchase and signing. Father Patrick Desbois is founder and president of Yahad - In Unum, an organization dedicated to locating the sites of mass graves of Jewish victims of the Nazi mobile-killing units in the former Soviet Union. He is Braman Endowed Professor of the Forensic Study of the Holocaust at the Center for Jewish Civilization at Georgetown University.  
**Monday, February 10, 7:00-8:30 PM followed by reception | The Kellogg Center Auditorium**

6

**Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece: The Fate of Salonica 'Jerusalem of the Balkans'**  
**Dr. Devin E. Naar**, University of Washington  
 From 1492 until the twentieth century, the city of Salonica--once part of the Ottoman Empire and today the second biggest city in Greece--was home to the largest community of Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews in the world. This talk focuses on how this once-thriving Jewish community grappled with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of modern Greece prior to the devastation of the Holocaust. Dr. Devin E. Naar is Isaac Alhadeff Professor of Sephardic Studies and Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Washington. His book, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*, won a National Jewish Book Award and the grand prize from the Modern Greek Studies Association. Complimentary copies of Dr. Naar's book will be available at the Serling Institute for those who would like to read it before the lecture.  
**Monday, February 17, 8:00-9:30 PM followed by reception | The Kellogg Center Auditorium**

7

**Third Time's the Charm? Analyzing the Israeli Election**  
**Dr. Yael Aronoff**, Serling Institute and James Madison College, MSU  
**Wednesday, March 11, 7:30-9:00 PM | James Madison College Library, 332 Case Hall**

8

**The Moon Is Down... Unsung Tales of Rescue and Resistance under Norway's Nazi Occupation**  
**Dr. Sten H. Vermund**, Dean, Yale School of Public Health  
**Dr. Madeleine Lenski**, Specialist, MSU Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
 Professors Vermund and Lenski will discuss the experience of Norway under Nazi occupation by examining the life and legacy of Odd Nansen. Dr. Vermund will discuss Nansen's diary from the Grini concentration camp outside of Oslo, which is one of the only surviving diaries from a Norwegian concentration camp. Dr. Lenski will discuss the rescue organization "Nansenhjelpen," which Nansen established in 1936 to provide assistance to Jewish and political refugees from Nazi tyranny, and its extraordinary rescue of hundreds of Jews from Prague.  
**Thursday, March 12, 7:00-8:30 PM | Wells Hall B-342**

9

**15th Annual Israeli Film Festival**  
 Featuring **Yael Katzir**, award-winning Israeli documentary filmmaker and professor  
**Sunday-Monday, March 15, 1:00-9:00 PM, March 16 7:00-8:45 PM | Wells Hall B-122**

10

**Annual Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference**  
 Featuring student research presentations and a keynote address by **Marissa Cloutier**, Senior Compliance Specialist, U.S. Department of State. Marissa, an alumna of the Serling Institute, will discuss her experiences working on national security and foreign policy in the U.S. State Department over lunch. The conference and lunch are free and open to the public.  
**Friday, April 3, 9AM-5PM | James Madison College Library, 332 Case Hall**

11

**Student Forum on Antisemitism**  
 Forum for students to share and/or hear from fellow students about experiences of antisemitism at MSU. Hillel Staff and Serling faculty will be at the forum. Complimentary dinner provided to participants.  
**Tuesday, April 14, 6:30-8:00PM | MSU Hillel Jewish Studies Center (360 Charles St. East Lansing, MI 48823)**

12

**The Phantom of the Guillotine: Dealing with the Legacies of Mass Violence after the French Revolution**  
**Dr. Ronen Steinberg**, Department of History, MSU  
 Dr. Steinberg will discuss his new book, *The Afterlives of the Terror: Facing the Legacies of Mass Violence in Post-Revolutionary France* (Cornell University Press, 2019). Complimentary copies of his book will be available in the Serling Institute starting on January 6.  
**Monday, April 20, 7:00-8:30 PM | Wells Hall B-342**

**Co-sponsored event:**  
**Lynne Avadenka at MSU Libraries**  
 Please join us for a talk and pop-up exhibition with Michigan artist/printmaker Lynne Avadenka. Avadenka's artist books and prints engage a wide range of ideas from Jewish and Israeli culture. It will be a rare treat to meet the artist and view her works held in MSU Libraries Special Collections.  
**Friday, March 20, 10:00 AM (talk) and 12:00-2:00 PM (pop-up exhibit) | MSU Main Library**

**Co-sponsored event:**  
**William Kentridge: Universal Archive**  
 An exhibit of recent work by the renowned Jewish South African artist William Kentridge. In an expanding series of linocuts printed on dictionary pages, William Kentridge explores the arbitrariness of the definitions and borders imposed by reason and colonial oppression.  
**Thursday, January 16, 4:00 to 7:00 PM (opening reception), January 16 to March 20 (exhibit) | RCAH Lookout Gallery**