TO: Prospective Trip Participants

FROM: Dr. Mitchell G. Reddish and Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland

SUBJECT: Travel Course to Egypt, Jordan, and Israel (RELS 268-95)

We appreciate your interest in the travel course to Egypt, Jordan, and Israel scheduled for December 27, 2012, to January 12, 2013. The itinerary and this memo should give you all the details you need to help you decide to join us for this educational adventure.

We are excited about this trip. We have planned it carefully, trying to include as much in the itinerary as possible. The focus of this travel course will be on the history, geography, and archaeology of part of the biblical world. Specifically, the trip will focus on religious and archaeological sites in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. We will visit sites that have been and continue to be important to three major religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is your chance to visit places that you have read and studied about over the years, such places as Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, Petra, the pyramids of Giza, and the Valley of the Kings and Queens. Participating in this course will be an unforgettable educational experience.

The price of $4788.00 for the trip includes all air and ground transportation, first-class hotel accommodations, daily breakfast and dinner, visas, and all taxes, fees, and sightseeing expenses. We have tried to include all expenses except for lunches and personal spending money. (Plan on about $300.00 for lunches, depending upon the size of your appetite!) This is an excellent price for all that it includes.

By successfully completing the travel course, which will involve also some follow-up class meetings during spring semester, you will earn a half unit of academic credit for the spring semester from the university. You may opt also to take a half-unit course during the latter part of the fall 2012 semester in preparation for the trip. Thus, by completing both the fall preparation and the travel portion of the course, you could earn a total of one unit (four credit hours) of academic credit. (The package cost for the trip includes a tuition fee of $140.00 for the half-unit credit for the travel portion of the course. For students who opt to participate in the trip without earning academic credit, the cost of the trip will be reduced by $140.00, resulting in a total trip price of $4648.00.)

We have taken students on travel courses several times in the last few years. These trips have always been extremely enjoyable and educational. Here are comments from some of the participants on previous trips:

“This was the greatest trip I have ever been on. I actually use everyday in some way the things I learned on this trip, unlike other trips I’ve taken!”

“I had a wonderful time and I found it to be a highly worthwhile experience. I’m glad I went.”

“I enjoyed the trip greatly and feel that the knowledge I obtained is invaluable for my overall educational experience. Plus, the social element of the trip allowed us to formulate new friendships and experience the different cultures.”

“Overall it was a great trip. It was the greatest experience of my life.”
“The countries we had a chance to visit have enhanced my own reading and understanding of the Bible. Everything was organized and there was no doubt as to what we were going to do each day. The price was unbelievably modest for such a trip. Definitely a great trip—students will not regret it!”

“This was a truly wonderful trip—one that provided graphic memories of places I had studied and read about for years.”

“The trip was fantastic, overwhelming, well planned, and was worth every hard climb, every photo, every long day, every sacred rock, and every hard laugh. We learned more in two weeks in our virtual textbook than we could have in an entire semester.”

Friends or family members of students, as well as other interested persons, are also eligible to participate in the trip. (The university charges an additional administrative fee of $150.00 for non-students. The tuition charge of $140.00, however, will not be assessed, resulting in a final trip cost of $4798.00.) Participation by non-students is limited to no more than one-third of the total number of participants. Non-Stetson students desiring course credit must enroll at Stetson and pay full tuition costs for a half-unit course (approximately $1400.00) in addition to the total cost of the trip. Registration packets are available in the Department of Religious Studies. Although the deadline for registration and payment of the $300.00 deposit is October 17, you should register as early as possible. Registration is on a first-come basis. Space on the trip is limited. Please make checks payable to Stetson University. The remainder of the trip costs is due by November 17, 2012. (Payment for the trip may be made by credit card; however, the university charges a 2.5% convenience fee for such credit card transactions. Check with Dr. Reddish for details.)

Travelers sometimes are interested in travel insurance that provides reimbursement for trip payment in certain situations when the person has to cancel the trip. We can provide further information about this optional type of insurance if you are interested. (The “Optional Travel Protection Program” mentioned on the back of the brochure is an example of this type insurance that is offered by the travel agency we use.)

Financial aid in the form of student loans is sometimes available to help pay expenses for travel courses. The availability of these loans varies with each student’s individual situation. If you are interested in exploring the possibility of a student loan, please check with Stetson’s Office of Financial Aid. In addition, the Department of Religious Studies has a limited number of Rinker Travel Scholarships (approximately $700.00 each) available for students who will be participating in travel courses. You may check with us for additional information on the Rinker scholarships. (Deadline for application for Rinker Scholarships is October 1.)

**If you are seriously considering participating in the trip and do not have a passport valid at least through July 2013, you should apply for one immediately.** Applications are not complete without a passport.

We hope you will decide to join us. You may register for the trip by mailing your registration forms and deposit to Dr. Reddish or by bringing them to his office (202 Allen Hall). If you have any questions about the trip, do not hesitate to contact either of us.

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