



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

INTRO. TO ZOROASTRIANISM - 38272

Last update 01-09-2015

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: islamic & middle east stud.

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Michael Shenkar

Coordinator Email: michael.shenkar@gmail.com

Coordinator Office Hours: Sunday 14:00-15:00.

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Shenkar Michael

Course/Module description:

The course is an introduction to the history of Zoroastrianism – one of the most significant religious traditions in Antiquity, from its origins until its decline as the principal religion in Sasanian Iran following the Arab conquest. On the basis of the Zoroastrian literature, the historical sources and the material culture, we shall discuss the central concepts in Zoroastrianism and its place in the context of other ancient Iranian religions.

Course/Module aims:

To introduce the principal events in the history of Zoroastrianism and the basic notions of Iranian religious tradition from its origin until the Islamic conquest.

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

The students will acquire basic understanding of the development of Zoroastrianism, the problematic of the Iranian written sources and of the fundamental notions of Iranian cult in the pre-Islamic period.

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecturer's exposition of the subject followed by a discussion.

Course/Module Content:

- 1) Zoroastrianism and the "Iranian Religions".
- 2) In the Beginning: Indo-Iranians and their gods.
- 3) When and where spoke Zarathustra?
- 4) Zoroastrian written sources: The Avesta and the Middle Persian Literature.
- 5) Basic concepts of Zoroastrianism.
- 6) The "Religion of the Achaemenians".
- 7) The Zoroastrian Rituals.

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- 8) *"Alexander the accursed": continuity and rupture in the Hellenistic period.*
 - 9) *Iranian religions under the Arsacids.*
 - 10) *Zoroastrianism in the Sasanian period.*
 - 11) *The Zoroastrian cosmogony and eschatology.*
 - 12) *The religion of the Kushans and their successors in Bactria.*
 - 13) *The "Zoroastrianism" of the Sogdians.*
 - 14) *"The Eternal Flame": the survival of Zoroastrianism after the Islamic conquest of Iran.*

Required Reading:

The basic course books are:

Boyce, M. (1979), *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London.

Rose, J. (2011), *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction*, London.

Skjærvø, P.O. (2012), *The Spirit of Zoroastrianism*, New Heaven and London.

For additional reading, see Moodle site.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 90 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 10 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

