

DIPLOMA IN BIBLICAL GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Proposal and Motivations

The Word of God is the soul of Theology. In the context of increased focus on the study of the Bible, and the formation of Bible study groups and *lectio divina* groups in parishes and other settings, there is demand in the Church for trained animators and leaders.

On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims frequent the Holy Land each year, and there is a deep-felt need for trained spiritual leaders who can enlighten and make these pilgrimages true occasions of obtaining deep knowledge of the history of our salvation. While the Church has need of trained personnel for teaching the Scriptures, even fewer people are able to bring the knowledge of the geography and history of the Holy Land to enliven the study of the Word of God. The Holy Land with its history and geography forms the fifth gospel that throws much light especially on the understanding of the four Gospels and the Old and New Testaments.

Given the demand for experts who can provide a more tangible explanation of the Scriptures with the aid of the geography and history of the Holy Land, it is proposed that the Salesian Pontifical University's Faculty of Theology in the Jerusalem Campus offer a Graduate Diploma in Biblical geography and History. It will ensure an academic preparation for catechist, animators of Bible study groups, homilists, lecturers, and seminar speakers as a means of New Evangelization. It also serve to prepare qualified guides for pilgrimages. Well-trained personnel will be able to explain to the faithful, the *Sitz im Leben* of the Old and New Testaments, particularly that of the incarnation, passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the beginnings of the apostolic Church.

Formative Objectives

The Graduate Diploma envisages enabling and equipping animators of Bible study groups with the knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and the apostolic Church. To this basic understanding, the proposed Diploma will add in-depth appreciation of the history and geography of the Biblical events to stress the incarnational nature of the salvation brought by Jesus Christ. Specifically, the Diploma will equip the student with:

- Adequate knowledge of Inspiration and Canon of the Scriptures
- Proficiency in the Books of the Old Testament
- Proficiency in the Books of the New Testament
- Exegesis of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles
- Competence in the Biblical Languages (Greek or Hebrew)
- Experiential knowledge of the Biblical geography
- Expertise in Biblical history
- Didactical methods to lead Bible-study groups, seminars and workshops

Target Group

The Graduate Diploma is planned for students of the 1st cycle of Theology and for Religious and Lay leaders who plan to be catechists, leaders/animators of Bible study / *lectio divina* groups, and for pilgrim guides in the Holy Land.

Conditions for Admission

A three-year graduate degree.

Guest participants who do not have a formal degree but are interested could be admitted to the programme. These guest participants would not be awarded the Pontifical Diploma, but would be given a Certificate of Completion of Course by the Director of the programme.

The minimum number of participants for activating the Diploma course would be 10 and the maximum would be 50. The Candidates must submit an application in the time prescribed, together with certification of courses completed. They should present a recommendation from the Parish Priest or from the religious superior. A personal interview will precede admission.

Curriculum

The Diploma will include lectures, guided study with assignments, field trips and reports, conferences, workshops, and projects, adding up to 60 ECTS, equivalent to 1500 hours of work:

24 ECTS Lectures

4 ECTS Conferences

8 ECTS Workshops and Seminars

14 ECTS Guided Field Trips and Reports

5 ECTS Projects

5 ECTS Final Evaluation

The Director of the Diploma will study the possibility of recognizing credits acquired (up to a maximum of 25 ECTS) from recognized Theological Institutes or Institutes of Religious Studies.

Courses

The Diploma will have two modules of 18 ECTS each and a third module of 14 ECTS of guided field trips and reports, 5 ECTS of projects and 5 ECTS of final evaluation

1st Module = lectures + conferences + workshops and seminars

Biblical geography = 2 ECTS

Biblical history = 2 ECTS

Introduction to the Bible = 5 ECTS

Old Testament Books = 3 ECTS

Biblical Language (Greek or Hebrew) = 3 ECTS

History of the Church in the Middle East = 3 ECTS

2nd Module = lectures + conferences + workshops and seminars

Biblical geography = 2 ECTS

Biblical history = 2 ECTS

Biblical, Christian archaeology = 2 ECTS

Gospels and Acts = 3 ECTS

Pauline and Apostolic letters = 3 ECTS

Christology = 3 ECTS

Workshop on didactical methods of teaching Bible = 3 ECTS

3rd Module = 14 ECTS guided field trips and reports + 5 ECTS projects

Final evaluation = 5 ECTS

Duration and Attendance

For those with a graduate degree in Theology, the Diploma can be earned in one year, through a concentrated study programme.

For those who are pursuing a 1st cycle of Theology or do not have a graduate degree in Theology, the Diploma can be earned in a maximum of four years.

At least, two-thirds attendance is required in all courses. The courses will be offered during the 1st semester (September – December) and 2nd semester (February – May) at the Studium Theologicum Salesianum, the Jerusalem Campus of the Faculty of Theology of the Salesian Pontifical University, 26, Shmuel Hanagid, Jerusalem 9107202, Israel.

Guided field trips will be held once a month. These trips will cover the major biblical sites in the Holy Land. The projects will focus on a biblical cite in Jerusalem where the student will provide at least 20 hours of voluntary guide work and write a detailed report on the site.

Evaluation

The evaluation of module 1 and 2 will take place at the end of the semesters in December and May respectively. Module 3 will be evaluated in May. The final evaluation will be held after the evaluations of Module 2 and 3 in May, and will consist of a detailed description of the geography, history and archaeology of at least three biblical cites in the Holy Land (minimum 15 pages, maximum 25 pages).

Costs

The complete cost of the Diploma will be 500 Euros, plus cost of travels for field trips. Students of the Bachelor Degree programme can request a 40% discount.

Staff

Director: Rev. Dr. Gustavo Cavagnari (President of the STS)

Teaching Coordinator: Rev. Dr. Andrzej Toczyski

Scientific Commission: Rev. Dr. Gustavo Cavagnari, Rev. Dr. Andrzej Toczyski, Rev. Dr. Eric Wyckoff

Secretary: Rev. Sr. Angela Ridout (Registrar)

Teachers

Biblical geography = 4 ECTS	Joan Maria Vernet Piotr Zelazko
Biblical history = 4 ECTS	Lionel Goh
Biblical language (Greek or Hebrew) = 3 ECTS	Eric Wyckoff Roman Mazur
Biblical, Christian archaeology = 2 ECTS	Joan Maria Vernet Piotr Zelazko
Christology = 3 ECTS	William Russell
Gospels and Acts = 3 ECTS	Eric Wyckoff
Guided field trips and reports (14 ECTS)	Andrzej Toczyski Piotr Zelazko
History of the Church in the Middle East = 3 ECTS	Pier Giorgio Gianazza
Introduction to the Bible = 5 ECTS	Roman Mazur
Old Testament Books = 3 ECTS	Andrzej Toczyski David Neuhaus
Pauline and Apostolic letters = 3 ECTS	Eric Wyckoff
Projects (5 ECTS)	Andrzej Toczyski Gustavo Cavagnari
Workshop on didactical methods of teaching Bible = 3 ECTS	Andrzej Toczyski
Final Evaluation	Commission of 2 professors

Equivalent Course List

Diploma Courses			Baccalaureate Courses			
RA0151	Introduction to the Bible	5 ECTS	=	RA0101	Inspiration – Canon – Hermeneutics	5 ECTS
RA0152	Old Testament Books	3 ECTS	=	RA0103	Pentateuch and Historical Books	8 ECTS
RA0153	Biblical geography	4 ECTS	=	RA0104	Prophetic Books	5 ECTS
RA0251	Gospels and Acts	3 ECTS	=	RA0105	Wisdom Books and Psalms	5 ECTS
RA0252	Pauline and Apostolic Letters	3 ECTS	=	RA0102	Biblical Archaeology, History and Geography	5 ECTS
RA0253	Biblical language	3 ECTS	=	RA0201	Gospels and Acts	8 ECTS
RA0451	Christology	3 ECTS	=	RA0202	Pauline and Apostolic Letters	8 ECTS
				RA0250	Biblical Greek 1	5 ECTS
				RA0106	Biblical Hebrew 1	5 ECTS
				RA0402	Christology and Mariology	8 ECTS

Details of Project and Final Evaluation

Requirement	Student's Task
<i>Projects (5 ECTS)</i>	
20 hours of guiding time that the student has dedicated to groups (to be recorded on paper) and a detailed report on one chosen site in the Holy Land.	Student should: a) Certify the time given to guiding, with details of sites, dates of journey and group. b) Write a detailed scientific report (5-8 pages maximum) on a chosen site.
<i>Final Evaluation (5 ECTS)</i>	
Detailed description of the geography, history and archaeology of at least 3 biblical sites in the Holy Land	Student should: Choose 3 sites, write an assignment (scientific methodology), and hand over for evaluation. (Minimum 15 pages, maximum 25 pages – not counting the Bibliography and cover page.)

- The *Reports* (1 for Project and 3 for Final Evaluation) should be written under the guidance of the Teaching Coordinator of the Diploma or those delegated by him/her.
- *Documentation* on 20 hours of guiding is to be submitted to the Director of the Diplomas. The sample grid given on the next page could be used for the reporting.