This course concerns developments in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds from roughly 3500 B.C. to roughly A.D. 500. In order to impose some thematic coherence on developments over this 4000-year span, we consider them as parts of a single “story”. The story is that of political and cultural consolidation (or unification) over a progressively larger area until we reach the “world-state” of the Roman Empire. Along the way, we will learn a good deal about different peoples and civilizations, but we want always to keep in mind that we are trying to understand a larger “story”. That means we always want to ask and understand what the place of different peoples and civilizations is in the larger story.

The textbook, Nagle’s *Ancient World*, will provide a basic narrative guide. Lectures amplify and supplement the text. Since Nagle does not present his material in terms of the “story” this course emphasizes, it is critical that students pay close attention to the lecture presentations. We will also be reading extensive primary (original) source selections which alone furnish us with direct experience of the ideas and thought patterns of various peoples and periods of the ancient world.

Evaluation is based on the results of three examinations and periodic writing assignments and quizzes.

**Required Books**

Nagle, *The Ancient World* (AW)

Sandars, *Epic of Gilgamesh*

**Class Schedule**

8/23 Introduction

1. Early Civilizations

8/25 Neolithic Revolution/Sumerian Civilization  
8/27 Emergence of Kingship  
8/30 *Creation Story* (and map quiz)  
9/1 *Epic of Gilgamesh*  

AW 1-20  
Handout  
*Gilgamesh*; writing assignment
9/3 Early Imperialism
9/6 Holiday
9/8 Early Egypt
9/10 Theology of Memphis
9/13 Egypt through the Middle Kingdom
9/15 Indo-European Impact
9/17 Hyksos and Egyptian Imperialism

9/20 FIRST EXAM

II. Big Empires and Little Peoples

9/22 Overview 1500-300 B.C.
9/24 Hebrew History in Near Eastern Context
9/27 Exile and Creation of Judaism
9/29 Greek History Overview/Homer

9/10 From Aristocracy to Democracy
10/4 Athenian Empire
10/6 Civic Problems/Civic Culture

10/8 Socrates/Plato

10/11 Fall Break

10/13 SECOND EXAM

III. Toward One World

10/15 Alexander
10/18 Hellenistic World
10/20 Hellenistic Philosophies

10/22 Rise of Rome
10/25 Roman Wars
10/27 Transformation and Crisis
10/29 Augustus

11/1 The Roman Peace
11/3 The Roman World
11/5 EXAM #3
IV. Toward Late Antiquity

11/8 Religions in the Roman World AW 357-362

11/10 Jesus and Paul writing assignment
http://ebible.org/web/Romans.htm

11/12 Pagans and Christians
11/15 3rd-century Crisis and Response AW 381-388

11/17 Constantine AW 388-390
11/19 The Christian Empire AW 394-411
11/22 Late Roman Government and Society AW 411-419

11/24-26 Thanksgiving Holiday
11/29 Consolidation/Unity, A.D.400
12/1 Roman World and World View
12/3 Beyond the Roman World
12/6 Fractures and Fragmentation AW 420-423, 390-393

12/13 EXAM #4 12-3 p.m.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In most cases you will have to reflect on the readings to respond to the assignment—that is, there aren’t answers that just appear in the readings waiting to be identified. So read the assignment, then read carefully, and consider how the reading provides indications that will help you respond to the assignment.

Try to keep your responses to a one-page length = 250 words.

9/1 What values do you think Gilgamesh espouses after his journey to Utnapishtim?

9/29 In the Iliad selections (107-120) how do humans and gods resemble each other and differ from each other?

10/6 Why does the Old Oligarch think democracy is not a very good form of government at Athens?
10/29  How does Augustus make the case in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti (The Achievement of the Deified Augustus)* make the case that he has created nothing new but only restored the Republic? Why is this important?

11/10 Discuss specific passages in the Paul's *Letter to the Romans* which point to distinctive Christian virtues.