

FIU Department of Religious Studies  
**REL 3209: The Dead Sea Scrolls**

Professor Erik Larson  
DM 303  
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Spring 2010  
TR 11:00-12:15  
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**Introduction and Goals**

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of about 850 manuscripts that were written between the third century B.C. and the first century A.D. They bear witness to a time that was crucial both to the development of Judaism and the birth of Christianity. They also provide us with the oldest manuscripts of the Bible that we have and tell us much about the lives, hopes and dreams of the people who collected and wrote them.

At the end of this course you will:

- A. Know how the Scrolls were found and why they have been called the greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century.
- B. Be familiar with the various Jewish groups that existed at the turn of the era and how the Dead Sea Scrolls group fits in with them.
- C. Understand the significance of the Scrolls for our knowledge of the text of the Bible and the development of the canon of Scripture.
- D. Be aware of how the Qumran group interpreted the Bible and how this was similar to or different from other Jews and from the Christians.
- E. Know how the Qumranites practiced their religion through prayer, study of the Bible and keeping the Torah.
- F. Be familiar with the distinctive Messianism and eschatology of the Qumran group.

**Syllabus**

1. [January 11] Introduction  
Read: RDSS Chap 1; CWDSS pp. 6-21.
2. [January 13] Discovery and Controversy  
Read: RDSS Chap. 2; CWDSS pp. 22-35; WHWL pp. 1-33.
3. [January 18] Archaeology of Qumran  
Read: RDSS Chap. 3; CWDSS pp. 168-192.
4. [January 20] History of the Second Temple Period  
Read: RDSS Chap. 4; CWDSS pp. 36-63.
5. [January 25] Origins of the Qumran Community  
Read: RDSS Chap. 5; CWDSS pp. 136-139; 149-151; 204-205; DSST pp. 77-85.
6. [January 27] Life of the Community  
Read: RDSS Chap. 6-7; CWDSS pp. 82-91; DSST pp. 1-32.
7. [February 1] The Role of Women at Qumran  
Read: RDSS Chap. 8; DSST pp. 33-73; WHWL pp. 80-104.

8. [February 3] Theology of the Scrolls  
Read: RDSS Chap. 9; DSST pp. 317-370.
9. [February 8] The Bible at Qumran  
Read: RDSS Chap. 10; WHWL pp. 34-52; DSSB pp. vii-xxii; introductions to Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Jeremiah, Psalms, 1 Enoch, Daniel, Ben Sira.  
**Note: Please bring DSSB to class on days we study the Biblical texts.**
10. [February 10] The Question of Canon  
Read: CWDSS pp. 160-161; 164-165.
11. [February 15] Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha  
Read: RDSS Chap. 11; CWDSS pp. 102-105; 122-127; 162-163; DSST pp. 230-275.
12. [February 17] Wisdom and Mysteries  
Read: RDSS Chap. 12; CWDSS pp. 140-143; DSST pp. 382-401.
13. [February 22] The Pesharim  
Read: RDSS Chap. 13; CWDSS pp. 96-101; DSST pp. 185-207.
14. [February 24] The Pesharim--**Continued**  
Read: RDSS Chap. 14; CWDSS pp. 96-101; DSST pp. 207-216.
15. [March 1] **Midterm Examination**
17. [March 3] The Theology of Jewish Law  
Read: RDSS Chap. 15.
18. [March 8] The Strange Case of the Temple Scroll  
Read: RDSS Chap. 16; CWDSS pp. 154-160; DSST pp. 154-184.
19. [March 10] The Law of the Sect  
Read: RDSS Chap. 17; CWDSS pp. 132-133.
20. [March 22] Prayer and Ritual  
Read: RDSS Chap. 18; CWDSS pp. 94-95; 133-135; 144; DSST pp. 407-418; WHWL pp. 53-79.
21. [March 24] Messianism  
Read: RDSS Chap. 19; CWDSS pp. 128-131; 162-163; DSST pp. 126-128; 138.
22. [March 29] Eschatology  
Read: RDSS Chap. 20; CWDSS pp. 92-93; DSST pp. 95-125.
23. [March 31] Some Controversial Texts  
Read: RDSS Chap. 21; CWDSS pp. 108-113; DSST pp. 123-124; 394-395.
24. [April 5] Mysticism and Magic  
Read: RDSS Chap. 22; CWDSS pp. 146-149; DSST pp. 419-431.
25. [April 7] Jews and Gentiles  
Read: RDSS Chap. 23.

26. [April 12] Jerusalem  
Read: RDSS Chap. 24; CWDSS pp. 106-107; DSST pp. 129-135.

27. [April 14] The Transition to Rabbinic Judaism  
Read: RDSS Chap. 25; CWDSS pp.192-195.

28. [April 19] The Scrolls and Christianity  
Read: CWDSS pp. 200-203.

**Paper Due at Beginning of Class**

29. [April 21] Conclusion

**Textbooks:** RDSS = *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Lawrence Schiffman (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

CWDSS = *Complete World of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Philip Davies, George Brooke, and Phillip Callaway (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002).

DSST = *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, by Florentino Garcia Martinez (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

DSSB = *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, by Martin Abegg and Peter Flint (San Francisco: Harper, 2002).

WHWL = *The Dead Sea Scrolls: What Have We Learned?* By Eileen Schuller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

**Grading:** Midterm 30%  
Final 30%  
Term Paper (9-12 pages) 40%

**Term Paper:** Each student will write a term paper on some topic relating to the course that particularly interests him or her. The topic must receive the approval of the instructor before it is handed in. The paper itself should be **9-12** pages in length, excluding bibliography. Each paper is to be printed or typed, not handwritten, with lines double-spaced. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform with either that of *MLA* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. In the body of the paper you may use either footnotes or endnotes.

**Academic Honesty:** Each student is expected to do his or her own work. It is absolutely unacceptable to submit someone else's work as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. Thus, when in the course of writing your paper you quote or paraphrase an idea found in one of your sources you must give credit to the original author (usually by means of a footnote).

**Academic Conduct:** Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they

will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Examinations:** Both midterm and final examinations will be a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching and essay questions. The final examination is not cumulative—it covers only material from the second half of the semester.

**Attendance:** An absolutely essential part of the course! Although not computed in your final grade, some material will inevitably be covered in class that is **not** to be found in the textbook so that each absence negatively affects your ability to do well on the tests. So please come, ask questions, and learn.

**Syllabus Note on Internet Use in Research:** You may cite from the internet in your term papers, but you must be discerning. Anyone can post “information” on the internet, and thus some of what is there is inaccurate, incomplete, and sometimes even blatantly untrue. As in print collections in libraries, only scholarly articles on the internet are acceptable as sources for research papers.

Internet articles should ideally have authors. Some will list individual authors; others will list institutions as sources. The credibility of the information depends on the credibility of the source. Acceptable sources include individual scholars with academic credentials, educational institutions (e.g., Institute of Reformation History, Princeton University), publicly supported national or international institutions (e.g. the World Health Organization or the National Institutes of Health) or other well known institutions with credible reputations (e.g. the World Council of Churches, the Childrens’ Defense Fund). Most educational institutions have addresses which end with the letters “edu.” You must use your judgment since many reputable institutions may not be well known by most students. Also, sometimes websites may list a university as the place from which the material emanates, but which does not sponsor or in any way support the information on that site. (You could set up a website that lists FIU as its origin, and purports that the Pope died last month and was replaced by a ringer!).

There will be some internet sources the reliability of which will be difficult to assess. Sometimes you must judge by the tone and range of an article. If it reads like a magazine or newspaper article and cites none of the sources it used, it is not scholarly. You should ask whether the article demonstrates balance: Does it attempt to tell all sides of the story? Does it ask critical questions of the material it covers? How well does its treatment accord with other treatments of the same material you have found? If you would really like to cite an internet article but have doubts about its acceptability, look up the institution or the author on the internet or in the library. Has the author or institution published other works? Have those been reviewed or cited by other scholars?

When you cite from the internet, you must list the entire address on the web where you found the information and the date you accessed it. When applicable you must also note any search terms needed within the website to find this particular article when these do not appear within the address.

The following are some bibliographic entries:

Musa, Edward, “The Art of the Maya.”  
<http://www.unesco.org/pop/journal/v1onaal.htm>. 4/27/01.

Zarabozo, Jamaal, “Is Family Planning Allowed in Islam?”  
<http://www.albany.edu/~ha4934/famplan.html>. 4/21/01.