

The History of the Ancient Near East

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Course Description

This course surveys the history of the Near East from the dawn of civilization around 3000 BCE to the fall of the Sassanid empire to the Arabs in 650 CE. In the interest of avoiding confusion, it is organized into a roughly chronological sequence of cultural area studies, so that the Bronze Age civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, for example, are treated separately and in the first half of the course, while the Iron Age civilizations of the Assyrians and Persians will be examined in the second. The course adopts a broad focus, treating politics as simply another area of culture and including religion, social structure, and everyday life as a part of its content.

Classroom Requirements

1. Students are required to attend **ALL** meetings of the class and to do **ALL** of the assigned readings. Excessive absences will lower your course grade. Read "Attendance Policy" below for further information.
2. **NO TEXTING DURING CLASS !!!**
3. **NO LAPTOPS !!!**
4. No reading newspapers, magazines, or books during lectures.
5. Save your conversations for after class,
6. Honesty is fundamental to learning. Cheating on any test will be punished with an automatic grade of "F" for the entire course.
7. Any efforts to disrupt the class will be reported both to the Dean of Students and to the UNI Campus Police.

Attendance Policy

Under “Class Attendance”, page 60 of the 2010-2012 UNI catalog states:

“Students are expected to attend class, and the responsibility for attending class rests with the student.

“Students are expected to learn and observe the attendance rules established by each instructor for each course.”

My attendance rules for this class are as follows:

Unexcused Absences:

- After the add deadline, you are allowed **SIX** free, or unexcused, absences.
- Beginning with your seventh absence, each successive absence will reduce your **end-of-the-semester** average by **FIVE** points.
- If you skip class on the Friday immediately before Spring Break, you will be penalized **THREE** absences.

Excused Absences:

- Under the terms of the UNI Catalog, absences due to official activities of University athletic and academic organizations may not be counted against a student. This rule does **NOT** apply to social and religious groups affiliated with the University. If you are on a University athletic team or participate in a University academic organization and must be absent, bring me a formal letter stating the reason for your absence, signed by the University official in charge of the activity.
- I will also excuse absences due to the following non-University causes:
 - actual, physical, hospitalization
 - call-up for military duty
 - court duty, including
 - jury duty
 - appearance as a witness
 - appearance as a plaintiff
 - appearance as a defendant
 - as with excused University activities, you must give me documentary proof of the reason for your absence.
- No other absences, including those for personal or family emergencies, will count as excused absences, so you should save up your absences in case of such emergencies.
- I will post your **TOTAL** number of unexcused absences along with the scores on each test. Consult the posting to see what the tally of your absences is.

Tests and Make-Up Tests

Tests and Study Guides:

- There will be three tests. Consult the Weekly Assignment Schedule for the test dates. Each test will consist of twenty-five multiple-choice questions, drawn from the lectures and the textbook. Each question will be worth two points. There will also be an essay question on each test, which will be worth fifty points.
- Each test will receive a numerical score; at the end of the course I will average those scores together with the grades on your writing assignment(s). The grading scale I will use can be found separately on this website.
- Study guides for each test can be found on this website. There will be no questions on any test that are not derived from material included on the study guides.
- I do not give pop quizzes.

Make-Up Tests:

- If for any reason you cannot take a test on the day indicated on the Course Schedule attached to this syllabus, you may take a make-up. I will give all make-up tests at the end of the semester, on the date indicated on the Weekly Assignment Schedule.

Incompletes:

- I do not grant incompletes except in cases of call-up for active military duty or when a student is admitted to a hospital, or disabled, as a result of injury or illness, and consequently is unable to finish the course. In both cases, I must require documentary proof before granting the incomplete.

Extra-Credit Work:

- I do not give extra-credit work.

Term Papers (Undergraduate)

You are to write a term paper exploring a topic from the list below. The term paper counts one-quarter of your course grade.

Formatting Requirements

Your paper must comprise not less than ten FULL double-spaced pages of text in 12-point Arial, Times Roman, or comparable font.

Margins are not to exceed 1¼ inches to the right and left, and one inch top and bottom.

The paper must include a separate title page at the beginning and separate single-spaced bibliography page listing all the sources you consulted (not just quoted) at the end. Notes referring to pages in your sources may be intra-textual, but any explanatory notes must be included on a separate endnotes page.

All pages are to be numbered.

Each deviation from these formatting requirements will cost ten points off the paper's grade.

Research Requirements

Consult the Rod, University of Iowa, and Iowa State catalogs to find books and academic journals that address your topic. I also encourage you to explore on-line bibliographic resources such as JSTOR.

I expect students to use the academic, not the popular, literature. That is, it is best to focus on articles published in professional academic journals and in books published by university presses, not in mass-circulation magazines and commercial publishing houses. The quality of the sources you used will be reflected in your paper's grade.

The more recently a book or article was published, the better it reflects the current state of scholarship. At all costs avoid relying on scholarship that is old. Old is moldy.

As a general rule, I expect one bibliographic source per page of text, thus a minimum of ten bibliographic sources for your paper. More is better.

If you give me a paper that appears to have been thrown together from books on the Rod Library shelves during the three or four days before the due date, that will be reflected in your grade.

Writing Requirements

I expect your papers to be written in clear, competent English. That's why I assign Strunk & White and Gucker as required texts. Poorly written papers will receive low grades. If you have doubts about your writing, avail yourself of the UNI Writing Center's services.

Always proofread your paper before you submit it.

Due Date and Manner of Submission

The paper is due on the day indicated on the Weekly Assignment Schedule. *It is to be submitted electronically ONLY*, as an email attachment in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text (.rtf) format, sent to robert.dise@uni.edu. If you submit your essay late, it will be *penalized a full letter grade for each class day that it is late, starting at the end of class on the due date.*

IMPORTANT:

Read the document “Writing Errors to Avoid” on my website (www.uni.edu/dise), and avoid those errors. Remember: **each time** you commit one of them, it will cost you **five points** off of the grade given your essay.

REMEMBER: BAD GRAMMAR WILL LOWER YOUR GRADE.

Use Strunk & White and Gucker as your writing Bibles.

Paper Topics

You are to select a topic from the following list:

1. A Comparison of the Origins of Egyptian Civilization and the Origins of Mesopotamian Civilization
2. The Origin of the Sumerians
3. The City-States of Sumeria
4. The Relationship Between Religion and Government in Sumeria
5. Sargon the Great and the Akkadian Empire
6. The Empire of Hammurabi
7. Hammurabi's Law Code
8. The Rise of Hatti (the Hittite Empire)
9. New Kingdom Hatti
10. Hittite Religion
11. Hittite-Egyptian Relations
12. The Battle of Kadesh
13. The Fall of Hatti
14. Kassite Babylonia
15. The Hurrian Kingdom of Mitanni
16. The Near-Eastern Balance of Power in the 2nd Millennium BCE (the "Club of the Great Powers")
17. The Rise of Assyria
18. The Assyrian Military Machine
19. Deportation in the Ancient Near East
20. The Neo-Assyrian Empire
21. Assyrian Religion
22. The Fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire
23. The Neo-Babylonian (or "Chaldean") Empire
24. The Medes
25. Cyrus the Great
26. Persian Imperial Administration
27. The Persian Army
28. Persian Religion
29. The Parthian Empire
30. The Sassanid Empire
31. Pre-Dynastic Egypt
32. The Construction of Pyramids
33. Old Kingdom Egypt
34. Middle Kingdom Egypt
35. The Role of Religion in Egyptian Life
36. The Hyksos
37. The Empire of New Kingdom Egypt
38. Relations Between Priests and Kings in Egypt
39. Hatshepsut
40. The Policy of Thutmose III

41. The Army of Egypt
42. Akhenaten's Religious Revolution
43. The Policy of Ramses II
44. The Collapse of New Kingdom Egypt
45. Egypt in the Third Intermediate Period
46. Egypt and Persia
47. Phoenician Colonization
48. The Government of Carthage and Its Empire
49. The Carthaginian Army and Navy
50. Carthaginian Religion

Graduate Student Requirements

Tests

Graduate Students will take the same tests as the undergraduates enrolled in the course.

Graduate Student Research Paper

Formatting Requirements and Penalties

In addition, graduate students will write a research paper, not less than **twenty (20) full pages** in length, **counting text alone**. Papers are to be double-spaced, with 1¼-inch side margins and 1-inch margins top and bottom. Their pages must be numbered. Endnotes are to be used rather than footnotes, and a separate bibliography page is to be included, both of them single-spaced. Each failure to conform to one of these requirements will cost **ten (10) points** off of the paper's grade.

Research Paper Contents and Due Dates

If at all possible, graduate students' papers should advance a thesis. If you have questions about how to that, discuss them with me. Graduate papers are expected to be grounded in the primary ancient sources, in translation, and in the scholarly journal literature. **Paper topics are to be decided in consultation with me not later than the third Monday of the semester.** Papers are due in class on the date indicated on the weekly lecture and assignments schedule for the undergraduate term papers. Papers are to be submitted electronically, as an email attachment in MS Word format (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). Failure to submit an electronic copy will result in a **20-point penalty**.

Incompletes are available, at my discretion, for just cause.

Graduate papers are expected to be well written and free of the errors listed in **Writing Errors to Avoid**. Each error will cost **ten (10) points** off the grade given the paper. I will also deduct points for poor grammar and organization.

The paper will count one-half of the semester grade.

Attendance

Graduate students receive six (6) free absences after the add deadline. They will be penalized **five** points off of their end-of-semester average for each absence above six.

Textbooks

Dunstan, William E., *The Ancient Near East* (Thomson/Wadsworth: 1998).

Gucker, Philip, *Essential English Grammar* (Dover: 1966) ISBN: 0-486-21649-7

Strunk, W. & White, E.B., *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed., (Allyn & Bacon: 2000) ISBN: 0-205-30902-X

**Weekly Schedule
Spring 2011**

(all dates except that of the final examination/test are subject to change)

Week of:	SUBJECTS	READING ASSIGNMENTS
January 10	The Syllabus The Neolithic Revolution	Dunstan: chapters 1 & 2
January 17	MLK DAY: NO CLASS	
January 19	Early Bronze Age Mesopotamia: 3000-1500 BCE	Dunstan: chapters 3 & 5
January 24	Mesopotamian Culture and Religion	Dunstan: chapter 4
January 31	Predynastic and Old Kingdom Egypt	Dunstan: chapter 6
February 7	Middle and New Kingdom Egypt	Dunstan: chapter 7
February 14	FIRST EXAMINATION (the Neolithic Revolution, Mesopotamia, and Egypt)	
February 16	The Hittites Philistines and Phoenicians	Dunstan: chapters 8 and 9
February 21	The Hebrews: Sources and Early Legends to the Exodus	Dunstan: chapter 10
February 28	Hebrew Monotheism	Dunstan: chapter 10 (cont.)
March 7	The Israelites in the Promised Land: Judges, Kings, Priests, and The Law	Dunstan: chapter 11
March 14-18	SPRING BREAK	
March 21	The Near East from 1000 to 550 BCE: The Age of Assyria	Dunstan: chapter 12
March 28	SECOND EXAMINATION (from The Hittites to the Assyrians)	
March 30	The Origins and Rise of the Persians	Dunstan: chapter 13, pp. 267-274
April 4	Persian Culture and Religion	Dunstan: chapter 14
April 11	Persia and the Greeks	Dunstan: chapter 13, pp. 274-282
April 18	Hellenistic Judaism PAPERS DUE	Dunstan, chapter 11 pp. 228-238
April 25	The Parthians (ca. 275 BCE- 228 CE) & the Sassanids (228-650 CE)	
Wednesday, May 4, 10 am	THIRD EXAMINATION (Persia, etc.)	