

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY?

Who were our ancestors at the dawn of mankind and the beginning of civilization? In what ways, then and since, were they different or similar to us – in biblical times and beyond? How did they live? When and why did changes occur in the cultural landscape? Is it possible to observe evidence for forgotten peoples and other events that shaped the ancient world, and understand how they affected our civilization? What are the characteristics of the material culture and cultural identities of different nations through history?

Israeli archaeologists examine the ancient cultures that existed in the Land of Israel and the world, through the material culture that people left behind (buildings and objects). We cannot converse with the people we are studying, rather we attempt to have the buildings and artifacts that were left behind by our ancestors tell their story. This largely detective work, collects and analyzes data with the aim of comprehending the activities of ancient peoples: their desires, beliefs and needs.

What is taught in the Department of Archaeology?

Studies at the Department of Archaeology of the University of Haifa are divided into two areas: on one hand, various theoretical studies, on the other, practical work. Theoretical studies include comprehensive classes on particular cultures (including field trips), as well as specific topics such as reading ancient Hebrew inscriptions. Practical lessons are conducted in the excavations at ancient sites, archaeological surveys, and in laboratory work.

Studies at the Department of Archaeology provide a broad and comprehensive instruction on a variety of topics relating to archeology of the Land of Israel, the neighboring and Mediterranean countries – from the prehistoric era to the Middle Ages. Diverse disciplines, both in terms of periods and topics, are covered: archaeology from the dawn of humanity, the Biblical period, the time of the Second Temple, the Mishna and Talmudic periods, and the time of Muslim and Crusader rule. Disciplines vary in terms of areas of study and the application of scientific methodology in modern archaeological research.

The curriculum includes a BA program for certified tour-guides, in collaboration with Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and the School of Tourism in Israel. **The program includes recognition, on an individual basis, of up to 30 credits of 120 points for a full Bachelor of Arts and is based on field-guide courses in archeology, history and geography.** This program is customized for working tour-guides and consequently takes place on a single day per week (Tuesdays) and, in one semester of the second year, on two days (Mondays and Tuesdays).

Why study at the Department of Archeology in Haifa?

The Department of Archaeology of the University of Haifa is a leading department of archaeological studies in Israel. The department offers a diverse curriculum of undergraduate and doctoral studies and is one of the finest and most active departments in the university. As teamwork is frequently required, the Department of Archaeology is one of the most unified departments in the university and possesses a uniquely warm and friendly, family atmosphere.

The Department of Archaeology of the University of Haifa has a particularly strong multi-disciplinary approach in its curriculum. We focus on innovative topics of research and methodologies: among these, the study of animal bones (Archaeo-zoology), the study of metals (Archaeo-metallurgy) and of other ancient materials (Geo-archaeology), the study of coastal sites and ancient commerce, the study of fossilized pollen (Palynology), reconstructing of ancient environments and climate, dating methods, and the combining of archeology and computer science. The Department of Archaeology also has a unique program in conservation of archaeological sites, including practical training courses for conservators. These studies, some of which are taught only at the University of Haifa, enrich the archaeological toolbox with the most advanced practices in the field.

The Academic staff members of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Haifa are engaged in a broad range of research areas. Each of the researchers is associated with one of more excavations in

Israel (for example, the Carmel Caves, Dor, Hippos, Jerusalem, Montfort Castle, Shikmona, Maresha) as well as sites outside Israel (recently work in the Caucasus – Georgia and Armenia).

Is there employment?

Certainly! Israel is studded with ancient sites. In past eras this region was a corridor, a passage of early humans from Africa to Asia and Europe. Later, at the center of the "Fertile Crescent" between the great powers of the ancient world; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome), the region established its place in the history of the ancient world. This country is the most crowded in the world for ancient sites per square kilometer. On the other hand, for almost a century the State of Israel has undergone accelerated development. This welcome development brings with it a danger for antiquities.

Consequently the Antiquities Act was passed, aimed at protecting ancient sites. The law is enforced by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), through its employees and researchers. The IAA is the largest employer of archaeologists in Israel, followed by the various university research institutes. Archaeologists are also employed in other institutions, including museums.

In recent years awareness of the need for conservation of ancient sites and artifacts has greatly increased, and many choose to be engaged in this branch of archeology. Teachers of Land of Israel studies, tour guides, and auditors come to study archeology graduate studies.

Archaeology graduates receive training in archaeological field work (excavations and surveys), job training for employment in the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and in academic research institutions. The Department of Archaeology also trains skilled workers for employment in museums, teaching in schools, guiding for national and international tourism.

Ma and Ph.D Studies

The Department of Archaeology at the University of Haifa is an interdisciplinary department employing varied scientific approaches in the study of past cultures in Israel, as well as neighboring countries and the Mediterranean – from humanistic approaches (history, arts etc.) to natural and exact sciences.

The Department of Archaeology is characterized by its emphasis on interdisciplinary, innovative themes and research methods, in the library, in the field and in laboratory work – Archaeozoology (the study of animal bones) and other sciences – enabling the reconstruction of the ancient environment, climate and landscape.

The Department maintains a unique program of preservation of material cultural heritage, combining academic studies alongside practical skills required in the discipline of conservation.

Unique studies in the Department :

Graduate students in the Department include those who see archeology as their future profession and hope to find employment in archaeological excavations, surveys and laboratories in the framework of the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and the universities; students who wish to be involved in teaching in schools or guiding in Israel and abroad; as well as students who wish to study the ancient world and are fascinated by the combination of old and new, of humanities and natural sciences.

Advantages of studying in the Department :

Students from fields such as Bible studies, art history, sociology and anthropology, computer science, information systems etc., can carry out postgraduate studies in the Department, fulfilling supplementary requirements in accordance with their specific academic backgrounds and the areas in which they wish to specialize.

The diverse nature of topics allows for great flexibility in developing a curriculum, and students receive individual instruction appropriate to the direction of study they choose.

Since 2010 the Department offers a MA program in conservation of material cultural heritage. In recent years the field of conservation has grown in importance and is emerging as one of the sought after fields, both in the public and private sectors. Our unique program was developed to provide the graduates with an appropriate background and training in the conservation of buildings and sites and in the preservation of artifacts and art works.

For further information please contact:

Ms. Gallit Aghion , Executive Assistant to Department Head
gaghion@univ.haifa.ac.il, Phone - 04-8240234