Purpose/Rationale for this Course

This course will introduce students to the field of biblical archaeology, and to explore how “material culture” can affect our understanding of the biblical texts and the ancient world that gave rise to them.

Course Requirements/Assignments

❖ **Short Writing Assignments (25%)** – I will ask you on a regular basis to compose short (1 page max!) pieces on assigned topics/questions. Sometimes these will be in the form of guided “responses” to the assigned reading. Other times they may be as simple as a brainstorming exercise or bullet point list. This category is intended as a sort of “catch all” that we can use for a variety of things.

❖ **Archaeology Online Group Project (25%)** – Over the course of this semester I want us to build (together) an online resource (or resources) that people outside of our class could find interesting and useful. Think of this as a tangible answer to the inevitable question from your overly-curious uncle: “Biblical archaeology? What did you do in that class?” Now, rather than talk to him about your semester, you can send him a link and then go talk to someone else. Details forthcoming.

❖ **“Fantastic Archaeology” Essay (25%)** – At the midpoint of the semester I will provide a list of past archaeological finds that seem to good to be true (because they probably are). I will have you choose one of these finds and then write an essay in which you 1) provide an overview of it, 2) offer your assessment, and 3) give a brief annotated bibliography. Details forthcoming.

❖ **Classroom Citizenship (25%)** – The college classroom should be a community that facilitates and encourages critical thinking. The “classroom citizenship” component of your grade reflects the extent to which you have (or have not) been a “good citizen” of your community. Good citizenship entails such behaviors as attending class regularly and on time, doing the readings, asking questions, contributing to discussions, etc. Examples of poor citizenship include cheating or turning in plagiarized work, not attending class or being late on a regular basis, sleeping, fiddling constantly with your phone, not removing your headphones, rolling your eyes at me, looking annoyed, whispering to your neighbor, or any behavior that conveys to me or your colleagues that you would rather be somewhere else. Sometimes you might have to fake interest, and that’s OK; part of being a contributing member of society is learning to act interested even when you might not be. We all have to fake it sometimes. Trust me.
College-wide Student Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate an integrated knowledge in the liberal arts

Our course goal is to read biblical texts in the context of their historical, literary, and contemporary worlds. This course will focus on the contributions of material culture to this endeavor. | Strategies used to support our exploration include: extensive reading, class discussions, and written essays. | Assessment will occur in your essays, quizzes, and participation in class during the discussions.

Students will demonstrate competency in quantitative skills and reading

Our course goal is to analyze material culture related to the ancient world. Students will be expected to read and comprehend primary sources that are written in various historical and personal styles. College-level textbooks will assist students in their own reading and interpretation of the Bible. Students should be able to recall and define significant individuals, terms, and concepts related to the Bible that are covered in the class. | Strategies to support your reading include readings of varying lengths and analysis of artifacts from the ancient world. | Assessment will occur in your essays, quizzes, and participation in class during discussions.

Students will think critically and solve problems through analysis, evaluation, inference, induction, and deduction

Our course goal is to analyze critically. Students should be able to read biblical texts in light of their ancient context, to locate different voices and perspectives them, to compare and contrast different accounts and modern interpretations, and to assess strengths and weaknesses of arguments. “Facts” become useful and begin to make sense only when students can fit them into a framework of thinking. | Strategies to support this process include readings, essays, and discussions. | Assessment will occur in your essays, exams, and participation in discussions.

Students will communicate with unity of purpose and coherent organization consistent with standard rules and recognized conventions using appropriate methodologies

Students communicate effectively when their essays have a unified focus and organization, when their ideas and arguments are developed logically with coherent, precise, and effective wording, when their sentence structure and vocabulary are appropriate for the assignment, when their essays are free of mechanical errors, and when they completely and accurately document the sources used in the assignment. | Strategies to support this include reading (the more you read, the better you write), class discussions (the more you talk about what you have read, the better you write), and actual writing. | Assessment will occur in your essays and participation in class discussions.

Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge, capability and ethical reasoning in a chosen field.

Religion graduates will demonstrate a satisfactory appropriation of the critical skills commonly used in biblical and theological scholarship.

Students should be able to read biblical texts in light of their ancient context, to locate different voices and perspectives in them, to compare and contrast different accounts and modern interpretations, and to assess strengths and weaknesses of arguments. “Facts” become useful and begin to make sense only when students can fit them into a framework of thinking. | Strategies to support this process include readings, essays and participation in discussions. | Assessment of critical thinking will occur in your essays, quizzes, and participation in discussions.

Religion graduates will explain the development of the Christian tradition and demonstrate the ability to analyze the complex relationships between this tradition and contemporary culture.

Our course goal is to read biblical texts in the context of their historical, literary, and contemporary worlds. This course will focus on the contributions of material culture to this endeavor. | Strategies used to support our exploration include: extensive reading, class discussions, and essays. | Assessment of the will occur in your essays, exams, and participation in class during discussions.

Religion graduates will demonstrate effective research and writing skills about religion.

Students communicate effectively when their essays have a unified focus and organization, when their ideas and arguments are developed logically with coherent, precise, and effective wording, when their sentence structure and vocabulary are appropriate for the assignment, when their essays are free of mechanical errors, and when they completely and accurately document the sources used in the assignment. | Strategies to support this include reading (the more you read, the better you will write), class discussions (the more you talk about what you have read, the better you will write), and actual writing. | Assessment of communication skills will occur in your essays and participation in class discussions.

*Disclaimer: I have borrowed much of the framework and language for these outcomes from previous syllabi written by Dr. David Howell (Ferrum).
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS/TOPICS

Lecture-based courses are easy to schedule with surgical precision because we (people who often lecture) typically know how long it takes for us to “get through” material. But my hope for this class is that the majority of time we spend together will involve us talking to each other, and not just listening to me talk (although there will, unfortunately, be some of that). And scheduling that sort of experience is infinitely trickier because it’s impossible to know what sorts of discussions we will have! I’ve therefore tried to keep our schedule as vague and flexible as possible while at the same time giving you a sense of where we are going to be heading next.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>PRIMARY READINGS</th>
<th>SELECT TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Motel of the Mysteries” by David Macaulay (on Brightspace)</td>
<td>Defining “biblical archaeology”; material culture; numismatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-49) in <em>Alexander to Constantine</em></td>
<td>The Persian Period; Alexander the Great; Hellenism/Hellenization; Josephus; Ptolemies; Seleucids; The Jerusalem Temple; Maccabees/Maccabean Revolt; Hasmonaeans; <em>Miqvaot</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chapters 3-4 (pp. 50-112) in <em>Alexander to Constantine</em></td>
<td>Pompey; Antipater; Herod; Antonia Fortress; Ossuaries; Caesarea Maritima; Caesarea Philippi (Bania); Jericho; Herodium; Masada; Qumran; Dead Sea Scrolls; Essenes; “Common Judaism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chapters 5-6 (pp. 113-173) in <em>Alexander to Constantine</em></td>
<td>Archelaus; Antipas; Philip; Sepphoris (Zippori); Tiberias; Agrippa I, II; Pontius Pilate; Pliny the Elder; “The Aqueduct Riots”; Pool of Siloam; “The Great Revolt”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chapters 7-8 (pp. 174-238) in <em>Alexander to Constantine</em></td>
<td>The Galilee Boat; Constantine; The Garden Tomb; The Church of the Holy Sepulcher; The Talpiot Tomb; Megiddo Inscriptions; Synagogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chapters 9-11 (pp. 239-293) in <em>Alexander to Constantine</em></td>
<td>Archaeology of “Paganism”; Petra; Mithras/Mithraism; Roman Imperial Cult; House of Dionysos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-21) in <em>Ante Pacem</em></td>
<td>Archaeology of early Christianity (vs. “biblical” archaeology); Symbolism of early Christianity; “Ichthus”; typologies; the Orante; the Good Shepherd; the Palatine Graffito; Sarcophagi; <em>Anamnesis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chapters 2-3 (pp. 23-87) in <em>Ante Pacem</em></td>
<td>The Jonah Cycle; Binding of Isaac (Akedah); The Magi; Samaritan Woman at the Well; Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Reading/Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/31 - 11/4</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (pp. 127-208) in <em>Ante Pacem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/7 - 11/11</td>
<td>Longenecker (TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/14 - 11/18</td>
<td>Longenecker (TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/21 - 11/25</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/28 - 12/2</td>
<td>Longenecker (TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>Conclusions (TBD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Academic Integrity**

In all instances, policies identified in the Ferrum College Catalog and the Ferrum College Student and Faculty Handbooks regarding the Honor System shall be followed. Students are expected to display academic integrity at all times and in all circumstances. **Students who plagiarize or cheat on an assignment will receive an automatic F in the course and will be reported to the Ferrum College Honor Board. Consider this your warning!**

**Office Hours**

I have at least eight hours per week when I will be entirely at your disposal. You can see my actual availability and make an appointment at the following: vandeneyle.youcanbook.me. I am happy to help with any and all aspects of the course: inquiries about the material, questions about your grade, etc. Even if you don’t have a specific question or concern, please stop by — I enjoy getting to know my students!

**Technology in the Classroom**

Electronic devices are distracting to their users, and studies show that we learn better when they are absent. If you are compelled to distract yourself with an electronic device, know that you are doing so at your own peril. If your device becomes a distraction to me or to your neighbor, I will ask you to leave.

**Evaluation and Grading Scale**

Your letter grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- 90–100% = A
- 80–89% = B
- 70–79% = C
- 60–69% = D
- below 60% = F

**Extra Credit**

There will be no extra credit in this class. The course components outlined on page one of this syllabus add up to 100%, which means that I have provided you with all the credit that you need to succeed. It is up to you to make good use of it by doing your work and by doing it well.

**Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

If you are not in class, you will be recorded as absent, **regardless of the circumstances.** If you are absent because of legal obligation (e.g., jury duty), health (e.g., flesh-eating bacteria), or college-sanctioned activities and related travel (e.g., athletics), your absence may be “excused” if you can provide official documentation justifying it. **Excused absences are still recorded as absences. The only difference between an excused and an unexcused absence is that an excused absence allows you to make up in-class work that you may have missed.**

**NOTE:** If you arrive after I have taken attendance, you will be counted as absent for that day. One tardy = one absence.

By the college’s 25% rule, any student who misses or is late to **ten classes** (on a MWF schedule) will receive an automatic F in the course. You are responsible for keeping track of your attendance — I am happy to tell you how many absences you have (come to my office or ask after class), but it is not my job to send reminder e-mails if you are approaching the 25% mark. I will, however, e-mail you when you have reached this mark.

**Makeup/Late Work**

The ability to make up work is a privilege, not a right. If you are absent on the day of an in-class assignment because of illness or emergency, you must 1) contact me as soon as possible with an explanation of why you were absent, and 2) provide **official documentation of your absence (e.g., a doctor’s note)** in order to qualify for a makeup. If arrangements are not made within one week, a zero will be recorded. It is your responsibility, not mine, to contact me about making up work. Late work may be subject to a penalty, depending on the circumstances.

**Academic Accessibility Services**

As directed by Ferrum College’s policy, any student with a disability who qualifies for and seeks academic accommodations (testing or other services) must work through the Office for Academic Accessibility for accommodations. The office is located Lower Stanley Library, Office 110 and the director may be reached by phone at 365-4262 or by email at nbtech@ferrum.edu. Please remember that accommodations cannot be granted retroactively; they must be requested in a timely manner prior to when the accommodation is needed. Students who wish to use accommodations through OAA are encouraged to meet with the director during the first weeks of the semester to discuss the process, and are also invited to read the policy manual (www.ferrum.edu/disability) for specific information.

**Civility in the Classroom Policy**

Civil behavior and mutual respect between faculty and students are critical in the college classroom environment if teaching, learning, critical thinking, and sharing of ideas are to occur. Respectful and civil behavior at a very basic level includes the following: turning off cell phones; arriving to class on time; engaging appropriately in classroom activities, lecture, or discussion through attentive listening without interruption or side chats; and demonstrating the ability to discuss topics without inappropriate language or attacking others (physically or verbally). Students who do not comply with the Civility in the Classroom policy described in the Faculty Handbook and the Student Handbook may be removed from the academic setting and may risk serious consequences as outlined in the Civility policy.
1) Who is my instructor for this class?

Me! My name is Dr. Eric Vanden Eykel – yes, I’m a doctor (but not the kind that helps people), and my last name is two words! This is my third year teaching at Ferrum. I live in Roanoke with my wife (Ellen), my two daughters (Jane & Sidney), and my dog (Dallas). Before moving to Virginia I lived in Texas, Georgia, and Wisconsin. I have a Ph.D. in Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am a Gemini (barely). My favorite color is blue, and my favorite food is coffee.

2) What kind of instructor are you? Is this a hard class?

Hmm... My classes require a lot of reading, a fair bit of writing, and a healthy dose of self-motivation. I apparently have a reputation for holding students to high standards; because I teach at the college level, I see this as a compliment. A student once wrote a really negative review of me on RateMyProfessors.com in which she/he described me as “aweful” (this review has sadly been removed, I presume because it was riddled with such errors). If you can understand why all of that is amusing to me, we will get along fine.

3) I don’t know anything about religion. Am I in the right class?

Yes! This class assumes no prior knowledge of the subject matter. You are here to learn!

4) When are your office hours?

It depends! My availability for each week (several weeks in advance, actually) is posted at vandeneykel.youcanbook.me and you can use this online app to make an appointment with me. When you do, you will be added to my schedule automatically and you and I will both receive a confirmation e-mail. You are more than welcome to drop by my office unannounced, but without an appointment I make no guarantees that I will be present or available. Just a heads up – appointments must be made 12 hours in advance!

5) How is my grade calculated?

With math. Your overall grade will be determined by your scores on writing assignments (25%), the group project (25%), your major essay (25%), and “classroom citizenship” (25%). All of these components are weighted equally because all are equally important. I interpret letter grades as follows: F = unacceptable; D = below average; C = average; B = above average; A = superior in every respect. Grades are far less mysterious than they often seem. They are, quite simply, measures of actual performance.

6) Can I e-mail you to find out what my grade is?

No. Because of privacy concerns I will only discuss grades in person, in my office (Britt 115). But do stop by as often as you wish to chat about such things! I also use the Brightspace gradebook so that you can see where you stand at any point in the semester.

7) Do you take attendance?

Yes. Every day I will make a note of who is present and who is not, and I record this data in the Brightspace so that you can keep track of it. If you arrive after I’ve taken attendance, you will be recorded as absent. Missing or being late to 25% of class meetings (ten or more for a MWF class) will result in an automatic F in the course. I will notify you and your advisor by e-mail if you hit this threshold.

8) Is it really possible to fail a religion class?

Absolutely.

9) Can I do some extra credit work to help bring my grade up?

No. I find that extra credit discourages students from putting forth consistent effort throughout the semester. It fosters a sense that you can just not do certain assignments and then make up for it later, usually by completing some sort of far simpler task (e.g., a stream-of-consciousness “reflection paper,” attending a public lecture, etc.). Allowing things like this to “fill in the gaps” betrays the spirit of what assessment at the college level is supposed to do, namely, signify the quality of your performance on the various components of the course in which you are enrolled. If you are unsatisfied with your grade, seek ways to improve your performance: spend more time on the readings and responses, speak up more in class, and by all means, ask for help if you need it!

10) You sound like a meanie. Are you a meanie?

No. But I hold students accountable for their decisions. So make good decisions: do your work, come to class, and contribute to the learning environment in meaningful, positive ways. Do these things, and do them consistently, and I promise you will do fine!