Brienna DiPietro

Participation Paper 2

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Semester Review

I’ve had an absolute blast throughout the semester reading about and discussing the late Second Temple Period. Learning the time line and reading the Maccabees and other historical writing was really amazing. It was a part of the Bible that I had never read before. Everything I knew about the history of Judaism revolved around my Paul class or was just very vague. Learning the history was not only fun, but also helped me to understand the context of the Old Testament that I did know and the New Testament’s intricacies.

In addition, reading so much pseudepigrapha and apocrypha gave me more of the same sort of context. It was also just really neat to read other perspectives floating around the region interacting with the texts of the Old Testament that I already knew. Reading so many ancient texts was also great when put with my Independent Study and Greek New Testament. I could put information from Philo’s Genesis interpretation into my own interpretation. I could use the language I’ve learned to better interact with the ancient texts.

My favorite part was probably learning about the Qumran sect. I didn’t really know anything about the people surrounding the Dead Sea Scrolls that I’d interacted with. They are so integral to my studies up to this point, but I hadn’t seen their authors at all. Once we started learning them it was also fun to explore a sect that was so specific and separated from the rest of the Jewish community.

I knew a decent amount about the day to day life of Jews in the time period already but learning about the sacrifices helped me understand the Old Testament concepts of sacrifice in the wilderness. The most valuable thing I did was probably interacting with the pseudepigrapha.