

21:510:286 Ancient Near East

Course Time: Thursdays 2:30pm – 5:20p.m.

Class Location: Hill Hall 104

Instructor: Dr. Clay M. Cofer

Office: Conklin 326

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30pm – 2:30pm, and by appointment

Email: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course addresses the history of the peoples of the Ancient Near East—primarily Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt and Anatolia—from their emergence in the Stone Age (ca. 10,000 BCE) down to the Hellenistic period (ca. 323 BCE). Ancient Near Eastern history certainly continues beyond this, but it melds with Greek and Roman history and is covered in Rutgers’ “Ancient Greek Civilization” and “Roman Civilization” courses. Special attention will be paid to the political and military history of these groups; social and cultural aspects of Near Eastern society (slavery, sexuality, ethnic identity, forms of government); and visual culture and archaeology.

Readings from ancient sources in translation include the Epic of Gilgamesh, Mesopotamian and Egyptian myths of creation, various law codes and legal documents, excerpts from the Hebrew bible, and selections from the Greek writer Herodotus. We shall also consult a large number of digital images throughout the course. Each week students will read some of this primary source material along with modern scholarship supplementing it (20 to 50 pages).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will learn to read primary sources closely and interpret visual images in order to analyze them in the historical context of their time. Students will also read texts critically, assessing how well they function as evidence, and which kinds of sources seem biased or more straightforward. Along with this critical reading, students will also regularly practice their analytical and writing skills in essay quizzes and exams, and will have many opportunities to express their ideas verbally in the class’s in-depth, in-class discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grades will be assigned as a percentage. My grade scale is as follows: A = 100% to 92%; B+ = 91% to 87%; B = 86% to 81%; C+ = 80% to 76%; C = 75% to 70%; D = 69% to 60%; F = 59% and below.

Six Essay Quizzes: 40%

Two Examinations: 50%

In Class Discussion: 10%

Extra-Credit Geography Quiz: special

1. There will be **eight essay quizzes**. They will target the ancient source reading material, and you will receive instructions about what to expect from them a week before each quiz. You may not make up the quizzes, but I shall drop the lowest two of the 8 grades you receive.

2. Students will take **two examinations**: a midterm and a final exam. They will consist of identifications (3 to 5 sentences on a person/place/date, etc.) and essays.

3. Either during or at the end of class, we shall set aside significant time for **discussion** of the material covered that day. There will also be several days in the semester devoted largely to the discussion of primary sources assigned for reading. I shall grade you on the frequency and quality of your participation in discussion for this aspect of your grade.

4. There will be an **extra-credit geography quiz** early in the semester. This optional quiz is intended to help you understand the history of the period better by making sure you know where the cities, regions, bodies of water, etc., are in the ancient Near Eastern world. Your quiz can potentially give you a higher score on the midterm examination. A score of 100% will give +4% on the exam, 90-99% will give +3%, 80-89% will give +2% and 70-79% will give +1%.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Since class attendance and participation is essential to this course—given that much of the material you will be responsible for will only come from lectures, visual presentations and in-class discussion—absences should be kept to an absolute minimum. Accordingly, the maximum number of unexcused absences allowed is one, beyond which there will be a grade penalty of -3% of the total grade for the course for each day past one. Excused absences must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. Rutgers recognizes the following circumstances as grounds for an excused absence: “illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions”

(http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_0608/pg23613.html). Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. There will also be a grade penalty for persistent lateness.

CLASS ETIQUETTE:

You are expected to act and behave in ways that are not disruptive to the class. With the exception of taking and or consulting notes during lectures and discussions, the use of computers, smart phones, iPads, tablets, smart watches, the internet (this includes social

media apps. like Facebook, Snapchat, etc.), cameras, video recorders, iPods, or any other mobile or computational devices in class is considered disruptive and is prohibited unless otherwise approved by me. Phones must be in silent mode throughout the duration of the class. Calls and text messages are only acceptable in emergency situations and must be done by stepping outside of the classroom. If I see you using such devices in a disruptive way during class, I will mark you as absent for the day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

You will follow the University's Policy on Academic Integrity, which falls under the Code of Student Conduct. **I strictly follow the University's rules regarding plagiarism and other academic irregularities.** Please consult me if you have any questions about what is and is not appropriate regarding the use of sources or citation. The policy of the University and the consequences of violating it are outlined here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>.

In addition, all students are required to sign the Rutgers Academic Integrity Pledge and the Rutgers Honor Pledge on each exam and major course assignment: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, requiring assistance and/or accommodation should speak with Disability Services in the Robeson Campus Center in a timely manner.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

- 1): William H. Stiebing Jr., *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture*, 2nd ed.
 BOOK: ISBN: 9780321422972 (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2008)
 eBOOK: ISBN: 9781315511177 (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2016)
 PURCHASE: The paperback version of this book will be available at the Campus Bookstore. Discounted copies can be found on www.textbooks.com. There is also an eBook version available for purchase online.
- 2): Readings on Blackboard

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

NOTE: Assigned readings are to be completed before the class under which they are listed.

PART I: THE STONE AGE THROUGH THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

September 8 (Week I):

Introduction to the Course; Introduction to the Ancient Near East

Reading: Stiebing 1-30

Handout: Study Aid for Extra-Credit Geography Quiz on Thursday September 15

September 15 (Week II):

Early Bronze Mesopotamia: the Emergence of Civilization

Extra Credit Geography Quiz

Reading: Stiebing 31-68

Blackboard Reading #1: Mesopotamian Myths of Creation

Blackboard Reading #2: Other Mesopotamian Myths

September 22 (Week III):

Kings and Empires: Sargon of Akkad, and the Epic of Gilgamesh

Quiz # 1

Reading: Stiebing 69-91

Blackboard Reading #3: Epic of Gilgamesh

September 29 (Week IV):

Middle Bronze Age Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant

Quiz # 2

Reading: Stiebing 92-116

Blackboard Reading #4: Laws of Eshnunna and the Code of Hammurabi

Blackboard Reading #5: Excerpt from Deuteronomy

October 6 (Week V):

The Time of the Pyramids: Egypt to the End of the Old Kingdom

Quiz # 3

Reading: Stiebing 117-149

Blackboard Reading #6: Egyptian Texts on Instruction and Wisdom

Blackboard Reading #7: Egyptian Myths of Creation and Other Myths

Blackboard Reading #8: Feder, "Science and Pseudo-Science; Epistemology: How you know what you know and the myth of the Moundbuilders"

October 13 (Week VI):

Middle Kingdom Egypt; Review for Midterm Examination

Quiz # 4

Reading: Stiebing 150-172

Blackboard Reading #9: Egyptian Curses, Oracles, and Prophecies

Blackboard Reading #10: The Hyksos

October 20 (Week VII): MIDTERM EXAMINATION

PART II: THE LATE BRONZE AND IRON AGES

October 27 (Week VIII):

New Kingdom Egypt

Reading: Stiebing 173-204

Blackboard Reading #11: Historic Documents of the Tuthmosids

Blackboard Reading #12: Amarna and the Hymn to the Aton

Blackboard Reading #13: Historic Documents of Ramses II

November 3 (Week IX):

The End of the Bronze Age in the Near East

Quiz # 5

Reading: Stiebing 205-233

Blackboard Reading #14: Hittite and Ugaritic Myths

Blackboard Reading #15: Accounts of Destruction and the Sea Peoples

November 10 (Week X):

Early Iron Age in the Near East

Quiz # 6

Reading: Stiebing 234-274

Blackboard Reading #16: Dothan, “The ‘Sea Peoples’ and the Philistines of ancient Palestine”

Blackboard Reading #17: Historic Documents of the Period

Blackboard Reading #18: Hebrew Bible: I Kings

November 17 (Week XI):

The Neo-Assyrian Empire

Reading: Stiebing 275-293

Blackboard Reading #19: Selections from Royal Annals of the Assyrian Kings

Blackboard Reading #20: Reade, “Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art”

Blackboard Reading #21: Siege of Lachish: Excerpts from the Hebrew Bible

Tuesday November 22 (Week XII):

The Neo-Babylonian Empire

Quiz # 7

Reading: Stiebing 294-311

Blackboard Reading #22: Historical Documents of the Neo-Babylonian Empire

Blackboard Reading #23: Babylonian Captivity: excerpts from the Hebrew Bible

December 1 (Week XIII):

The Achaemenid Persian Empire

Reading: Stiebing 312-345

Blackboard Reading #24: Rise of Cyrus: Herodotus I.95-216

Blackboard Reading #25: Prophecy: Book of Isaiah 40-55

Blackboard Reading #26: Inscription of Cyrus

December 8 (Week XIV):

The Legacy of the Ancient Near East; Review for Final Exam

Quiz # 8

Reading: Stiebing 346-352

Blackboard Reading #27: Watterson, "Ancient Egyptian Attitudes Toward Women"

Blackboard Reading #28: Winter, "Women in Public: The disk of Enheduanna, the beginning of the office of en-priestess, and the weight of the visual evidence"

Blackboard Reading #29: Kuhrt, "Ancient Mesopotamia in Classical Greek and Hellenistic thought"

December 15 (Week XV): Reading Day (NO CLASS)

FINAL EXAMINATION: Thursday December 22, 11:45pm – 2:45pm