Ancient Israel

Class code
HBRJD-UA 9118, HIST-UA 9524, SASEM-UG 9550; Arab Crossroads Elective (AD); History Elective (AD); Ancient World Elective (AD)

Instructor Details
Dr. Yifat Thareani

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
The story of the archaeological discipline in the Land of Israel is strongly tied with the major developments that the region has undergone in the last two centuries. This course offers an overview of the history of archaeology in Palestine since the appearance of the first European travelers and missionaries in the mid-19th century, along the vibrant interest of collectors, forgers and robbers in the Promised Land, through the appearance of the first scientific excavations, the rise of the American biblical archaeology and its influence on local Israeli research. Special attention will be given to the way the newly born Israeli archaeology helped to establish the Zionist identity that wished to pass over two thousand years of Diaspora history; the methods by which the nascent Israeli archaeology connected new-comers to the land of the patriarchs and the manner by which Israeli scholars served state interests in the creation of the national Zionist ethos.

The aftermath of the Six Days War and the increasing tension between the Bible and archaeology will be discussed in light of the intense debate over thehistoricity of the Exodus story, Joshua's conquests and the United Kingdom of David and Solomon. Finally, at the turn of the millennium, post-modern archaeology presented a new pluralistic view of the past. This multi-vocal framework will be used as a background for discussing the archaeology of otherness and minorities in 21st century Israel.

Desired Outcomes
By the end of this course the students must be able to demonstrate their understanding of material covered in the lectures, field trips and in the bibliography. In addition students will have to demonstrate:

1. Acquaintance with the major events and trends in the history of biblical archaeology in Israel ever since its inception in the 19th century.
2. An understanding of socio-political events in the modern history of Israel and the way these processes are reflected through archaeology.
3. Familiarity with the main arguments that dominate the current archaeological and historical disciplines.
4. Identification and analysis of the most significant objects found in Israel in more than 150 years of archaeological exploration.

Assessment Components
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 current events. Students are required to turn in all written assignments on the dates scheduled. Late work will be penalized.

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

1. Three Critical Response Papers [25%]
2. Midterm Assignment [25%]
3. Final Exam [50%]

Failure to submit or fulfill any one of the required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** Full attendance, thoughtful participation, assignments turned in on time and meet assigned grading criteria

**Grade B:** Full attendance, thoughtful participation, assignments turned in on time but partially meet assigned grading criteria

**Grade C:** Partial attendance, little participation, assignments turned in late and/or partially meet assigned grading criteria

**Grade D:** Partial attendance, no participation, assignments turned in late and/or do not meet assigned grading criteria

**Grade F:** Poor attendance, no participation, assignments turned in late and/or do not meet assigned grading criteria

Grade conversion

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Grading Policy

No-shows for in-class presentations and assignments submitted after the deadline without requesting an extension will receive zero grades.

If a student believes an inadvertent error was made in the grading of an individual assignment or in assessing an overall course grade, a request to have the grade re-evaluated may be submitted. To appeal an assigned final grade, the student should first email the course instructor requesting clarification about how the grade was determined. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion and wishes to appeal the grade further, a formal written appeal should be submitted to the site director. **This appeal must be submitted within 30 days after the grade has been posted; appeals that are submitted after this deadline will not be considered.**
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and **unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade.** Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

All medical-based absence requests MUST be presented to the Manager of Student Life and Housing (MSLH). In the case of illness contact the MSLH within seven (7) days of the absence or as soon as practicable and provide medical documentation. Non-medical requests should be made to the Assistant Director for Academics (AD/Academics) and in advance of the intended absence. Your instructors will be informed of any excused absence; they are not authorized to approve your absence, and they are required to report any absences to the AD/Academics.

**NYU Policy on Religious Holidays**

1. Students who anticipate being absent because of any religious observance should, whenever possible, notify faculty and the AD/Academics in advance of such anticipated absence.

2. Whenever feasible, examinations and assignment deadlines should not be scheduled on religious holidays. Any student absent from class because of his/her religious beliefs shall not be penalized for any class, examination, or assignment deadline missed on that day or days. In the event that examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on a religious holiday, any student who is unable to attend class shall be permitted the opportunity to make up any examination or to extend any assignment deadline missed on that day or days.

3. That no adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails him/herself of the provisions of the resolution.

4. A violation of these policies and principles shall permit any aggrieved student to bring forward a grievance, provided under the University Grievance Procedure.

**Late Submission of Work**

All works must be submitted on time, unless you have received an explicit extension. Any late submission may result in grade deduction at the sole discretion of the instructor.

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

**Plagiarism Policy**

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 for which you can be disciplined. Punishment may include a failing grade, suspension or expulsion. In all confirmed cases, a report will be sent to the student’s Dean at NYU or, in the case of a non-NYU student, to the home institution.

**Required Text(s)**

All readings are available on NYU Classes.
It is hard to overestimate the importance of the internet to the build up of contemporary knowledge of the world around us. But it needs to be used wisely. This means that one must be selective and careful when relating to internet-based sources, identifying and distinguishing opinions from facts, and journalism from academics. One should make clear reference to internet sources, allowing the reader the opportunity to consult these resources as and if required. As with all sources of information, use the internet critically.

Please also note that the ‘world-wide web’ exists in many languages. Many sources about Israel in English, for instance, will be aimed at tourists or readers living primarily in English-speaking regions of the world. Sources might differ when reading them in other languages.

Established in coordination with NYU’s Expository Writing Center, NYUTA’s Writing Center is available to help you with all genres of writing, from senior theses to smaller response papers; from personal statements to cover letters; from PowerPoint presentations to creative assignments. The Center can help you at any stage of the writing process, from figuring out the demands of an assignment, to working with or researching sources, to brainstorming a thesis and outline, to finalizing a project or reviewing a draft. However, please note that writing sessions are held as a joint session, an active exercise between the student and writing advisor – this is not a proofreading service!

Please view the Writing Center as an opportunity, not a punishment. It is meant equally for student-writers who are not confident in their skills as well as students who are quite talented and strong, but recognize the value of a second look. Moreover, rest assured that your instructors will value and appreciate your initiative to visit the writing center.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact NYUTA’s AD/Academics, Edan Raviv (room 201; edanr@nyu.edu).

The Journey to Palestine Starts Here

Until the 19th century the Land of Israel was a remote neglected district of the Ottoman Empire. Far reaching changes that took place in the political status of the region brought to a significant increase in the number of European travelers and to a religious revival. This was the background for the first stage in the archaeological research of Palestine. Motivated by theological and colonial interests, this stage was characterized by localization of the Old and New Testaments sites, by remembering fondly ancient landscapes and by collection and robbery of antiquities.


Missioners and Engineers in the Service of Her Majesty

The establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund in the second half of the 19th century marked the opening of a new chapter in the archaeological study of the land. This class will focus on the British Palestine Exploration Fund and with some of the characters that laid the foundations for modern archaeological research in the land of Israel.

In this framework we will discuss the important role that figures such as: Robinson, Warren and Wilson played in the scientific discovery of the land, in systematic identification of ancient sites, in mapping and in archaeological digs.


On Forgers and Antiquities Robbers

Ever since its inception the archaeological discipline in Palestine is accompanied by dark affairs of robbery and forgery. Behind these unethical deeds stands the wish to gain scientific or political prestige, to prove religious veracities or simply to make a fortune.
Some of the main forgery and robbery affairs that stirred up the public discourse from the 19th century until these very days will be presented: Moses Shapira; Dayan's and Avigad's collections, the Jehoash Inscription and some selected items from the Israel Museum. All will provide a window to an acquaintance with the darker side of the interest in the past.


**Critical Paper One Due**

**Session 4**

*At the Edge of a New Century*

The dawn of a new century brought about the appearance of the systematic archaeology to the local stage. In this meeting we will focus on the period between 1890 and 1914, in the characters of Sir Flinders Petrie - ancestor of the scientific archaeology in the Middle East and of R. A. S. Macalister - the announcer of the professional archaeology in the region and in the historical and cultural contexts in which they both acted.


**Session 5**

*The 1920's-1940's: The Rise of Biblical Archaeology*

The period between the two world wars marked the beginning of excavations in the big mounds and the determination of an agreed chronology and of a unified periodical terminology (that of: stone, bronze and iron). The foundation of the British Mandatory Antiquities Department in 1920 was a milestone for the scientific systemization of archaeology in the Land of Israel.
Parallel to the scientific developments in the secular archaeology that significantly improved the fieldwork; the 1940's saw the appearance of a school that aimed at proofing the historicity of the biblical events by stratigraphic and typological means. The paradigm that was established by American Protestants and directed by W. F. Albright has left an unmistakable imprint on the archaeology of Palestine.


**Session 6**

*The 1950's-1960's: Archaeology and Nationalism*

The continuous struggle for the Israeli state and its founding in May 1948 as well as the waves of Jewish immigrants who came from Europe and the east raised the need to create a unified national ethos. The scholarly attempts to prove the connection between the Promised Land and the newly born people and the call for historical legitimation stood behind the nationalization of Israeli archaeology in its early days. This trend was well reflected through the Bible Circle Study that prime-minister David Ben-Gurion hosted in his house; the
character of Yigael Yadin, the excavator of Masada and Hazor, and the involvement of state institution in these enterprises.


Critical Paper Two Due

**Session 7**

**The Footprints of the Six Days War: Between Old and New Archaeology**

Bounded in the biblical paradigm the Israeli archaeology ignored the innovations and trends of the European and American social archaeology in the 1960's. In spite of the strengthening of the interdisciplinary trend and the exposure of wide excavation areas that was conducted in the Israeli fieldwork, the Israeli archaeology stagnated in its will to uncover palaces and temples and in proofing the biblical text. Comprehensive archaeological surveys that followed the Six Days War (1967) emphasized the importance of the ecological aspects for the reconstruction of the daily life and the cultural changes that took place in ancient Canaan. This was also the time when many conflicts occurred between archaeology and the bible. As a result, Israeli archaeology moved away from history and biblical text and restricted itself to "pure" technical issues.


**Session 8**

**The 1990's and the Debate over David and Solomon**

Deepening conflict between the biblical description and the archaeological remains regarding the formative phases of the people of Israel deterred many scholars from the so-called "secular fundamentalism" and motivated the call for archaeology as an independent scientific discipline. In this phase major biblical events were reexamined and refuted one after the other: the identifications of the Patriarchs; the historical background of the Exodus and Joshua's conquests. A prominent expression of this stage was the debate over the historicity of the United Kingdom of David and Solomon and the appearance of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. This argument crossed the borders of the archaeology and history and moved to a broader public and political discourse.


**Session 9**

**Back to History: Israeli Archaeology in a Post-modern Era**

Israeli archaeology nowadays faces diverse voices and opinions, the outcome of subjective conceptions. This post-modern archaeology creates a multi-vocal past picture that stems from pluralistic hermeneutic of artifacts and is done by examination of various aspects of the ancient life and of different social strata. The Israeli archaeology at the turn of the millennium returned to history but to a more critical discussion - a sophisticated dialogue between the interpretation of the ancient remains and the biblical text.

Session 10

Archaeology of Otherness in the Land of Israel
As was the case with the new-comers of the 1950's, minorities and immigrants that existed in antiquity were excluded and their contribution to the history of the land was continuously repressed. The post-processual approach brought about the understanding that archaeology depends in time and space and that the personal life of the archaeologist, his education and point of view has a direct influence on the past image that he creates. At the same time, an increasing anthropological interest in immigrants and fringe societies changed the attitude of recent scholars towards minorities and marginal areas and opened a window to the possible existence of a multi-vocal past.
This class will focus on the forgotten periods in the archaeology and history of the land, on frontier societies, minorities and immigrants.


Critical Paper Three Due

Session 11

The Untold Story of Women in Israeli Archaeology
Reviewing the social history of women in the archaeological research of the Land of Israel reveals a limited but continuously increasing presence. Isolating thinking and behavioral patterns in which female archaeologists operated, enables significant insights for the social history of Palestine. Ever since the appearance of the first women travelers in the relatively tolerant Ottoman east, through the disregard of the British pioneering explorers; from the appearance of Jewish settlement daughters in the digs of the 1930's and their contribution in shaping the Zionist ideology up to the integration of women archaeologists in the Israeli academy and discipline. The scientific work of most women is characterized by examination of aspects that have been neglected by men such as: pottery, art, ritual and craft. On one hand it raises the possibility that the values by which the status of women is checked are masculine, on the other it emphasizes the unique contribution of the feminine voice to the reconstruction of the land's past.

Session 12
Margin Girl: Frontier Areas as Multi-Cultural Archaeological Spaces
Since ever, frontier zones have been presented as boundary between the civilized world and its chaotic periphery. As such frontier areas represent in the western thought the geographic, cultural and social margins. The silence of frontier dwellers was often taken as an acceptance to their marginality. They were thus denied of any access to the past and to writing their own historical narrative. This class presents two "frontier stories": one from the 21st century CE southern district of Tel-Aviv and another from the 8th century BCE in the Negev desert frontier. Comparison between the two stories reveals something about the perception of identity in two frontier communities and about the way in which multi-cultural spaces, about the nature of archaeological interpretation and the vibrant dialogue that exists between various acting powers in frontier societies.


Session 13
Enemies, a Love Story: Cross-cultural Contacts between Syria and Israel in the Iron Age
A traditional scholarly view argues for hostile relations between the Aramaeans of Syria and the ancient Israelites in the first half of the first millennium BCE. Led by King Hazael of Aram Damascus, the Aramaean power defeated all cities and local kingdoms in its path, thereby causing much destruction and fear. While this view is supported by the archaeological record and the historical sources, a renewed study of the archaeological material offers more multifaceted relations. In this session we will challenge the conservative view in light of two new studies on Aram-Israel relations, both textual and archaeological. We will examine results of recent scientific collaborations between archaeologists and historians working in Syria and Israel by trying to suggest a revised perspective to the political and cultural relations between the two nations in the past and perhaps in the future as well.


Session 14
An Epilogue: Towards a Dialogue between Yesterday and Tomorrow
Discussing the story of archaeology in the Land of Israel reveals a strong connection between the history of the land in modern times and the developments and changes that the archaeological discipline experienced. Our review presented the transformation from collecting to systemization, from naiveté to sobriety, from history to the artifact and back, from the unconscious to the reflexive and critical.
This class is a summary of the different processes that were introduced during the semester and an invitation to an open discussion concerning the future of the land's past.

Classroom Etiquette
No mobiles are allowed.

Required Curricular Activities
Israel Museum and City of David in Jerusalem
Archeological Visit to Galilee
Your Instructor

Dr. Yifat Thareani is a research archaeologist at the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology at the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College. Dr. Thareani was born in Tel-Aviv in 1974. She is a graduate post-doc at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), Sorbonne V, Paris, at the Orient et Méditerranée, Laboratoire Mondes Sémitiques, Center National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) (research topic: Between Israel, Aram and Assyria: Tel Dan at the Iron Age II, supervisor Prof. Maria-Grazia Masetti-Rouault) and a graduate post-doc of the Leon-Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies, University of Haifa (research topic: The Empire and the Sea: The Case of the Assyrians and the Mediterranean, supervisor Dr. Assaf Yasur-Landau). She completed her BA, MA and PhD in Archaeology at Tel-Aviv University (dissertation title: Towns in the Desert: Geographical, Economic and Sociopolitical Perspectives written under the direction of Prof. Israel Finkelstein and Prof. Nadav Na’aman). Thareani has supervised excavation fields at Beth-Shemesh and she currently co-directs the archaeological excavation at Tel Dan and at Tel Achziv on behalf of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem.