

Civilization And The Jews

A Course At UNLV

"There's a universal dimension to the history of the Jews which will be apparent to all," Dr. Vern Mattson observed about the upcoming public television series and UNLV class titled "Heritage: Civilization and the Jews."

Mattson, associate professor of history at UNLV, is enthusiastic about the one-credit course (HIS 490) planned around the television series and offered through the University's Division of Continuing Education. The course may also be taken for non-credit.

The television episodes will air on KLVX-TV from 9 to 10 p.m. Oct. 1 and 2, and thereafter on Mondays, Oct. 8-Nov. 19. The UNLV class meetings are set for Tuesday, Oct. 2 (6:30-8p.m.), and Oct. 16 and 30, and Nov. 13 and 27 (7-9 p.m.).

"This course is a winner," Mattson said. "It is timely in a lot of ways, and should be well-received."

The television series, which took five years and world-wide research and filming to produce, will move from the origins of the ancient Israelites to modern day Jerusalem and the "living legacy" of Judaism.

Mattson expects great interest in the class because popular interest in the history of religion has been growing for some years -- perhaps

because Americans are eager to discover their roots, and religious roots are central to the growth of this country.

Another factor is that Israel is such an important part of our national consciousness.

"Politically, Israel is our most important ally in the Middle East. She's a wonderful ally who takes care of herself, and is ideologically of one mind with us," Mattson said.

Mattson predicts lively discussion in the class, which will consist of people from different backgrounds, bringing a variety of experiences and opinions.

"We can't understand Western civilization without understanding the history of the ancient Jews as recorded in part in the Old Testament," Mattson explained.

Some major historical events to be included in the survey will be the story of the Jews escape from slavery in Egypt, Moses' reception of the law on Mt. Sinai, and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D., when militarism in the Middle East finally dispersed the Jews for the next 2,000 years. Finally, of course, the Holocaust and the creation of Israel will be discussed.

"There is not another people with so unique a history," Mattson said. "Who else has survived as a people for 2,000 years without a country, without a geography?"

Mattson will also serve as instructor for an extended travel-study program now in the planning stages at Continuing Education. The group will

visit Germany, Poland and Israel next summer, focusing on the Holocaust and the formation of Israel.

Part of the UNLV faculty since 1969, Mattson says he can trace his interest in the Jewish experience to his own intellectual and religious pilgrimage.

"I might have stopped identifying with the Christian tradition if I had't discovered its Jewish origins," he says.

Anyone interested in taking the class for credit or non-credit can call Continuing Education, 739-3394, for registration details. Senior citizens (62 and over) may register for non-credit for half price and for one academic credit at no charge. Credit registrants will have assigned readings and will be required to write a short paper.

Effective Family Living Conference At UNLV

The UNLV Division of Continuing Education, in cooperation with the Nevada Mothers Association of American Mothers, Inc., is sponsoring a special family-management conference in which speakers will present practical guidelines for parents, paraprofessionals, and social service practitioners.

Understanding and Participating in More Effective Family Living will be presented for the first time in Las Vegas on September 29.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Robert J. Doman, director of training and research at the National Academy for Child Development in Redlands, California. His talk will outline ways to evaluate children's learning abilities at various stages of development and identify hidden problems that could limit a child's potential. Doman will also present methods for accelerating children's skills, managing their behavior and creating a more positive environment in the home.

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