



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Hellenistic Judaism - 14791

Last update 09-09-2021

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Jewish Thought

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Maren Niehoff

Coordinator Email: maren.niehoff@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesdays 10.30-11.30

Teaching Staff:

Prof Maren Niehoff

Course/Module description:

in recent years it has become clear that Hellenistic Judaism was a diverse and influential phenomenon with important implications for the development of Classical Judaism, early Christianity and Greek culture in the Roman Empire (the "Second Sophistic"). The course explores various expressions of Hellenistic Judaism in chronological sequence, ranging from the story of the Greek Bible translation to Greek-speaking Jews in third century Palaestina. Emphasis will be given to an in-depth analysis of various texts in the original Greek, with attention to their respective intellectual and cultural context

Course/Module aims:

The course aims at

- familiarizing the students with diverse texts
- highlight the connection between encounters and constructions of Hellenistic Judaism

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Students will be able

- to identify intellectual encounters in Antiquity and their impact on constructions of Hellenistic Judaism
- to formulate academic arguments

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures and discussions in class

Course/Module Content:

Section 1: Greek Bible Translation and early Exegesis in Alexandria
Section 2: Philo of Alexandria's Systematic Bible Commentary
Section 3: Barbarian Identity in Rome - Freedom and Martyrdom
Section 4: Hellenistic Judaism in Late Antique Palaestina?

Required Reading:

Section 1: Greek Bible Translation and early Exegesis in Alexandria (sessions 1-3):
Primary Sources in Greek:

Ep. Arist. 301-316, ed. L. Michael White and G. Anthony Keddie, *Jewish Fictional Letters from Hellenistic Egypt* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 165-69.
Demetrius, Fragm. 2, 14-15, ed. Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 1.70).
Secondary Literature:
Maren R. Niehoff, "Alexandrian Judaism", in Matthias Henze and Rodney A. Werline (eds.), *Early Judaism and its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020), 281-304.
John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1-35.

Section 2: Philo of Alexandria's Systematic Bible Commentary (sessions 4-6)

Primary Sources in Greek:

Philo, Conf. 2-15, All. 1.43-52, ed. Cohn-Wendland.

Secondary Literature:

Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria. An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 173-91.

Section 3: Barbarian Identity in Rome - Freedom and Martyrdom (sessions 7-10)

Primary Sources in Greek:

Philo, Probus 74-6, 92-97.

Josephus, Jewish War 7.351-7.

Secondary Literature:

Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria*, 1-22.

Steve Mason, "Josephus as a Roman Historian," in Honora H. Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers (eds.), *A Companion to Josephus* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 89-107.

Section 4: Hellenistic Judaism in Late Antique Palaestina? (sessions 11-14)

Primary Sources in Greek:

Anonymous, "De Psalmis Moysis", ed. Cordula Bandt et al., *Die Prologtexte zu den Psalmen*

von Origenes und Eusebius (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 52-56.

The Testament of Joseph, chap. 1-6, ed. M. de Jonge, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*

(Leiden: Brill 1978), 144-51.

Secondary Literature:

Nicholas De Lange, "Hebraists and Hellenists in the Sixth Century Synagogue: A New Reading of Justinian's Novel 146", in Constanza Cordoni and Gerhard Langer (eds.), "Let the Wise Listen and add to their Learning" (Prov. 1.5). *Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 217-226.

Additional Reading Material:

section 1:

Philo, Mos. 2.37-44

Justin Martyr, Dial. 68.7-9, 71.1-4.

Mekh. Bo 14, jMeg. 71d.

section 2:

Paul, Gal. 3.1-18, 4.21-31.

Orig., PArch 4.6-14.

Ronald E. Heine, Origen. Scholarship in the Service of the Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

David T. Runia, Philo in Early Christian Literature (Assen and Philadelphia: van Gorcum and Fortress Press, 1993), 157-183.

section 3:

IV Macc., chap. 6, 14-6.

Plutarch, The Life of Alexander, chap. 65; Sayings of Kings 172b-e, 179d-181f.

Lucian, The Passing of Peregrinus, chap. 21-25.

Guy G. Stroumsa, Barbarian Philosophy. The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

Philip A. Stadter, Plutarch and His Roman Readers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

section 4:

Mdr. Ps. on Psalm 90, ed. Buber p. 388.

Eus., "De Auctore", ed. Bandt et al., p. 178.

Eus., "De Divis. ", ed. Bandt et al., p. 172.

Genesis Rabbah 87.5, ed. Albeck p. 3.1066-69.

Nicholas de Lange, Origen and the Jews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Nicholas de Lange, Japheth in the Tents of Shem (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

Maren R. Niehoff, "Celsus' Jew in Third Century Caesarea. Tracing Hellenistic Judaism in

Origen's Contra Celsum", in Jonathan Ben Dov and Michal Bar Asher-Siegal (eds.), Social History of the Jews in Antiquity: Studies in Dialogue with Albert Baumgarten's Work (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 233-50.

Maren R. Niehoff, "Homer between Celsus, Origen and the Jews of Late Antique Palaestina", in

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 15 %
Participation in Tutorials 25 %
Project work 60 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

course language: English.

Course Requirements: preparing the Greek sources and the scholarly literature from week to week (25%), presenting a chosen text in class (15%) and writing a final paper of 10 pages based on the presentation in class (60%).