CAS First Year Seminar
FYSEM-UA 767
The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Foundations of Judaism and Christianity

Spring, 2020, Tuesday, 4:55-7:25 p.m

Instructor Information
- Professor Lawrence H. Schiffman
- Office: 212 998 8979, Cell 646 630 2479
- lhs1@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Tues. 10:30-2:00 (please confirm in advance or email if not convenient)

Course Description
This seminar investigates the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for our understanding of the history of Judaism in ancient times and the development of Christianity. The course will deal with these long-lost scrolls as ancient documents testifying to the Judaism of the Greco-Roman period and the manner in which they influenced early Christianity. Many texts will be read in translation and analyzed in depth. The seminar will also explain the modern drama of their discovery and publication as well as the ways in which they have reshaped our understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Each student will engage in a research project, working closely with the instructor throughout the semester. There will be a class trip to the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC.

Course Overview and Goals
Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:
- Understand the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their importance for the history of Judaism and Christianity.
- Recognize the significance of each of the major texts and be able to compare and contrast their contents.
- Understand the relevance of the scrolls to the Hebrew Bible and New Testament
- Learn to read ancient religious texts with a critical methodology
- Understand socio-political events in the modern period that indirectly shaped the history of the discovery, publication and analysis of the Scrolls.
- Understand the methods for evaluating the relationship between archaeological and textual data.
- Understand the main controversies arguments that concern the current state of the study of ancient Judaism and early Christianity.
- Be able to write a research paper based on what we will be learning and to present its results to the class.
Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive on time. Students must complete all assigned readings before the class meeting and be prepared to participate actively in discussions of the readings and the issues they raise.

Two Oral Critical Response Seminar presentations followed by written submissions.

To enhance students' understanding of the prominent issues in the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, two selected articles referring to different aspects of the study of the Scrolls will be reviewed. The students will be required to critically analyze each article in an oral presentation, and then answer questions from the students and instructor. Immediately following, students will submit a two page written summary of their presentation, as enriched by the class discussion.

Research Paper

Students will write 10-12 page research papers, for which they will learn about the major tools for the study of the Scrolls, documentation (footnotes, etc.), and other skills. Papers will use primary and secondary sources. Close supervision and discussion with the instructor and discussion of bibliography will enable students to write meaningful papers that both survey the data and evaluate its significance for the study of the Scrolls and the foundations of Judaism and Christianity. Students will present their papers in the last two sessions of the class. Presentation is mandatory.

Submission according to schedule of:
- February 14: Research paper topic
- February 10-28: Meeting with instructor
- February 28: Tentative bibliography
- April 14, 2020: First Draft of Paper
- May 18, 2020: Final paper

Midterm Writing Assignment Based on Museum Visit

With advice of the instructor, students will select a specific object or group of objects at the Museum of the Bible and write a 5 page essay (NOT a research paper) regarding the significance of this (these) object(s) for the study of the Scrolls, or related issues in biblical studies or the history of Judaism or Christianity. The tour of the Museum will include an introduction to the plan and concept of the Museum as well of the various controversies that have surrounded it. Students will also be asked for a short (one-page) evaluation of the Museum in terms of how it meets its goals. (In case a suitable date for a group visit cannot be found, students will be required to visit on their own and the introduction will be given in class.)

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

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<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentations and written summaries</td>
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<td>Midterm Museum Paper</td>
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<td>Preparatory steps for research paper</td>
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<td>Research paper</td>
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**Letter Grades**
Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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**Disability Disclosure Statement**
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting
academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**Course Materials**

**Required Textbooks & Materials**


**Schedule of Sessions**

(a and b refer to the first and second half of each session. There will be a 10 minute break in between)

1. January 28

   a. Introduction: Scholars, Scrolls and Scandals: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism and Christianity (Illustrated)
      Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 3-35

   b. Discussion: Problems of Method in the Study of Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity

2. February 4

   a. Historical Background: Second Temple Period
      Schiffman, “The Jews in Late Antiquity”
      [http://lawrenceschiffman.com/resources/e-books/](http://lawrenceschiffman.com/resources/e-books/)
      Schiffman, “Challenge and Transformation: Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism”

   b. Jewish Sectarianism, Rabbinic Judaism and the Rise of Christianity
      Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 65-81

3. February 11

   a. Archaeology of Qumran (illustrated)
      Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* 37-61
      J. Magness, The *Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 47-72 [on NYU Classes].

   b. Introducing Scrolls Research: Concepts, Tools and Techniques
4. February 18

a. Origin of the Community: Essenes, MMT (The Halakhic Letter) and the Sadducean Theory
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 65-95

b. Close reading: Josephus and the Dead Sea Scrolls

5. February 25

a. Sectarian Organization
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 97-126
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 26-45, 97-111,

b. Women in the Scrolls
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 127-43
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 283 (hymn 17)

6. March 3

a. The Hebrew Bible at Qumran (illustrated)
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 161-80

b. Apocryphal Texts from Qumran
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 181-95
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 307-18, 539-579

7. March 10

a. Theology and the Sect and the Sectarian Hymns
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 145-57
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 67-90, 249-278

b. Wisdom and Sapiential Texts
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 197-210
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 419-443

8. March 24

a. Biblical Interpretation in the Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 211-22
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 461-496
b. The Commentaries (Pesharim) and the Gospels
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 223-41
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 49-66, 478-96

9. March 31

a. Jewish Law in the Scrolls
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 273-87
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 138-160

b. Mishnah/Talmud and New Testament

11. 10. April 7

a. The Temple Scroll and the History of Jewish Law
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 245-71
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 192-219

b. Rewritten Bible as a Genre

12. April 14

a. Religious Life, Calendar and Liturgy
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 289-312
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 364-383

b. Discussion of Research papers in progress and reflections on problems in scrolls research

13. April 21

a. Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Jewish or Christian
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 532-4

b. The Eschatological Community and the War Scroll
   Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 329-39
   Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 157-183

April 28
   Student paper presentations

14. May 5

a. Student paper presentations
b. Conclusion: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Foundations of Judaism and Christianity

Resources

- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** Bobst Library (library.nyu.edu)
- The Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/).
- The Center for Online Judaic Studies http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Dead_Sea_Scrolls click on Dead Sea Scrolls at bottom right.
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** NYU Writing Center (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** IT Help Desk (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarism constitutes an academic offence that will result in disciplinary action. Punishment may include a failing grade, suspension or expulsion.

In addition, to avoid confusion, the following is some advice on avoiding plagiarism:

*Plagiarism includes presenting or paraphrasing a phrase, sentence, or passage of a published work (including material from the Internet) in a paper or exam answer without quotation marks and attribution of the source, submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors, submitting a paper written by someone else, submitting as your own work any portion of a paper or research that you purchased from another person or commercial firm, and presenting in any other way the work, ideas, data, or words of someone else without attribution.*

(www.nyu.edu/*tisch/preservation/program/ongoing/plagiarism.htm)

Instructor Bio

LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN is Judge Abraham Lieberman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University and Director of the Global Network for Advanced Research in Jewish Studies. He earned his PhD in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University. He is a specialist in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Judaism in late antiquity, the history of Jewish law, and Talmudic literature. His many publications include *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism; From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism; Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls; The Courtyards of the House of the Lord: Studies on the Temple Scroll; Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism*; and more than 200 articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Judaism. In 2006 he received the National Foundation for Jewish Culture Scholarship Award. He coedited the *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* and the award-winning *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*. Dr. Schiffman was featured in the PBS Nova documentary *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls*; four BBC documentaries on the scrolls; a
Discovery special; the series *Mysteries of the Bible* (A&E) and *Kingdom of David* (PBS); and other documentaries. More recently he served as the academic advisor to the exhibition at Discovery Times Square entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Biblical Times*. 