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The Ancient Near East

Fall 2017

Meeting Time: Thursdays 2:30pm - 5:20pm

Class Location: Hill Hall 104

Final Exam: Dec 21st, 11:45-2:45

Instructor: Matthew Jameson

Office: Conklin Hall 326

Office Hours: Thursdays 12-2pm

Email:

Course Description

This course covers the history of the peoples of the Ancient Near East from the advent of agriculture in the Neolithic Period (ca. 10,000 BCE) to the conquests of Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic Period (323 BCE). The history of the Ancient Near East does not end at this point, but it melds with Greek and Roman History and is covered in Rutgers' "Ancient Greek Civilization" and "Roman Civilization" courses. We will focus primarily on the regions of Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, and Anatolia, but also include material from outside of the traditional historical narrative of the Near East, such as the Arabian Peninsula. Lectures, readings, and discussions will address the archaeology, visual-culture, political and military history, and social and cultural aspects (i.e. identity, trade, and social organization) of the people living in these regions. Special topics will also examine the methods scholars use to approach the study of the Ancient Near East.

Learning Outcomes/Goals

Students will learn to read and assess primary sources closely and interpret visual images in order to analyze them in the historical context of their time. Students will also gain an understanding of how historians, archaeologists, art historians, linguists, and other scholars bring evidence together to create the historical narrative of the Ancient Near East. Weekly reading responses and a term paper will allow students to regularly practice their analytical and writing skills, while the weekly discussions will provide opportunities for students to express their ideas verbally in the classroom.

Required Materials

1. William H. Steibing Jr., *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture*, 2nd ed.
 - a. BOOK ISBN: 9780321422972 (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2008)
 - b. eBOOK ISBN: 9781315511177 (Taylor & Francis/Routledge, 2016)
 - c. Purchase: The paperback version of this book will be available at the Campus Bookstore. Discounted copies can be found on www.textbooks.com or on Amazon.
2. Readings on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Grades will be assigned as a percentage using the following grade scale:

A = 100%-92%; B+ = 91%-87%; B = 86%-81%; C+ = 80%-76%; C = 75%-70%;
D = 69%-60%; F = 59% and below.

Attendance and Participation: 10%

It is crucial to attend every class possible (see attendance policy below). Time will be set aside every week for the discussion of material covered in the lectures and readings. This may be in the form of large or small group discussions. We will address questions from the reading responses at the beginning of class. I shall grade you on *both* the frequency and quality of your participation in discussion for this aspect of your grade.

Reading Responses: 30%

There will be *five reading responses* based on the assigned readings for that week's class. These are listed in the weekly schedule below and will come primarily from the non-text book readings. They will ask you to summarize what you have read and provide two to three questions you have after reading the material. They will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis depending on whether it is clear you have done the reading.

Two Examinations: 40%

Students will take *two examinations: a midterm and a final exam*. They will consist of slide IDs (3-5 sentences for each slide), term IDs (3-5 sentences for each term), short answer questions, and essay questions. The final will not be cumulative but will cover the material after the midterm. Each of these exams is worth 20% of your grade.

Paper: 20%

Students will write a *4-5 page* formal description paper on a monument/site/object covered in the course. The topic must be chosen by **October 12th** from an approved list (students will also be given the option to submit a topic of their choice). The final paper is due the last day of class: **December 7th**.

Extra Credit Geography Quiz

An extra credit geography quiz will be distributed on **September 14th**. The breakdown is as follows: 91-100 = 5% increase on midterm; 81-90% = 4%

increase on midterm; 71-80% = 3% increase on midterm; 61-70 = 2% increase on midterm; 51-60% = 1% increase on midterm; below 50% = no extra credit.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance and participation are two essential components to your grade, and much of the material you will be responsible for on the midterm and the final will only come from lectures, slides, and in-class discussions. This means that absences should be kept to a minimum. Because this class meets a limited number of times - only once a week - the maximum number of unexcused absences is one, beyond which there will be a grade penalty of -3% of the total grade for the course. 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 religion 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 though any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdrawal to avoid getting an F.

Class Etiquette

As mentioned above, this class meets only once a week, so it is crucial that you are on time and come prepared. *Persistent lateness will be taken into account in your participation grade.* You are expected to act and behave in ways that are not disruptive to the class. Computers, tablets, and other mobile computational devices are allowed for taking notes during class but should not be used for any other purposes, as it is disruptive and takes away from your learning experience. 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 notice you using such devices in a disruptive manner I will pull you aside and talk to you after class as a first warning. If this becomes a persistent issue it will affect your participation grade.

Academic Integrity

You will be expected to follow the University of Rutgers' 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 etiquette. We will be covering some of this in a lecture on citing academic sources. 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 (i.e. the Midterm, Final, and Paper):

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment.”

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or contact odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Weekly Schedule

Assigned readings are to be completed before the class for which they are listed

September 7 (Week I)

Introduction to Course; Introduction to the Ancient Near East: Geography and Environment; Early Farmers; Archaeology and Chronologies

Reading: Steibing 1-30

Blackboard Reading #1: Ashmore 2010, “Introduction to Archaeology”

September 14 (Week II)

*****EXTRA CREDIT GEOGRAPHY QUIZ*****

Agriculture and Urbanism: The Early Cities in Southern Mesopotamia; Early Bronze Age Anatolia and the Levant

Reading: Steibing 31-68

Blackboard Reading #2: Flannery and Marcus 2012, *The Creation of Inequality*, “The Nursery of Civilization”

September 21 (Week III)

The Early Empires in Southern Mesopotamia: Sargon of Akkad and the Third Dynasty of Ur; Trade in the Persian Gulf

Reading: Steibing 69-91

Blackboard Reading #3: Epic of Gilgamesh

Blackboard Reading #4: Crawford 2005, "Mesopotamia and the Gulf: the History of a Relationship"

Assignment: Reading Response 1

September 28 (Week IV)

Middle Bronze Age Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the Levant; Bronze Age Arabia

Reading: Steibing 92-116

Blackboard Reading #5: Code of Hammurabi

Blackboard Reading #6: Excerpt from Deuteronomy

October 5 (Week V)

Egypt to the End of the Old Kingdom Egypt: Pyramids and Pharaohs

Reading: Steibing 117-149

Blackboard Reading #7: Feder 2006, "Science and Pseudoscience; Epistemology: How You Know What You Know; The Myth of the Moundbuilders"

Assignment: Reading Response 2

October 12 (Week VI)

Middle Kingdom Egypt; Writing a Formal Description: How To Do It; Review for Midterm Examination

Reading: Steibing 150-172

Blackboard Reading #8: The Hyksos

Assignment: Choose Paper Topic

October 19 (Week VII)

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

October 26 (Week VIII)

New Kingdom Egypt; Late Bronze Age Internationalism; The Uluburun Shipwreck

Reading: Steibing 173-204

Blackboard Reading #9: Selections from the Amarna Letters

Blackboard Reading #10: Pulak 1998, "The Uluburun Shipwreck: An Overview"

November 2 (Week IX)

Collapse of the System: The End of the Bronze Age in the Near East

Reading: Steibing 205-233

Blackboard Reading #11: Various Accounts of Destruction/Collapse
Assignment: Reading Response 3

November 9 (Week X)

The Early Iron Age in the Near East: Anatolia, the Levant, and Arabia

Reading: Steibing 234-274

Blackboard Reading #12: Story of Wenamun

Blackboard Reading #13: Hebrew Bible: I Kings

November 16 (Week XI)

The Neo-Assyrian Empire; The Art Historical Approach

Reading: Steibing 275-293

Blackboard Reading #14: Selections from Royal Annals of the Assyrian Kings

Blackboard Reading #15: Reade 1979, "Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art"

Blackboard Reading #16: Emberling 2014, "Ethnicity in Empire: Assyrians and Others"

Assignment: Reading Response 4

November 21 (Week XII)

The Neo-Babylonian Empire; Formal Description Workshop

Reading: Steibing 294-311

Blackboard Reading #17: Historical Documents of the Neo-Babylonian Empire

Blackboard Reading #18: Morales 2013, "Comparing Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia: Cosmos, Politics, Landscape"

November 30 (Week XIII)

The Achaemenid Persian Empire; Historical Sources and Issues of Bias

Reading: Steibing 312-345

Blackboard Reading #19: Rise of Cyrus: Herodotus I.95-216

Blackboard Reading #20: Inscription of Cyrus

Assignment: Reading Response 5

December 7 (Week XIV)

Alexander's Conquest; The Near East after Alexander; Review for Final Exam

Reading: Steibing 346-352

Blackboard Reading #21: Kuhrt, 1995 "Ancient Mesopotamia in Classical Greek and Hellenistic Thought"

Assignment: Final Paper Due

December 14 (Week XI)

READING DAY: NO CLASS

FINAL EXAM: December 21st, 11:45-2:45pm