

# Course Prospectus

## For THL 467 Historical Geography of the Bible Lands

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## Overview

With its focus on *'the Land'*, the Bible is a profoundly geographic text. In spite of this, the geographic dimension of the Bible is often misunderstood, overlooked or assumed. Knowledge of the geography of the lands of the Bible can provide a much fuller understanding the Bible through establishing the context of biblical events and key factors explaining the course of biblical and, indeed, much of world history. *'The Land'* promised to Abraham and his descendants, located on a bridge between the two centers of ancient civilization, has played a pivotal position in the unfolding of the history of what is now known as the Middle East. The names and descriptions given to the natural and man-made features of the lands of the Bible have profoundly affected our civilization, ranging from place names, often reproduced on distant landscapes, to ways we map the world. Its situation on a transition zone between five climatic types, bisected north to south by the Levant (or Dead Sea) Rift System with its complex geology, has made this small area one of the more physically and biologically diverse and agriculturally challenging regions in the world.



*Photo courtesy of NASA. This true-color image of the Middle East was acquired by MODIS on March 8, 2002. Visible in the image are the countries of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the island of Cyprus. The major bodies of water are the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Dead Sea, and the Nile River.*

## Course description

This course deals with the historical geography of the Bible Lands as represented in ancient texts (the Bible as well as Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Canaanite sources). Emphasis is on the interrelationship of history with physical and human geography during the Bronze and Iron Ages, including analysis of the settlement, economic, political, military, and communication factors in ancient Israel. Upon completion a student should be able to correlate relevant archaeological, historical and biblical material with important sites, roads, and landscape features within the eastern Mediterranean region.

## Prerequisites and corequisites

There are no prerequisites or corequisites for this course.

## Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

## Instructional Objectives

On successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how the physical, social and economic geographical framework and contexts have influenced historical biblical events in the eastern Mediterranean region and the flow of biblical history, generally.

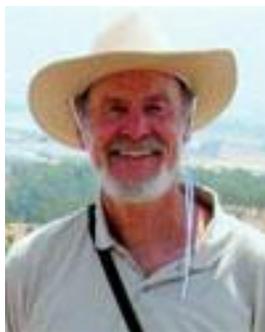
This will include the following:

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- the geologic history and processes that have created the landforms;
  - the climate and weather and the factors that govern them;
  - the resultant ecosystems with their zones or patterns of vegetation and populations of animals;
  - the built environment and economic structures created on this foundation, particularly agricultural land use and settlement patterns, choice of building materials, mining and manufacturing, trade routes and fortifications; and
  - the Bible's land ethic, including related statutes.
2. Demonstrate an ability to identify and name on maps the location of the major physical and cultural features of the biblical land of Israel, i.e., boundaries of types of political/administrative or natural regions or subdivisions; physical features of mountains, valleys and plains, rivers/wadis, lakes, forests and wetlands; as well as land and sea trade routes, agricultural areas, fortifications, cities and settlements.
  3. Demonstrate an ability to visualize the geographical environments that affected the writers of the Bible and are used in their imagery, by identifying on maps as well as recognizing photographs of where major Biblical events took place.
  4. Demonstrate elementary skills in the use of literary, scientific and cartographic resources, tools and procedures in the study of the historical geography of the Bible lands.
  5. Develop an increased understanding of the Bible through a better grasp of the geographical factors in biblical episodes.
  6. Provide the basis for a better understanding of current events in the Middle East and for future travel to the region.

### **Your Instructor**

The instructor of record for this course is Dr. Charles W. Moore. To contact him on course details and issues please use the email feature in the e-learning system (Populi) or [charles.moore@livinguniv.com](mailto:charles.moore@livinguniv.com).



Dr. Moore completed post-graduate study in geography and urban/regional planning at the University of Washington. His career has been devoted to both academic and government research in the areas of natural sciences, technological change and natural resource development. During the 1970s, he served as Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Saskatchewan and spent a year at Glasgow University in Scotland as a Research Fellow. His past 33 years have been spent with the Canadian federal government in policy-related evaluation of science and technology programs at the former Science Council of Canada and the Department of Natural Resources (including the Geological Survey of Canada, Geomatics Canada, Canadian Forest Service, Canada Centre for Mineral and Energy Technology). He has published and delivered academic papers in the fields of historical economic geography, geology, regional planning and program evaluation as well as traveled and conducted research in those same subjects in North America and Western Europe.

## **Course Protocols**

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### **Technology access**

This course requires web access and the student has to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. One can download the reader free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

### **Students with disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities have a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor by email (on the course "Info" page click on the instructor's name and then select "Send Email").

### **Icebreaker assignment**

To begin this course, students must complete an Icebreaker assignment to introduce themselves to their professor and classmates through the posting of a short autobiography on the course forum. Simply tell the class about yourself and why you are taking the course (200 words or less). The Icebreaker assignment is due by the eighth day of the semester. Students post their biographies as a reply to the Icebreaker topic on the course forum. A student can earn **25 bonus points** in this course by doing so "on time." As there are people from all over the world enrolled in this course, each autobiography will help all know, understand and appreciate each other. Students are to read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

### **Attendance in this online course**

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary for students to derive maximum benefit from a course and to maintain a satisfactory academic record, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time, as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go."

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before "Last day to withdraw from a course" without a grade penalty as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of "W" for it. After that date, the grade will be a "WF" and counted in a student's GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student's class attendance or punctuality endangers the student's success or places other students at risk.

### **Withdrawing from or dropping this course**

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar's Office in writing. Please note the following:

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- If a student drops a course on or before the “Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty” as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a “W” is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of “W” if passing (not computed in GPA) or “WF” if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of “WF.”
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be given a grade of “W” on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of “W” or “WF” for the course depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw will be assigned a grade of “W” for the course.

### Course evaluation

We welcome your input for improving this course. Making suggestions to us by email is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make distance-learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning your experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate your letting us know how we can improve our products and services for you and other distance learners.

### Textbooks

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The required textbooks for this course are as follows:

**BEITZEL, B.J. *NEW MOODY ATLAS OF THE BIBLE*. CHICAGO: MOODY PUBLISHERS, 2009.**

**LANCASTER, S.P. AND J.M. MONSON. *GEOBASICS IN THE LAND OF THE BIBLE*. ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS: BIBLICAL BACKGROUNDS, 2008. <http://www.bibback.com/Geobasics.html>**

**LANCASTER, S.P. AND J.M. MONSON. *GEOBASICS STUDY GUIDE: INTRODUCTORY MAP STUDIES IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE LAND OF THE BIBLE. PARTS ONE, TWO & THREE*. ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS: BIBLICAL BACKGROUNDS, 2010-11. <http://www.bibback.com/downloads.html>**

***GEOBASICS MINI-MARKING GUIDE. 2009-11. FREE DOWNLOADABLE PDF FILE.***  
**[http://www.bibback.com/downloads\\_files/GMMGuide.pdf](http://www.bibback.com/downloads_files/GMMGuide.pdf)**

#### SUPPLEMENTAL/OPTIONAL BOOKS

Recommended (IF YOU CAN AFFORD THEM), especially Vol. II

**CLEAVE, R.L.W. *THE HOLY LAND SATELLITE ATLAS. VOLS. I, II & CD-ROM*. NICOSIA: ROHR PRODUCTIONS, 1999. TRY FOR USED COPIES.**

Students may order book through the University Bookstore or at the links provided above.

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The books used or referred to in this course are commercial publications. They represent the views and ideas of their authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse these texts nor vouch for their accuracy. We simply employ them in helping you master the content of the course.

### **Course Requirements**

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#### **Due dates and extensions**

Submit assignments on or before the due date. No late or make-up assignments will be allowed except for extreme circumstances (permission of instructor is necessary). Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

#### **Reading assignments**

Refer to "Course Outline" section for basic lesson structure and reading assignments. Specific assignments and due dates are set forth in each published lesson.

#### **Writing/Mapping assignments**

This course requires completion of six (6) writing and mapping assignments, some of which will include an associated oral or written discussion component. All writing assignments in this course should follow the MLA style as set forth in *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* by Lester & Lester. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed. The Files feature on an assignment submission page lets you submit your work so your instructor can have it handy for download, review and grading.

#### **Research paper**

A research paper will be due by the end of the semester. The topic of this paper will be selected by the student and approved by the instructor. The paper length should be 12-20 pages, including maps, diagrams, tables and references. Citations should be formatted according to MLA style. This assignment is **worth 25% of your final grade**.

#### **Quizzes and examinations**

This course includes five (5) quizzes. They are closed book, on-line tests of approximately 20-30 minute duration. There will also be a Mid-Term and a Final exam. Each exam should be able to be completed within 2 hours, although additional time will be allowed. They are also closed book exams taken on-line. There is no proctoring requirement for any quizzes or examinations.

### **Grading**

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A course grade will be determined based on the number of points a student has earned over the semester as follows:

Writing/Mapping Assignments with discussions (six, each worth 60 points, for total 360 points)  
Research Paper (250 points)  
Quizzes (five, each worth 28 points, for total 140 points)  
Exams (a Mid-term worth 100 points, and a Final worth 150 points, for total 250 points)  
**TOTAL 1000 points**

Posting the autobiography, participation in online discussions and extra work can earn a student bonus points. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

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Grades are in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning, we believe that the measure of mastery of course subject matter is completion of 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want students to earn at least 800 points in this course. If they do not do so then they have not achieved the level of the mastery we would like them to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades. Mastery of the material is what one's goal should be.

Grades, assigned by points, are as follows:

- A 900-1000 points
- B 800-899 points
- C 700-799 points
- D 600-699 points
- F Below 600 points

### Academic Irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were the writer's own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned. In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members may refuse to grade such papers or examinations, completely or in part, and to record each of them as a failure. If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

### Course Outline

Only textbook assignments are indicated below. Other readings are found in the lessons.

#### Lesson 1 Introduction: The Role & Methods of Historical Geography in Biblical Studies (2 weeks)

Main Reading Assignments

##### Topic 1- Biblical Historical Geography as a Field of Study

Beitzel x-xii; 14-17; 18-32; 98-105; 200;

##### Topic 2- Biblical Land of Promise & Its Setting

Geobasics 1

##### Writing/Mapping Assignment L1

##### Quiz L1

#### Lesson 2 The Physical Geography of Bible Lands I: Geology & Regions (2 weeks)

Main Reading Assignments

##### Topic 1- Geologic Structure & History

Beitzel 56-58; 32-56; Geobasics 2-25,

**Topic 2- Regions, Landforms, Relief & Soils**

Geobasics Mini-guide

**Writing/Mapping Assignment L2**

**Quiz L2**

**Lesson 3 The Physical Geography of Bible Lands II: Weather & Water  
(2 weeks)**

Main Reading Assignments

**Topic 1- Weather & Climate**

Beitzel 64-66;58-64

**Topic 2- Hydrology & Water Balance**

**Topic 3- Climate Change & Past Climate Scenarios**

**Writing/Mapping Assignment L3**

**Quiz L3**

**Lesson 4 The Physical Geography of Bible Lands III: Biogeography  
(3 weeks)**

Main Reading Assignments

**Topic 1- Vegetation & Phyto-geography**

Beitzel 66-67

**Topic 2- Zoogeography & Wildlife Re-introductions**

**Topic 3- Biblical Botany & Landscape Restoration**

**Writing/Mapping Assignment L4**

**Mid-Term Exam**

**Lesson 5 The Human Geography of Bible Lands I: Settlement &  
Agricultural Geography (3 weeks)**

Main Reading Assignments

**Topic 1- Toponymy**

Beitzel 72-76; 106-144

**Topic 2- Rural Land Use, Settlement & Tenure**

**Topic 3- Agricultural Technologies**

**Writing/Mapping Assignment L5**

**Quiz L5**

**Lesson 6 The Human Geography of Bible Lands II: Political &  
Economic Geography (3 weeks)**

Main Reading Assignments

**Topic 1- Roads, Trade & Geopolitics**

Beitzel 76-86; 40; 145-  
206; 220-231;

**Topic 2- Urbanization, Administration & Fortifications**

Geobasics Mini-guide.

**Topic 3- Economic Growth & Decline**

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**Writing/Mapping Assignment L6**

**Quiz L6**

**Lesson 7 The Human Geography of Bible Lands III: Brief Historical  
Geography Survey-Babylon to Modern State of Israel (2 weeks)**

Main Reading Assignments

**Topic 1- Babylon to Roman-Byzantine Judea/Syria/Palestina**

Beitzel 207-219; 232-  
276.

**Topic 2- Arab Conquest to End of Ottoman Empire**

**Topic 3- British Conquest to Modern State of Israel**

**Research Paper**

**Final Examination**