

## HISTORY 211: THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

Prof. Ariel López

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45  
Palmer Hall 205

E-mail: [lopeza@rhodes.edu](mailto:lopeza@rhodes.edu)

Office: 407 Halliburton

Office hours: Tuesdays from 11am – 1pm

This course will explore the three most distinctive civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean and their interactions with each other: Pharaonic Egypt, Classical Greece and the Roman Empire. Major themes to be discussed include, for example, the rise of the Roman Empire, the attitude of ancient Egyptians towards the dead, the economic and social structures of Greek city states, the cult of Isis or the hieroglyphic writing system. Major characters will include, for example, the emperor Augustus, Pericles of Athens or the “heretic” pharaoh Akhenaton.

### GENERAL POLICIES:

This class will consist of lectures and discussions. Attendance is mandatory. I allow three unexcused absences for the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the decrease of three whole points from your overall grade. Laptops are not permitted in class unless you have a special dispensation from the college.

I expect you to come to class having read the assigned readings so that we can discuss them, you can ask meaningful questions and answer mine. There will be frequent surprise quizzes to test your readings.

### GRADING:

Your course grade will be calculated as follows (A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-88; B = 87-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-78; C = 77-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-68; D = 67-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 and below):

15% participation and attendance

25% midterm exam

30% final exam

30% final paper (assignments to be given later in the semester)

Both exams will include map quizzes

### ASSIGNED TEXTS:

The main textbook for the course is available in the bookstore:

Charles Freeman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. *Egypt, Greece and Rome*. Oxford University Press. 2004.

Many other readings will be distributed by e-mail, photocopies or posted online in Moodle.

### CALENDAR:

1. Aug. 25: **Introduction to the course**

2. Aug. 30: Egypt 1 – **The rise of civilization in the Ancient Near East**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 2: “The civilizations of the ancient Near East”

3. Sept. 1: Egypt 2 – **Egypt in the Ancient Near East**

Readings: ● \*Hymn to Hapi  
● \*The Story of Sinuhe  
● \*Instruction of Merikare

4. Sept. 6: Egypt 3 – **The Old and Middle Kingdom**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 3: “Egypt, the Gift of the Nile”  
● \*Boundary Stela of Sesostris III  
● \*Autobiographies of Weni and Harkhuf

5. Sept. 8: Egypt 4 – **The Egyptian Empire: the New Kingdom**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 4: “Egypt as an imperial power, 1500-1000 BC” and  
● Interlude One: “The Amarna Letters”  
● \*Annals of Thutmose III + \*The Battle of Qadesh

6. Sept. 13: Egypt 5 – **Egyptian Religion and the Amarna revolution**

Readings: ● \*Great Hymn to Osiris  
● \*Great Hymn to Aten  
● \*New Kingdom prayers (pp. 104-114)

7. Sept. 15: Egypt 6 – **The living and the dead**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 5: “Daily Life in New Kingdom Egypt”  
● \*The prayers of Paheri  
● \*Spell from coffin texts  
● \*The book of the dead: selections  
● \*Three harpers’ songs  
● \*Harper’s song from tomb of Neferhotep

8. Sept. 20: Egypt 7– **Scribes and Hieroglyphics: an introduction**

Readings: ● \*The Instruction of Amenemope

- \*Papyrus Lansing: A schoolbook
- \*The immortality of writers
- \*The Satire of treads

9. Sept. 22: Egypt 8 – **The Iron age crisis**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 6: “The Ancient Near East, 1200-500 BC” and chapter 7: “The Setting for Mediterranean Civilization”
  - \*Herodotus on the Circumnavigation of Africa
  - \*Voyage of Hanno

10. Sept. 27: Greece 1: **The dark ages and the rise of the polis**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 9: “The Greeks in a Wider World, 800-600 BC” and chapter 10: “Hoplites and Tyrants: The Emergence of the City State”

11. Sept. 29: Greece 2: **The Persian wars**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 11: “Cultural change in the Archaic Age” and chapter 12: “The Persian wars”
  - \*Herodotus on the Persian Empire
  - \*Inscription of Udjahorresne

12. Oct. 4: Greece 3: **Classical Greece: Culture and society**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 13: “Everyday life in classical Greece” and chapter 14: “Religion in the Greek World”

13. Oct. 6: Greece 4: **The Athenian empire: Society and economy**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 15: “Athens: Democracy and Empire”
  - \*Lysias, Selections

14. Oct. 11: **Review session for midterm exam**

15. Oct. 13: **MIDTERM EXAM**

16. Oct. 20: Greece 5: **The Peloponnesian war**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 16: “From Aeschylus to Aristotle” and chapter 7: “The struggle for power, 431-338 BC”
  - \*Thucydides, On the causes of the Persian war

17. Oct. 25: Greece 6: **Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic world**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 18: “Alexander of Macedon and the Expansion of the Greek World”
  - \*Selections from Plutarch, Life of Alexander

18. Oct. 27: Greece 7: **The Hellenistic World**

- Readings:
- Freeman, chapter 19: “The Hellenistic World” and Interlude Four: Celts and Parthians.

- \*The Rosetta Stone

19. Nov. 1: Rome 1: **The Roman Republic and its expansion**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 20: “The Etruscans and Early Rome” and chapter 21: “Rome becomes a Mediterranean Power”

20. Nov. 3: Rome 2: **The emergence of the Roman Empire and the crisis of the Republic**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 22: “From the Gracchi to Caesar, 133-55 BC” and chapter 23: “The Fall of the Roman Republic”

21. Nov. 8: Rome 3: **Augustus and the Roman Empire**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 24: “Augustus and the Founding of Empire” and chapter 25: “Consolidating the Empire, AD 14-138”  
● \**Res Gestae*

22. Nov. 10: Rome 4: **The Army and the Administration of the Empire**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 26: “Administering and Defending the Empire” and Interlude Seven: “The Romans as Builders”

23. Nov. 15: Rome 5: **Rome and Italy: the center of the empire**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 25: “Consolidating the Empire, AD 14-138”  
● \*Juvenal, Satire nr. 3  
● \*Pliny, On his Laurentine villa

24. Nov. 17: Rome 6: **One day in Pompeii**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 27: “Social and Economic Life in the Empire”  
● \*Pliny the Younger, On the Vesuvius eruption

25. Nov. 29: Rome 7: **Palestine in Roman times and rise of Christianity**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 29: “The foundations of Christianity”  
● \*Fl. Josephus, On late Judaism and Jesus

26. Dec. 1: Rome 8: **The third century crisis**

Readings: ● Freeman, chapter 28: “Transformations: The Roman Empire, 138-313”  
● \*Cassius Dio, Book 78 on Caracalla

27. Dec. 6: **Review session for final exam**