NEAR EASTERN STUDIES 193
NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL
SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Forty-seven hours of instruction per week for six weeks. This course teaches archaeological field methods through hands-on instruction. Students work with the project staff and receive exposure to techniques like excavation, survey, illustration, photography, and artifact processing. Students also learn local archaeology and history through weekly lectures and field trips. No prerequisites but courses in archaeology or Middle/Near Eastern studies are recommended.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Students will be assessed on the following assignments:

10% Site survey instruction
10% Field notebook instruction
10% Excavation instruction
10% Environmental sciences instruction
10% Field illustration and photography instruction
10% Artifact processing and analysis instruction
40% Good citizenship and active participation

COURSE SOURCES

The principal source for this class is the archaeological site of Dhiban and the artifacts and geologic samples recovered by the staff and students. Most instruction takes place at the site. Methods of instruction include mini-lectures by the instructor and qualified staff members, and one-on-one instruction between staff members and students. The book, *Jordan: An Archaeological Reader*, and a course packet of readings will be kept on a reserve shelf in the project library. Students will also handle artifacts in the processing laboratory in the afternoons, and visit museums and archaeological sites on the weekend.

SCHEDULE

Students work on the site for six weeks from Sunday to Thursday approximately eight hours per day. Over the six-week period, students rotate every two weeks in groups of three or four through set stations designed to teach them different aspects of field research (e.g., site survey, excavation, geologic mapping, artifact processing). Simultaneously, there is a weekly theme in which all students receive more formal instruction from the instructor or a staff specialist. The

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1 Good citizenship includes punctuality, collegial contributions in discussions, and active participation in group exercises.
students’ performance is measured by their completion of an assignment related to each weekly theme.

**Week 1 Site Survey**
Topics: Identifying archaeological sites; setting up a grid; using a total station

Lecture: Introduction to Dhiban and project research goals
Suggested readings:
- Adams ‘Archaeology in Jordan: A brief history’
- Porter, et al., ‘The power of place: The Dhiban community through the ages’
- Macumber, ‘Evolving landscape and environment in Jordan’

Fieldtrip: Madaba churches and archaeological museums (Friday)
Fieldtrip: Mount Nebo Byzantine churches (if open) and Dead Sea (swimming)

**Week 2 Excavations**
Topics: Stratigraphy, excavation tools, managing excavation units

Lecture: Thinking in context: Excavation method and theory

Fieldtrip: Jerash (Friday)
Suggested readings:
- Freeman, ‘The Roman Period’
- Watson, P ‘The Byzantine Period’

**Week 3 The Field Notebook**
Topics: Recording archaeological excavations; using different instruments; paperwork

Lecture: Tackling the field notebook

Fieldtrip: ‘Amman Citadel, National Archaeology Museum, ‘Amman Roman Theatre, Downtown Shopping (Friday afternoon and Saturday)

**Week 4 Environmental Sciences**
Topics: Excavating and recording soil formations, collecting and processing geologic data

Lecture: Geoarchaeological techniques

Fieldtrip: The Nabataeans: Wadi Dana Nature Preserve, Petra, Karak Castle (Friday - Sunday)
Suggested readings:
- Schmid, ‘The Hellenistic Period and the Nabataeans’

**Week 5 Field Illustration and Photography**
Topics: Illustrating architecture, field photography
Lecture: Community Archaeology and Site Development
  • Jacobs and Porter, “Excavating Turath: Documenting Heritage Discourses in Jordan”

Fieldtrip: Early Islamic Desert Castles (Friday)
  • Students can be dropped off near ‘Amman if they wish to visit again and spend the night at their own expense.

Week 6 Data Processing and Field Analysis
Topics: Cleaning and storing artifacts, ‘reading’ pottery

Lecture: Wrap-up and reflection on project goals

ITINERARY AND A TYPICAL DAY

The program lasts six weeks. In 2013, the program will begin Sunday June 30, with students arriving on Friday, June 28. The program will end Friday, August 19. The project’s workweek begins on Sunday morning and ends Thursday evening. Each day begins with a first breakfast at 4:15am in the hotel in Madaba prior to leaving for Dhiban on rented buses at 4:45am. A few participants stay in Madaba to process excavated artifacts with the object registrar. Students arrive at the site around 5:30 am to start the workday. Field school members work together with hired workmen from Dhiban until 1:00pm. On most days, the work is hot (between 75 and 95+ degrees F), dusty, and physically demanding. Students should be in at least average physical shape and have a tolerance for dirty conditions, walking up and down hills, and carrying equipment. There is a 30-minute break for second breakfast and a later 15-minute break for tea. Buses leave the site to return to Madaba at 1 PM and lunch is eaten in the hotel restaurant at 2:00pm. Students have free-time until 4PM. During most evenings, students will participate in afternoon lab exercises with staff. During instructional evenings twice per week, students will meet in a classroom in the hotel. Dinner is served at 7PM. After dinner, students can explore Madaba, do laundry, read course materials, or catch up on email. Students are encouraged to go to bed by 9PM each night in order to be rested for the next day’s work and to avoid exhaustion.

Weekends begin on Thursday night at 6PM and last until Saturday night at 8PM. Fieldtrips are scheduled for most weekends. On weekend days where no events are scheduled, students have the freedom to explore Jordan, leaving on their own from the tourist hub of Madaba. During these trips, students are not under the instructor’s supervision.