

ISRAEL

PROFESSORS: BOB MOSS AND BYRON MCCANE



Then and Now: Holy Land to Three Religions

Sacred to the three Abrahamic religions and steeped in thousands of years of history, Israel is today at the epicenter of one of our world's most important conflicts. In this interim, students will become familiar with Israel in all its complexity, including its three religions and their respective relationships to the land, its history, culture, and politics.

We'll spend a few days on campus being introduced to the history, religion, and culture of Israel, and then we will depart for 18 days in Israel and Jordan. Among the sights we'll see is the Galilee, the homeland of Jesus, where we will visit Nazareth, Zippori, Capernaum, Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee, and Gamla. In Jerusalem we'll see the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism, and the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, where the Dome of the Rock, one of the most sacred sites in Islam, now stands. In the Old City of Jerusalem we'll visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christianity's most sacred place. In the modern city of west Jerusalem we will visit the Israel Museum, home to the world's most extensive collection of biblical archaeological artifacts, and the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are kept. We'll travel to the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on the earth's surface, to see the fortress of Masada, Israel's most important historical site, and Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written. Finally, we'll travel south through the Arava Valley, the largest geological fault on earth, to Eilat, the southernmost city in Israel. From there we'll go into Jordan, visiting Petra, one of the "new Seven Wonders of the world", Wadi Rum and Mt Nebo on our way back to Tel Aviv for our flight home.

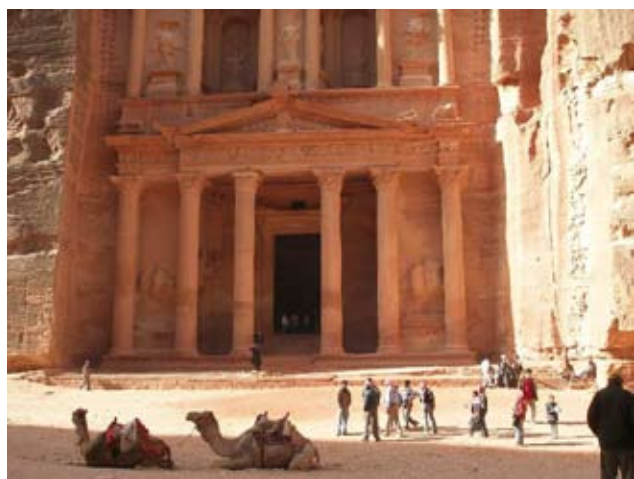
We'll have many opportunities to learn about Israeli culture, both from Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. We will spend a few nights in a Kibbutz, experience Sabbath services with Israeli families, and attend church services in Jerusalem.

Each student will pick a topic to research before, during, and after our trip, and each student will present his or her findings during a day-long seminar.

Interim Costs:

The cost of this Interim is \$3,000-4,000. This includes:

- airfare
- all ground transportation
- books
- gratuities
- breakfast and dinner
- a professionally printed photo book will be created at the end of the trip and the cost of one copy per student is included.



The cost of the Interim does not include:

- pairs of students will share cell phones and the cost of the phone is not included in interim cost — we would estimate an additional \$50 per person.
- lunches (students should budget \$10 per day for 18 lunches)
- souvenirs



Israel Then and Now: Wofford College, Interim term 2010

[Byron R. McCane](#) [Robert E. Moss](#)

"No matter what your Faith, you'll find Jerusalem to be one of the most 'magical' and amazing places on the planet. And Israel one of the most beautiful. I honestly believe everyone must go at least once!"

"And when you go, you need to go with Dr. McCane. His knowledge of religion, and of the region's history and archaeology turn what would otherwise be a fun 'tour' into a truly amazing and inspiring experience."

-Dr. Moss

From our 2006 Israel & Jordan "alumni":

"I will never forget personal discussions with Israelis and Palestinians of everything from music, to opinions of terrorism and the effect it has on their lives." -Liz O'Quinn

"My interim experience in Isreal is my definition of a liberal arts education...we studied religion, history, geography, archaeology, music, sociology, geology, ecology, government, music, art, need I go on? I am now keenly interested in the Middle East; I know the faces, the players, the geography and the history; partly because of my continued interest, but mostly because I was there. I touched the Whaling Wall. I walked the Via Dolorosa. I swam the Dead Sea. I prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. I smoked hookah in Bethlehem with Arabs. I sailed the Sea of Galilee. I shared Shabbat dinner with Jews on a kibbutz in the desert. These are not just memories but experiences that cannot be replaced." - Natalie Hussey

"Do not miss the opportunity to go on this trip! The hospitality of our guides (who became a true part of our group) and the people was amazing. We attended a local dinner with our travel guide and his family in Bethlehem. Being in Jerusalem, seeing the Western Wall, staying at a kibbutz (which I had never even heard of before!), singing with our tour guide in ancient chapels, the amazing sunset at Petra... every day there was something new, educational, spiritual, and exciting for me. I think back on some aspect of my Interim at least weekly as I remember how special it was to travel with new and old friends and have access to wonderful professors who guaranteed that no second of the trip was wasted, or I hear news driving to work of continued conflict in the region. I gained a much better appreciation for the history and complexity that was and continues in this region and had quite a few "moments" of my own." - Maggie Sanders Lewis

Israel Interim 2006 was one of the most memorable and most meaningful trips of my life. I still use the experiences we had to form opinions on Middle Eastern politics and religious affairs in the region. To be able to travel to the Holy Land with Dr. Moss and Dr. McCain made the trip even more special. They were able to offer such great insight into the religous and political issues of the region and were great fun. I would highly suggest this interim - definitely the most worthwhile interim of my Wofford years. - Erin Blanton Metcalf



“IS IT SAFE?”

That’s the question on the mind of parents considering sending their sons and daughters on this trip. The short answer is that we wouldn’t be taking this trip if we weren’t convinced that it’s safe. And of course, safety will remain our primary concern throughout the trip. Should conditions change and safety in a given area becomes a concern, we will immediately alter our itinerary accordingly. Note that we will NOT be traveling to Gaza; and we will be spending little if any time in the West Bank.

Travel to Israel does call for an informed and disciplined mindfulness of safety and security. We have more than fifteen years of combined experience traveling in this region. A very similar trip we took students on over interim in 2006 was a great success. You can read the comments of a few of the students regarding safety below.

On the basis of our experience, and in consultation with agents both here in the US and in the Middle East, the itinerary has been designed to preserve and protect the safety and security of our students. Students and their parents who would like to be apprised of the details of security arrangements are invited to contact Prof. McCane 864-597-4562; (mccanebr@wofford.edu) for a more comprehensive explanation.

Despite the impression created by television news reports, travel to Israel is no more dangerous than travel to New York City. If, for instance, a visitor to NYC does not know his or her way around, it is possible for that visitor to get into big trouble in a big hurry. An experienced traveler, by contrast, can spend a great deal of time in NYC without ever being in any danger whatsoever, having a great time all the while. This interim has been designed by experienced travelers, and the itinerary is mindful of safety and security from start to finish.

“Did you feel unsafe at any point on the trip?”

I did not feel unsafe at any point during the interim trip. The hotels where we stayed and places we visited were not large flashy westernized tourist traps... Our nights were spent in the same hotels where Israelis and Palestinians visiting these cities might spend their nights. We were immersed in the culture; eating at the same restaurants, shopping at the same stores, and visiting the same sites. I actually had a sense of security knowing that I was on this trip with professors from Wofford College who had experience studying and visiting this region. -Liz O’Quinn

Honestly, I never felt unsafe before or during the trip. However, there were a few times I was surprised or caught off-guard. For example, after we crossed into Jordan, someone checked under our bus. A few of us commented that he was probably checking for a bomb. The bus was fine, and I never gave it a second thought. Otherwise, we followed basic guidelines like never going out alone and avoiding standing at crowded bus stops. It is a different environment to see soldiers with machine guns at local restaurants, for example, but not one where I felt threatened. -Maggie Sanders Lewis

There was no point that I felt unsafe. Occasionally, I would feel uneasy, but then remembered how great our professors were, how much experience they had with the area, and knew they would never put us in a dangerous situation.- Erin Blanton Metcalf

For more information go to: <http://webs.wofford.edu/mossre/israel.htm>