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## **Religion 101 – Ancient Egyptian Religion**

Fall 2009

Monday 7:00-9:30 p.m.

The following objectives will be used in Religion 101:

**Objective:** To introduce students to ancient Egyptian religion through the disciplines of Religious Studies and Egyptology.

**Objective:** To help students differentiate the study of ancient Egyptian religion from current new age expressions of interest in Egypt and from images of ancient Egypt in popular culture and the media.

**Objective:** To become familiar with the “tools” available to the scholar of ancient religions including archaeology and exegetical disciplines.

**Objective:** To become familiar with the different cultural contexts of the ancient near east and to understand both the principles of biblical archaeology and historical biblical criticism.

Each class will focus on a particular theme or aspect of ancient Egyptian religion and will include an initial period of discussion and lecture followed by a film. The films that have been selected for the course have been chosen for their ability to accurately present an aspect of ancient Egypt, for their accuracy and use of current interpretations, or for their ability to create a discussion.

August	24	Introduction to Religious Studies Egyptology, “Egyptmania,” and the American Obsession with ancient Egypt Video – “Egypt in the New Millennium”
	31	The ancient near east Gods, goddesses and the role of the sacred in ancient Egypt Polytheism and Henotheism How can we understand the lives of ancient people? Reading: Silverman, chapters 1-5, Lesko, chapters 1-2 Videos – “Egypt: Journey to the Global Civilization” “Egypt Unearthed Series: Deities and Demons”
September	7	No classes – Labor Day

- 14 The role of the sacred in ancient Egypt, continued  
Nineteenth Century beginnings of Egyptology  
Orientalism, Colonialism, and the Misrepresentation of Asian peoples  
Video –“Egypt: Rediscovering a lost world: The Pharaoh & the showman”  
Reading: Wilkinson, chapter 1
- 21 Introduction to archaeology – Kenza Glass  
Introduction to Egyptology  
Hieroglyphics  
Reading: Wilkinson, chapters 2, 4, 5, 10
- 28 Introduction to biblical archaeology  
Scripture and Material Culture  
The Exodus – theories and interpretations  
Video – How Archaeology Illuminates the Bible Series - “An Orientation to Biblical Archaeology” – Dr. William Dever
- October 5 Historical biblical criticism  
The nature of oral and written tradition  
Reading: Friedman, chapters 1-5  
Video – How Archaeology Illuminates the Bible Series - “Who were the early Israelites, and where did they come from” – Dr. William Dever
- 12 No class – Fall Break
- 19 Historical biblical criticism (2)  
Source Criticism in the Pentateuch  
Discussion of *Who Wrote the Bible?*  
Video – How Archaeology Illuminates the Bible - “Religion and Cult: One God or Many” – Dr. William Dever  
Reading: Friedman: chapters 5-10  
**Take Home Mid-Term Examination Distributed**
- 26 Egyptian attitudes towards death  
State religion and the role of the cult  
Reading: Silverman, chapters 8-13, Wilkinson, chapter 12  
Videos – “Ancient Egypt Unearthed Series: Mummies into the Afterlife”  
“Ancient Egypt Unearthed Series: Pyramids as Resurrection Machines”  
**Take Home Mid-Term Examination Collected**
- November 2 Akhenaton and the nature of heresy in ancient Egypt  
Video – “Akhenaten: Egypt’s heretic king”  
The Amarna Letters – Dr. Marcie Walker
- 9 The role of the temple and temple ritual in ancient Egypt  
Reading: Silverman, chapter 11, Handout (Byron E. Shafer, “Temples, Priests, and Rituals: an Overview.”)  
PowerPoint presentation – the temple at Edfu  
Video – “Egypt beyond the pyramids series: Mansions of the spirit”

- 16 The Feminine in ancient Egypt  
Reading: Silverman, chapter 6.  
Videos – “Ancient Lives Series: Woman’s Place”  
“Ancient Egypt Unearthed Series: Secrets of Egypt’s Lost Queen”
- 23 Religion and art in ancient Egypt  
Reading: Silverman, chapter 14., Wilkinson, chapter 14.  
Video – “Ancient Lives Series: An Artist’s Life”  
**Term Paper Due – First Deadline**
- 30 **PowerPoint presentations**
- December 7 **PowerPoint presentations**  
**Final Examination Distributed**  
**Term Paper Due – Second Deadline**

Course Requirements:

**Examinations:** Each student will complete a “take home” mid-term examination (October 19) and a final examination which will be distributed during the last week of classes.

**Research Papers:** A term paper of 8-12 pages in length on a subject related to ancient Egyptian religion, art, or history. Papers may also explore the relevance of an archaeological site or may take a more thematic approach such as the role of women in ancient Egypt.

Term papers must be grounded in religious studies and Egyptology rather than the popular interpretation of Egypt. Papers must demonstrate knowledge of accepted theory and discuss divergent scholarly interpretations of theory.

Only internet sources that are academically legitimate will be accepted. For example, the website of the Theban Mapping project <http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/> is a useful source of knowledge for the latest archaeological finds in the Valley of the Kings. Similarly, the website of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/>) is a rich site replete with research reports.

Research papers must contain a thesis related to the scholarly interpretation of ancient Egypt rather than simply presenting unconnected data.

**PowerPoint option:**

Students may elect to make a PowerPoint presentation during the last two classes in lieu of submitting a formal paper. Because of the size of the class, only 20 presentations will be accepted. Presentations will be made on November 30 and December 7. Each presentation must also be submitted electronically and also include a bibliography. Applications for making a PowerPoint presentation will be accepted on a first come first served basis until the 20 openings are taken. Applications must contain the following:

- a) A brief description (one to two paragraphs) of the topic.
- b) Identification of the primary Egyptologists or religious studies scholars whose work will be used to support the project.
- c) A brief statement (two to three paragraphs) suggesting how PowerPoint will enhance presentation of the topic and why the student has chosen this option.

### **Deadlines for Research Papers:**

Research papers may be submitted on November 23 if the student desires to receive full comments on the paper. Papers may also be submitted on December 7 and will be returned with a grade but without comments.

Because of the size of the class, drafts of papers cannot be accepted. However, meetings can be scheduled any time during the semester to discuss the paper. Thesis paragraphs can also be submitted and reviewed via email.

Grades will be calculated on the basis:

- 5 points - class participation
- 30 points - mid-term examination
- 30 points - final examination
- 35 points - term paper

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100 points

### **Texts:**

Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, New York, Harper and Row, 1987.

Leonard Lesko, *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991.

David P. Silverman, ed. *Ancient Egypt*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Richard W. Wilkinson, ed. *Egyptology Today* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

### **Standards for the Academic Study of Religion**

The academic study of religion is grounded in the assumption that the human experience of the sacred can be studied as an intellectual and societal phenomenon without bias. Accordingly, the study of religion depends on the same objectivity that would be assumed in the humanities and social sciences.

In keeping with this perspective the study of religion at Cedar Crest College depends on the ability of students to think critically and objectively about both the nature of religion and religious practices. Value judgments about any religion, or perspectives from a faith position, are outside of this approach and properly belong in bible colleges and seminaries where a religious perspective is assumed.

Any student having difficulty with this approach should contact the instructor at the earliest possible point in the course.

#### Attendance:

Unless excused for health or personal emergency, students are expected to be in class. Students missing more than three classes without a valid excuse will lose 2 points from their final course grade for each day absent.

### **THE HONOR CODE**

Students are expected to abide by the principles of the college's honor policy throughout the course. The Honor Code policy can be found in the Customs Book. Any violation will be dealt with according to college procedure.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is “the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work,” (The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, New York: Random House, 1975, p. 1014). The Cedar Crest College Faculty Handbook (Book Four, Article B, Section 3, p. 14) further defines it:

Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed within quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified by the instructor. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In consideration of these ideas, all Religious Studies courses will treat plagiarism in the following ways. Inadvertent plagiarism, the occasional failure to include a citation or the occasional use of a phrase from another source or the omission of a reference, represents sloppy scholarship and is subject to the loss of points on the paper or examination on which it occurs. However, the importation of either complete sentences or paragraphs from an external source and integrating them within the body of a paper constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade being given for the entire course.

Academic papers or projects submitted for another college course cannot be re-submitted for any Religious Studies course without the permission of both instructors. Dual submission of papers is a violation of academic policy and will result in a failure for the course.

## GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPERS

An “A” paper must have:

- Excellence in the creative and critical presentation of an argument relevant to the assignment.
- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that connects the ideas in the paper with the thesis.
- A complete bibliography or “works cited” page(s) in appropriate format.
- Clearly articulated relevance and significance of the subject matter.
- The paper must be grammatically correct and relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A “B” paper must have:

- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that relates to the thesis but may lack some connections.
- A bibliography or “works cited” page(s) that is relatively free from error.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- The paper must be relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A “C” paper is identified by:

- A poorly constructed central idea and the absence of a thesis.
- Poor structure.
- Incomplete bibliography, “works cited” and references in the text.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- Errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.

A “D” paper is identified by:

- No central idea.
- Little or no structure.
- Incomplete or missing bibliography, “works cited” and references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Unclear or confused relationship to the assignment.

A failing paper is identified by:

- No central idea or structure.
- Failure to include bibliography “works cited” or references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Lack of relationship to the assignment.