



## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *The Sasanian Empire in Light of its Material Culture - 38273*

*Last update 01-09-2015*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: islamic & middle east stud.*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Michael Shenkar*

*Coordinator Email: [michael.shenkar@gmail.com](mailto:michael.shenkar@gmail.com)*

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

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Teaching Staff:

Dr. Shenkar Michael

Course/Module description:

The course will focus on selected topics in social, religious and cultural history of Iran in the Sasanian period (third-seventh centuries CE). The Sasanian Empire was the summit of the pre-Islamic Iranian civilization and a place of special importance is reserved for its legacy in Iranian history and culture even today. We shall focus mostly on the primary sources and the material culture. We shall discuss the urban planning, the architecture, the Sasanian royal inscriptions and rock reliefs, iconography of coins and seals.

Course/Module aims:

Acquaintance with the main historical and cultural processes and basic facts in the history of the Sasanian Empire through its material culture.

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

To be acquainted with the main historical events of the Sasanian period and with the principal monuments of the Sasanian culture. Ability to deal with primary sources for the period.

Attendance requirements(%):

80

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

Course/Module Content:

- 1) The Iranian plateau on the eve of the Sasanian era.
- 2) The written sources.
- 3) The inscriptions.
- 4) Urban layout and architecture.
- 5) Rock Reliefs.

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6) *Religious architecture and the Zoroastrian religion in the Sasanian period.*

7) *Religious iconography.*

8) *Coinage.*

9) *Society and Ideology.*

10) *Silver vessels.*

12) *The Sasanians in the East.*

13) *Conclusion: The Sasanian Empire and its legacy.*

Required Reading:

1)

Wiesehöfer, J. (2013), "Fratarakā and the Seleucids", in Potts, D. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, Oxford, pp. 718-728.

Hauser, S.R. (2014), "The Arsacids (Parthians)", in Potts, D. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, Oxford, pp. 728-751.

2)

Pourshariati, P. (2008), *The Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire*, London, pp. 1-19.

Yarshater, Ehsan "Iranian National History", in Yarshater, E. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol 3 (1): the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, Cambridge, 1983.

שקד, ש. (1992), "ספר המלכים ורקעו", בתוך: *שאה-באמה*, ספר המלכים, מאת פינדוס, תרגם מפרסית אליעזר כגן, כרך א', ירושלים.

3)

Gignoux, Ph. (1983), "Middle Persian Inscriptions", in Yarshater, E. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol 3 (1): the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, Cambridge, pp. 1205-1216.

Skjærvø, P.O. (2011), "Kartir", *Encyclopaedia Iranica online edition*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kartir>

4)

Huff, D. (1986), "Architecture iii. Sasanian Period", *Encyclopaedia Iranica online edition*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/architecture-iii>

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5)

Herrmann, G. and V. S. Curtis (2002), "Sasanian Rock Reliefs", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* online edition, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sasanian-rock-reliefs>

Canepa, M. (2013), "Sasanian Rock Reliefs", in Potts, D. (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, pp. 856-877.

6)

De Jong, A. (2004), "Sub specie maiestatis; Reflections on Sasanian Court Rituals", In: Stausberg, Michael (ed.), *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, Leiden - Boston, pp. 345-365.

Shaked, Sh. (2008), "Religion in the Late Sasanian Period: Eran, Aneran, and Other Religious Designations", in Curtis, V.S. and Stewart, S. (eds.), *The Sasanian Era (The Idea of Iran, vol 3)*, London, pp. 103-118.

7)

Shenkar, M. (2014), *Intangible Spirits and Graven Images: The Iconography of Deities in the Pre-Islamic Iranian World*, Brill, pp. 6-9.

8)

Schindel, N. (2013), "Sasanian Coinage", In Potts, D. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, Oxford, pp. 814-840.

9)

Huff, D. (2008), "Formation and Ideology of the Sasanian State in the Context of Archaeological Evidence", in Curtis, V.S. and Stewart, S. (eds.), *The Sasanian Era*, pp. 31-59.

Shayegan, R.M. (2013), "Sasanian Political Ideology", in Potts, D. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, Oxford, pp. 805-814.

10)

Ritter, N. C. (2012), "On the Development of Sasanian Seals and Sealing Practice: A Mesopotamian Approach", In I. Regulski, K. Duistermaat and P. Verkinderen (eds.), *Seals and Sealing Practices in the Near East: Developments in Administration and Magic from Prehistory to the Islamic Period*, Leuven, Paris, Walpole, pp. 99-115.

11)

Marshak, B. I. (1998). *The Decoration of Some Late Sasanian Silver Vessels and its Subject-Matter. The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Persia. New Light on the Parthian and Sasanian Empires*. V. S. Curtis, R. Hillenbrand and J. M. Rogers. London: 84-93.

Masia-Radford, K. (2013), "Luxury Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period", In Potts, D. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, Oxford, pp. 920-943.

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12)

Sims-Williams, N. (2008), "The Sasanians in the East. A Bactrian Archive from Northern Afghanistan", in Curtis, V.S. and Stewart, S. (eds.), *The Sasanian Era (The Idea of Iran, vol. III)*, London, pp. 88-103.

Additional Reading Material:

General surveys. History:

Daryaee, T. (2009), *Sasanian Persia. The Rise and Fall of an Empire*, London.

Daryaee, T. (2012), "The Sasanian Empire (224-651 CE)", in Daryaee, T. (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*, Oxford, pp. 187-207.

Wiesehöfer, J. (2001), *Ancient Persia, 550 BC to 650 AD*, London - New York, pp. 151-182.

Wiesehöfer, J. (2010), "The Late Sasanian Near East", in Robinson, C.F. (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1: The Formation of the Islamic World Sixth to Eleventh Centuries*, Cambridge, pp. 107-133.

Shahbazi, A.Sh. (2005), "Sassanian Dynasty", *Encyclopædia Iranica Online Edition*, July 20, 2005, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sasanian-dynasty>

General surveys. Material culture:

Mousavi, A. and Daryaee, T. (2012), "The Sasanian Empire: An Archaeological Survey, c.220-AD 640", in D. Potts, (ed.), *Companion to the Archaeology of the Near East*, pp. 1076-1095.

Huff, D. (1986), "Archaeology iv. Sasanian", *Encyclopædia Iranica*  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/archeology-iv>

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 80 %

Assignments 20 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

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Other 0 %

Additional information: