211-01 Dead Sea Scrolls

Thomas Dilbeck
Course Objectives
This course is an introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). In this course we examine aspects of the historical and religious significance of these fascinating texts. Attention will be given to a range of issues arising from the DSS, including political/religious developments within Early Judaism, as well as textual criticism of sacred Jewish writings. By the end of this course students will be able to:

- discuss and assess the impact of the DSS upon key aspects of Judaism, Christianity, and the study of the Bible
- critically engage primary and secondary sources on the DSS
- think a bit more critically and creatively

Required Materials

Beyond the Qumran Community (2009) by John J. Collins published by William B Eerdmans Publishing

The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English - Geza Vermes- Penguin Classics

Top Hat Subscription ($20.00) can be purchased at www.tophat.com; to be used in conjunction with a cell phone, smart phone, laptop, iPhone, or iPad.

Assignments and Grading
Three In Class Exams (50% of the final grade): There will be three exams this semester (see dates below). They will be non-cumulative. The format will consists of multiple choice and essay.

Paper (40% of final grade): You will select one of the non-biblical texts discovered at Qumran and write about the text. You must survey its discovery, contents, and how it contributes to our understanding of Judaism/Christianity. It should be 3-5 pages (see below for dates).
Attendance and participation (10%): Attendance will be kept via TopHat. If you miss more than 6x you will receive a 0 for the attendance and participation part of the course. The participation grade will consist of in-class discussion, and projects. This will happen occasionally and you will not know in advance.

Plagiarism and Cheating
Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to plagiarism. If you have any doubts about whether you are plagiarizing, please contact me. Plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course with your advisor being notified, and a record of misconduct will be placed on file with the university.

Cheating will also result in an “F” for the class and a report to the dean.

Grading Scale for REL 204

92 – 100 % = A  
82 – 91 % = B  
72 – 81 % = C  
62 – 71 % = D  
Below 62% = F  

Terminology
In the class we will attempt to use terms that are not theologically loaded. To refer to what is commonly called “the Old Testament,” I will use the phrase “Hebrew Bible.” I will use B.C.E. (before the common era) instead of BC (before Christ) and CE (common era) instead of AD (anno domini- “year of the Lord”).

Schedule, Assigned Readings, and Assignments

1- August 26, 28  
Intro.

The Discovery  
DSST\(^2\) (1-19)

2- September 2, 4

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1 Note: This schedule is subject to revision. Such changes that influence you will be made known.  
2 Dead Sea Scrolls Today by VanderKam
Archaeology

History of Hellenistic/Roman Palestine
  3- September 9, 11

The Qumran Community/Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? BQC (1-11); DSST (97-122)

Thought, Practice and History of the Community
  4- September 16, 18

Overview of Texts

Exam 1
  5- September 23, 25

Study of the Hebrew Bible Before and After Qumran

1qIsaa

  6- September 30, October 2

The Books of Samuel and Jeremiah at Qumran

The Great Psalms Scroll

  7- October 7, October 9 (No Class)

The Canon

  8- October 14, October 16

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha at Qumran

Halakhic Texts

  9- October 21, October 23

Wisdom Literature

Rewritten Bible

  10- October 28, October 30

Rewritten Bible 2

Biblical Interpretation 1

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3 Beyond the Qumran Community-Collins
Rough Draft Paper Due

11- November 4, November 6

Biblical Interpretation 2

Exam 2

12- November 11, 13

Thanksgiving Hymns CDSS (269-325)

God

13- November 18, 20

Purity

The end times

14- SBL and Thanksgiving (No Class)

15- December 2, 4

The Messiah(s) CDSS (432-444; 547-548; 552-554)

Scrolls and New Testament DSST (197-226)

Final Draft of Paper Due

16- December 9, 11

Scrolls and New Testament 2

Conclusions

Exam 3 (Finals Week)