

## History 205: The Ancient Mediterranean

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Fall 2009 (10723)

MWF 9-10, Palmer 205

### Overview

This course is an introductory survey of the history of the ancient Mediterranean from ca. 3000 B.C. to ca. A.D. 500 that focuses on the great civilizations of the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. This is a fascinating region to study because of the diversity of the civilizations that emerged and developed in a relatively small geographic expanse. Each had its distinctive character, and yet vigorous cultural exchanges within the area (and beyond) led to the assimilation, adaptation, and sometimes even rejection by one culture of the ideas and practices of another. In particular, we will pay close attention to the rise and fall of empires, which were the predominant form of political organization in the ancient world and contributed significantly to this phenomenon of cultural assimilation and resistance. In order to track these interactions and examine their consequences for the historical development of Mediterranean civilizations, we will examine a rich variety of evidence, which historians use to interpret the civilizations of this region, such as literary texts, inscribed documents, coins, art, and architecture.

### Goals

This course aims to achieve three objectives:

- To give students a comprehensive survey of Mediterranean history from ca. 3000 B.C. to ca. A.D. 500, highlighting some of the major political, social, and cultural developments.
- To teach students the “historian’s craft,” that is, the method of critically evaluating primary historical sources in order to understand better the period in question and to appreciate its complexities. The course thus seeks to turn students into budding historians.
- To inspire students to engage in comparative historical analysis with the hope that they make valuable connections between Athenian history and our own.

### Course Requirements

**Attendance and Participation.** It goes without saying that your success in this course depends greatly on your attendance in class. But let me underscore three specific reasons why. First, during lecture you get to see me, a trained real-life historian, working through the sources in a critical way. Class time therefore affords the student the opportunity to have the skills required to succeed in this course “modeled” for you. Second, I will often employ ancient terms and concepts (transliterated into English) in lecture that are not found in the

course readings. I expect students to know these and use them in their papers and exams. Lastly, I expect *all* students to participate in class, which is to say, to ask good questions, make insightful comments, and even challenge me, the professor, about interpretations given in class. In general, Friday classes will be devoted solely to class discussion. Consequently, **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY!** Every unexcused absence will result in a decrease of one whole letter grade from your participation grade (i.e., one unexcused absence = B; two unexcused absences = C, three = D; four = F [zero]). **N.B.** Excused absences entail providing documentation of a prior commitment (e.g., jury duty) or personal or family emergency (e.g., illness). Such absences are subject to the instructor's approval. Chronic tardiness will not be tolerated.

There will also be two short map quizzes on Friday, **September 11** and Friday, **October 30**, which will be factored into your participation grade. The former will be based on the maps in *The Ancient World* pp. 2, 80; the latter on the maps pp. 195, 213.

**Papers.** You are required to write five (5), one-page source analysis essays on (at least) one of the primary source readings to be discussed during our Friday discussions (September 4, 18, 25, October 2, 9, 23, November 6, 13, 20, and December 4). There are two stipulations: you must 1) write an essay for September 4; and 2) have no more than two essays for a given culture. For a fuller description of these assignments, see document "Papers" on the Academic Server.

**Exams.** There will be two exams during the semester, a midterm and final. Both exams will have the same format, consisting of two parts: 1) identifications (persons, places, dates, concepts, sources, etc.) (5 of 8); and 2) essay (1 of 2). The final exam is not cumulative; it will cover course material beginning from the midterm exam.

## 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):

- 20% Participation (including two map quizzes)
- 20% Source Analysis Essays (for dates, see above)
- 30% Midterm (Friday October 16th)
- 30% Final (Wednesday December 16th)

Late papers will be accepted but at a loss of 1/3 letter grade for each day late (e.g., B+ becomes a B, then a B- and so on). I do not allow rewrites.

## Tips for succeeding in this course

As mentioned above, I am a stickler for coming to class regularly and with a willingness to participate. Accordingly, you must be well prepared, which means coming to class not only having completed the day's reading but also having read them carefully and critically (for more

on this, please see the document, “Source Analysis: An Introduction”). Please take copious reading notes with your thoughts, comments, and questions. These will help you participate and will improve the overall experience of the class for you and your classmates. Also, you are strongly advised to bring your texts to class, as I will frequently draw your attention to certain passages of importance. I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss reading strategies, concepts, issues raised in class, etc. A positive attitude goes a long way. In the past, all those who showed an interest and a desire to master the course material have fared well in my courses.

## **Texts**

Nagle, Brendan. *The Ancient World: A Social and Cultural History*. (Prentice Hall, 7th ed.)  
Nagle, Brendan and Burstein, Stanley. *The Ancient World: Readings in Social and Cultural History* (Prentice Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.)

## **Schedule**<sup>\*\*</sup>

- Week 1** August 26 (W): Introduction  
August 28 (F): Mesopotamia I (AW 1-16); Sumerian King List †; “Source Analysis: An Introduction” †
- Week 2** August 31 (M): Mesopotamia II (AW 26-32)  
September 2 (W): Egypt I: Old and Middle Kingdoms (AW 16-25)  
September 4 (F): *Readings* 1.1-4; 2.5.1-2; 2.8.1-2; *Enuma Elish* †; Selection from *Epic of Gilgamesh* †
- Week 3** September 7 (M): LABOR DAY: NO CLASS  
September 9 (W): Egypt II: The New Kingdom (AW 32-40)  
September 11 (F): *Readings* 1.9-10.2; 2.1-2; 2.5.3; 2.8.3; Selection of letters from Egypt †
- Week 4** September 14 (M): Middle East I: Israel and Assyria (AW 41-52, 58-66)  
September 16 (W): Middle East II: Persia (AW 52-8)  
September 18 (F): *Readings* 1.5-8; 2.3-4; 2.5.4-7; 2.6; 2.7; 2.8.5; Selection of Persian and Assyrian documents †
- Week 5** September 21 (M): Emergence of Greek Civilization (AW 67-83)  
September 23 (W): Archaic Greece: Early Sparta and Athens (AW 83-102)  
September 25 (F): *Readings* 4.1-6; 5.1-6; 6.1-5
- Week 6** September 28 (M): The Persian Wars (AW 103-8)  
September 30 (W): Athenian Empire (AW 108-13)  
October 2 (F): *Readings* 8.1-6; *Athenian Imperial Inscriptions* †
- Week 7** October 5 (M): Athenian Democracy (AW 138-55)

- October 7 (W): Peloponnesian War (AW 113-16)  
 October 9 (F): *Readings* 8.7-12; Selections from Thucydides' *History* †
- Week 8** October 12 (M): Athenian Culture (AW 120-38; *Readings* 7.1-8)  
 October 14 (W): Greece in the Fourth Century (AW 116-19, 156-9; *Readings* 9.1-4)  
 October 16 (F): **MIDTERM EXAM**
- Week 9** October 19 (M): FALL RECESS: NO CLASS  
 October 21 (W): Hellenistic World I: Alexander (AW 161-64)  
 October 23 (F): *Readings* 10.1.1-2; Selections Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* †;  
 Aristotle's Letters to Alexander †
- Week 10** October 26 (M): Hellenistic World II: Hellenistic Society and Culture (AW 165-93)  
 October 28 (W): Early Rome (AW 194-210)  
 October 30 (F): *Readings* 9.5.1-2; 10.2-10.5.9; Introduction to 1 Maccabees, NOAB pp. 201-202; 1 Maccabees 1-4; Introduction to 2 Maccabees pp. 245-4; 2 Maccabees 5-7; Selection of Hellenistic royal documents †
- Week 11** November 2 (M): Republican Rome I: Building of an Empire (AW 211-26)  
 November 4 (W): Republican Rome II: Society and State (AW 226-40)  
 November 6 (F): *Readings* 11.1-4; 12.1.1-12.7; 13.1-8
- Week 12** November 9 (M): Republican Rome III: Transformation (AW 241-53)  
 November 11 (W): Republican Rome IV: Fall of the Republic (AW 253-67)  
 November 13 (F): *Readings* 14.1-5; Selections Sallust, *Conspiracy of Catiline* †
- Week 13** November 16 (M): Roman Empire I: Augustus (AW 268-72)  
 November 18 (W): Roman Empire II: Julio-Claudians to the Severans (AW 273-81)  
 November 20 (F): *Readings* 14.6-8; Augustus, *Res Gestae* and selections from Tacitus' *Annals* †
- Week 14** November 23 (M): Roman Empire III: Roman Peace (AW 282-308; *Readings* 15.1-9)  
 November 25 (W): THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS  
 November 27 (F): THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS
- Week 15** November 30 (M): Roman Empire IV: Rise of Christianity (Trajan-Pliny Correspondence and TBA†)  
 December 2 (W): Roman Empire V: Crisis (AW 309-24)  
 December 4 (F): *Readings* 16.1-16.9.2; 17.1-17.4.9
- Week 16** December 7 (M): Roman Empire VI: Transformation (AW 325-47)  
 December 9 (W): Conclusions (*Readings* 18.1-7)

\*\* Schedule subject to change

† Readings found on Academic Server, under Prof. Jansen's name (Ancient Mediterranean)