

How does RS 155 “The Historical & Geographical Settings of the Bible” taught in Israel and Palestine fulfill the GE Common Inquires “Thinking Globally” and “Thinking Historically”?

As this course is taught in Israel and Palestine (and Jordan for those who choose that option), the course engages people of many ethnic and religious identities and offers our students many opportunities to consider these people with their national and ethnic histories in a global context. As the course addresses the historical identity of ancient Israel and Judea viewed through the remains of their material culture, ancient historians, original inscriptions, and physical settings, this course also provides students with a fabulous opportunity to “think historically” via primary and secondary materials and their own lived experience. Students will be reading, viewing, touching, and discussing the epigraphic and archaeological artifacts of Israel, Judea, Greece and Rome. These artifacts and inscriptions will involve art, economics, warfare, history, and religion. Students will also be reading and discussing excerpts from the historians of the Greco-Roman world and excerptst from current scholarship. All of this will be done in the context of the national history of Israel and other Bible readings.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course students will ...

1. Experience, enjoy and develop a love for the land of the Bible!
2. Demonstrate competence in the historical context of the Old & New Testaments (participation in on-site discussions, exams, and impression reports).
3. Demonstrate competence in the geological, geographical, and hydrological context of the Old & New Testaments (participation in on-site discussions, maps, exams, and impression reports).
4. Be able to describe and analyze the dynamics of Israelite and Judean artistic, economic, political, and social identities and thereby connect those realities to both their interpretation of the Bible and their interpretation of themselves (participation in on-site discussions, exams, and impression reports).
5. Be able to analyze historical sources (epigraphy, archaeology, and first century texts) with appropriate attention to their contexts and messages, and how those contexts effect biblical interpretation (participation in on-site discussions and impression reports).
6. Discover that their real time, real space, and real people engagement of Israel has totally transformed the way they read their Bibles and understand the great narrative of redemption.