

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Jewish Studies 01:563:340

Religion 01:840:340

Spring 2024

Mon / Wed, 5th period, 3:50 – 5:10 p.m.

Miller Hall 116

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. / and by appointment

Professor Gary A. Rendsburg

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Course Description:

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls represents one of the most dramatic archaeological finds of the twentieth century. Since their discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls have been the subject of intense study and debate, and have profoundly influenced the way in which we understand the Jewish sects of the Second Temple period, the origins of Christianity, and the rise of Rabbinic Judaism. In this class we will examine a number of the Dead Sea Scrolls, attempting to understand them within their original historical context, as well as their significance for later Jewish and Christian traditions. All readings are in English.

Textbooks:

Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 7th edition
(Penguin, 2012) – Paperback

- www.bn.com: \$20.49
- ISBN-13: 9780141197319
- also available as an e-book: \$13.99

James Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 2nd edition
(Eerdmans, 2010) – Paperback

- www.bn.com: \$25.99
- ISBN-13: 9780802864352
- also available as an e-book: \$17.99

(Note: The books are available at the Rutgers University Bookstore.)

Course Packet:

You will find the very extensive Course Packet posted at Canvas. You must have this available during every class session (either printed or via online access).

Canvas Readings:

There are a host of readings posted at Canvas, under three modules:

- a) Articles – Journal of Religious History
- b) Articles – Others
- c) Articles – Ebionites / Nazarenes / Minim

The first module includes a series of essays which appeared in a special issue of the *Journal of Religious History* devoted to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The second module includes an array of relevant readings.

The third module contains essays related to a particular topic, to be discussion towards the end of the semester.

I will assign these readings at selected times throughout the semester.

Course Flow:

Students are expected to read the assigned material, both from the textbooks and from the Canvas website. In addition to the “Class Schedule” below, I will notify you at least once per week (at the end of class maybe and always via posted Canvas announcements to be sure) of the upcoming readings.

I encourage class participation as much as possible. I do not take attendance, but please note the following. The class lectures frequently present material not covered in the readings, and (one hardly needs to add) this material will be included on the exams.

To Bring to Class:

Students must bring to each class session the Vermes book (with the actual Dead Sea Scrolls translated therein) and the Course Packet (with a variety of important materials that we will consult on a regular basis). You do not have to bring the Vanderkam book to class each time, but since it is a rather slender volume, you should feel free to do so.

Course Learning Goal:

The student will gain a clear understanding of the contents, importance, and historical significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Grading and Assessments:

- Class participation, preparedness, and engagement (15%)
- Midterm exam (30%) – take-home exam, due March 8
- Final exam (30%) – per the official final examination schedule
- Quiz (10%) – February 12
- Short paper (3-5 pages) (15%) – due April 26

Attendance:

A major portion of the educational experience in this course takes place in the classroom. While attendance *per se* is not an official component of your course grade, you will be at a great disadvantage if you are not present in class on a regular basis.

If you expect to miss a class session, kindly use the University self-reporting system for absences: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> An email is automatically sent to me to apprise me of your absence.

Or you may wish to inform me ahead of time if you know that you will miss class, especially if there will some (good) reason for missing two or more classes in a row. Overall responsibility for the course material, however, remains yours at all times.

If you do miss class, please make sure to get the notes from someone. If there is something in the notes that you do not understand, feel free to come see me during office hours for further clarification.

Finally, please make every effort to arrive in time for the start of class. Late arrival is disruptive to the class discussion and in general disrespectful to me and your classmates.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Please note the University's academic integrity policy:

<https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

I personally endorse the policy and enforce its guidelines. In short, no cheating of any sort will be tolerated in my course; and such actions are grounds for probation and potential dismissal from the University.

DISABILITY POLICY:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

There is nothing more important than our individual and collective health and well-being. We are on campus to learn and explore, and we seek to do so in a stress-free and enjoyable environment.

If you are experiencing any difficulties, please note that excellent counseling services are available on campus: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>.

SCHEDULING NOTES

Due to my attendance at conferences during the semester, and due to Passover later in the semester, we will not hold in-class sessions on the following dates:

Wed, Jan 24	Mon, April 22
Mon, Jan 29	(Passover eve)
Mon, Feb 19	Wed, April 24
Mon, March 25	(Passover, day 2)
Wed, March 27	Mon, April 29
	(Passover, day 7)

To compensate for all this valuable in-class time together, we will use several different options:

- video recordings from when I taught the course in Fall 2020 (during covid)
- synchronous meetings on another day via Zoom (if possible), especially at the end of the semester, since we will not be meeting in-person for the last three sessions (per the above)
- video recording of my lecture to the Oxford Interfaith Forum (July 2023), available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkZLpt4BsD0>
- mid-term take-home exam (as opposed to in-class)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Discovery and Initial Explorations

- Vanderkam, ch. 1 = pp. 1–46 (pdf file, 22–85)
- CP, 33–34 (maps)

Weeks 2–3: Judaism during the 2nd–1st centuries B.C.E.

- CP, 5–32
- Vanderkam, chs. 3–4 = pp. 97–156 (pdf file, 164–245)
- Schiffman, “Sectarianism” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)
- “Therapeutae,” EJ (Canvas) (Articles – Others)

Week 4: The Community Rule (along with 1QSa and 1QSb)

- One of the first 7 documents found in Cave 1:
<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/community>

Community Rule:

- Vanderkam, pp. 77–80 (pdf file, pp. 134–136)
- Vermes, pp. 97–117 (pdf file, 133–157)
- Vermes, pp. 118–126 (pdf file, 158–168)
- CP, 35–37

1QSa = Messianic Rule (or Rule of the Congregation):

- Vermes, pp. 159–162 (pdf file, 206–209)

1QSb = Blessings

- Vermes, pp. 387–390 (pdf file, 457–460)

Week 5: Damascus Document

- Vermes, pp. 127–158 (pdf file, 169–205)
- Vanderkam, pp. 76–77 (pdf file, 131–132)
- CP, 37–39 (sampling of laws in the Damascus Document)
- CP, 43–46 (information about the Damascus Document)
- CP, 74–83 (information about rabbinic literature, esp. the Mishna)

Week 6: Pesharim Texts (Commentaries)

Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab) (Commentary on Habakkuk):

- One of the first 7 documents found in Cave 1
<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/habakkuk>
- Vermes, pp. 509–516 (pdf file, 584–593)
- Vanderkam, pp. 62–67 (pdf file, 112–118)
- CP, 55: Essenes – DSS – Christianity chart
- CP, 57, bottom: end of Matthew, ch. 1
- CP, 124: Habakkuk 2:4 quoted in the New Testament

Pesher Nahum (4Q169) (Commentary on Nahum):

- Vermes, pp. 504–508 (pdf file, 578–583)
- Vanderkam, pp. 67–69 (pdf file, 119–120)
- Vermes, pp. 54–66 (= pp. 85–99 of the pdf file)
for a reconstruction of the historical background
- CP, 125: Historical Background of Pesher Nahum
- CP, 126–128: Ḥalaqot – Halakhot (smooth things)
- CP, 129 – Teacher of Righteousness and Wicked Priest
(we will discuss the Overseer in a future lecture)

Week 7: Thanksgiving Hymns and War Scroll

Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH) (Hodayot):

- Vermes, pp. 249–305 (pdf file, 309–369)
- Vanderkam, pp. 86–87 (pdf file, 148–149)
- CP, 126 – Ḥalaqot – Halakhot (smooth things)

War Scroll (1QM) (Milḥamah):

- Vermes, pp. 163–187 (pdf file, 210–239)
- Vanderkam, pp. 88–90 (pdf file, 152–153)
- One of the first 7 documents found in Cave 1:
<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/war>

- CP, 55 – ‘apocalyptic’ and ‘dualistic’ lines in the middle of the chart
- CP, 56–57 – Matthew, ch. 1
- CP, 130–131 – Messiah in the DSS

Week 8: Biblical Canon and Textual Criticism

- CP, 88–99, 103–106
- Tov, “Copying Biblical Scroll” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)

Week 9: Calendar and Ritual Purity

- CP, 109–123
- Vanderkam, pp. 83–85, 142–144 (pdf file, 143–146, 229–231)

Week 10: Temple Scroll and 4QMMT

Temple Scroll (11QT):

- Vermes, pp. 191–220 (pdf file, 243–279)
- Vanderkam, pp. 80–82, 193–195 (pdf file, 137–141, 302–303)

4QMMT (Miqsat Ma‘ase ha-Torah) (Some Precepts of Torah):

- Vermes, pp. 221–229 (pdf file, 280–290)
- Vanderkam, pp. 80–82 (pdf file, 137–141)
- Sussman, “4QMMT” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)
- Schiffman, “Pharisees and their Legal Traditions” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)

Week 11: Reworked Pentateuch (RP) and related texts

- Vermes, pp. 474–477 (RP texts) / pp. 492–494 (4Q422) / pp. 480–491 (GenApoc) / pp. 539–541 (Jubilees) (pdf file, 544–568 / 621–625)
- Vanderkam, pp. 57–58 / 75 / 190–195 (RP / Jubilees) (pdf file, 104–105 / 129 / 299–303)
- CP, 100–102

Week 12: Qumran, the Essenes, and Early Christianity

- Vanderkam, ch. 6 = pp. 197–226 (pdf file, 305–348)
- Vermes, “DSS and Christianity” (Canvas) (Articles – JRH)
- Rendsburg lecture, “The DSS at 75,” Oxford Interfaith Forum (July 2023): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkZLpt4BsD0>
- CP, 55–58, 99, 121, 124, 129, 132

Week 13: Archaeology of Qumran:

- Vanderkam, pp. 20–33 (pdf file, 48–65)
- Eshel, “Archaeology of Qumran” (Canvas) (Articles – JRH)
- Magness, “Qumran Cemetery” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)
- Ten short videos featuring Jodi Magness (University of North Carolina), filmed at the site itself:
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8WLhh_RGfY (Qumran, part 1)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MSGo7wLUh4> (Qumran, part 2)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qjll8lskQd0> (Qumran, part 3)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tukn8k0hGp8> (Qumran, part 4)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7-pptIVMgw> (Qumran, part 5)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cFA3E-TgPw> (Qumran, part 6)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZZDbR2QvgU> (Qumran, part 7)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwlSgxgJlNA> (Qumran, part 8)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGNSvI7L-oA> (Qumran, part 9)
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPronhlKcjk> (Qumran, part 10)

Week 14: The Afterlife of the Essenes / Qumran Community

- CP, 43–46, 85–87, 135–142
- Sussmann, “4QMMT” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)
- Telushkin, “Karaites” (Canvas) (Articles – Others)
- Three Essays at Canvas: Articles – Ebionites / Nazarenes / Minim

Week 15: Some Final Items

Tefillin and Mezuzot:

- Vanderkam, p. 51 (pdf file, 93)
- CP, 107–108

Qumran Ostraca:

- Vermes, pp. 634–636 (pdf file, 724–725)

Copper Scroll:

- Vermes, pp. 625–631 (pdf file, 715–721)
- Vanderkam, pp. 92–93 (pdf file, 159–160)

For more about my work and my academic profile:

<https://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/people/core-faculty/gary-a-rendsburg>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_A._Rendsburg

<https://www.facebook.com/grendsburg>