

HIS / 380-1  
**The Near and Middle East**  
UNCG – Fall 2011

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Meets: MW 2:00 – 3:15 PM in MHRA 2209  
Instructor: Stephanie Reed, University of Chicago  
Email: sdreed2@uncg.edu  
Office: 2113 MHRA Building  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 or by appt.  
Office Ph: (336) 334-5206 (no voice mail)  
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\*I welcome your questions via email or office hours regarding the course lectures, readings, academic goals, etc. I will respond to your emails as quickly as possible M-F during normal “business hours,” or 8am-6pm. I will try but cannot guarantee a prompt response if I receive your mail after 6pm weekdays or on weekends/holidays.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

This course will trace the history and material culture of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and early Persian or Achaemenid Empires (9<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), three of the “starring” empires of the Old Testament that were to play pivotal roles in the history of both Near/Middle Eastern and Western civilization. A comparative investigation of these distinct yet culturally linked states also offers a unique opportunity to address an ongoing historical debate—the idea of empire itself, or what kind of social, territorial, and administrative structure(s) can be defined as “empire.” The Assyrian and Persian periods especially allow us to also witness the effects of social and religious inheritance and historical context upon imperial practices and propaganda.

The study of ancient societies is often challenging due to gaps in the written record, and material or physical evidence can provide vital historical clues. Beyond understanding the history of these early empires and their physical past, we will closely examine the relationship between archaeological, art historical, and historical practice, observing how other categories of evidence complement or diverge from what we consider “history,” and how we can broaden our perspectives by utilizing these categories as tools of historical learning and analysis.

**BREAKDOWN OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To understand the basic geography of ancient Mesopotamia and its cultural sphere and the key cities and territories controlled by the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires.
- 2) To know the origins and basic development pattern of Mesopotamian civilization from urbanization to empire.
- 3) To understand the historical, aesthetic, and socio-religious contexts in which Assyria, Babylon, and Persia rose to power in the first millennium BC.
- 4) To understand the historical and cultural contributions of these three great powers to the history of the Near/Middle East and Western Civilization.

- 5) To be able to critically discuss historical sources and scholarly theories concerning the nature of each empire and what constitutes “empire.”
- 6) To better understand Middle Eastern culture and the current challenges of the region.

### **CLASS FORMAT:**

The course will consist primarily of lectures and guided discussion of themes based on lectures and readings. Each weekly topic will be structured around specific questions geared toward an interdisciplinary approach to our subject matter and scholarly debates in the field. These questions will be introduced at the beginning of class and reassessed in light of the lecture and reading assignments.

### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

Van de Mieroop, Marc. 2007 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC* (Bookstore) \*See Appendix for king lists/timelines

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:** (Available on shelf Reserve; selected readings on Blackboard eReserve)

Allen, Lindsay. 1997. *The Persian Empire*

Curtis, John and Nigel Tallis, eds. 2005. *Forgotten Empire: The World of Achaemenid Persia* (full text on eReserve)

Oates, Joan. 1996. *Babylon*

Postgate, J.N. 1994. *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*

Reade, Julian. 1983. *Assyrian Sculpture*

Roaf, Michael. 1990. *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (eReserve)

### **TENTATIVE LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE:**

Please read the assigned materials during the week assigned (unless otherwise noted) and come to classes prepared with questions and observations. Supplemental required readings and study-guide questions will be updated regularly on Blackboard (BB). These readings are designed to provide other categories of evidence, revisit concepts in different contexts, and to provide additional exposure to primary and secondary sources (hint: for your papers). Students are responsible for keeping up with BB for readings and course announcements, etc.

In addition to the assigned readings, additional readings have been placed on reserve and will be useful for those wishing to explore subjects (particularly for papers) in detail. Refer to bibliographic list on final page.

**A great time-management tip from my favorite professor:** Read for general themes and the main examples of these themes, writing them down as you go. This will help tremendously on quizzes and keep you from having to re-read texts before exams. If assigned an article, find and jot down the author’s main idea (thesis) and key supporting evidence.

### **Abbreviations:**

HANE: *A History of the Ancient Near East*

Atlas: *Cultural Atlas of the Ancient Near East*

LR= Library Reserve    BB= Blackboard (eReserve)

<b>PART I: PRE-IMPERIAL ASSYRIA AND BABYLON: BACKGROUND AND BEGINNINGS</b>
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**Week 1:** Aug. 22/24. The What and Where of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East

Themes: Geography, timelines, Mesopotamian archaeology and its pioneers

\*HANE: Ch. 1

\*Atlas: 8-9 (chronological table), 18-24

\*Begin reading: T. Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, Ch. 5-7, pp. 125-219. (photocopy on LR) (due Aug. 31)

General/suggested readings:

R. Matthews, *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: Theories and Approaches*, Ch. 1, "Defining a Discipline," pp. 1-26. (BB)J. N. Postgate, "Mesopotamia: The Land and the Life," in *Early Mesopotamia*, Ch. 1, pp. 3-21. (LR)**Week 2:** Aug. 29/31. The First Cities/Charismatic Kings

[AUG. 31 QUIZ 1]

Themes: Urbanization, writing, cylinder seals, city gods, Mesopotamian life and thought

\*HANE Ch. 2, 3 (short)

\*Atlas: 58-77

\*E. Porada, "Why Cylinder Seals?: Engraved Cylindrical Stones of the Ancient Near East, Fourth to First Millennium BC," *Art Bulletin* 75, pp. 563-82. (BB)

General/suggested readings:

Postgate, "Cities and Dynasties," Ch. 2, pp. 22-50 and "The Written Record," Ch. 3, pp. 51-70, in *Early Mesopotamia* (LR)**Week 3:** Sept 5/7. Centralization of Power and Rise of Territorial States

Themes: Kings of Akkad and Ur III, international relations (Amarna Age), the palace system

\*HANE: Ch. 4.1 (skim 4.2), Ch. 7, (Ch.8 on Mittani and Hittites is optional)

\*Atlas: 96-107

\*Begin reading: A. Altman, "Tracing the Earliest Recorded Concepts of International Law. The Near East 1200-330 BCE, pp. 101-153" (BB) (due Sept. 12)

<b>PART II: ASSYRIA</b>
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**Week 4:** Sept 12/14. From Kingdom to Empire: Assyria 12<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> c. BC [SEPT. 12: QUIZ 2; SEND PAPER #1 TOPICS (VIA BB BY 5PM) FOR APPROVAL]

Themes: Collapse of palace system, Assyrian conquests, early capitals (Assur and Nimrud)

\*HANE: Ch. 9.2, Ch.10

\*Atlas: pp. 139-40, 148-49

\*J. Brinkman, "Unfolding the Drama of the Assyrian Empire," in *Assyria 1995*, pp. 1-16 (BB)

General/suggested readings:

J. and D. Oates, "The Land of Assyria: Setting the Scene," in *Nimrud*, Ch. 1, pp. 13-35 (LR)**Week 5:** Sept 19/21. Royal Ideology and Aesthetics of Empire (Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III)

Themes: palace architecture, visual archetypes

\*HANE: Ch. 11, 12

\*J. Reade, *Assyrian Sculpture*, pp. 6-17; or P. Collins, *Assyrian Palace Sculptures*, pp. 28-61 (LR)

\*I. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," pp. 1-37. (BB)

General/suggested readings:

I. Winter, "Aesthetics in Ancient Mesopotamian Art." In *CANE*, edited by J. Sasson, pp. 2568-2582 (BB)

**[FRIDAY, SEPT. 23 (VIA BB BY 5PM): PAPER #1 TOPICS DUE WITH ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY]**

**Week 6:** Sept. 26/28. Mid-Imperial Assyria

(Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II/Khorsabad, Sennacherib/ Southwest Palace, Nineveh)

Themes: Imperial expansion, new lands and capitals, individual royal prerogatives, deportation

\*HANE: Ch. 13

Assyria in Isaiah 2:5-22 (Handout)

\*A. Kuhrt, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," pp. 13-34 (BB)

\*B. Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, pp. 41-74; or Cogan, "Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BCE," pp. 111-15 (LR)

General/highly suggested:

P. Collins, *Assyrian Palace Sculptures*, pp. 62-94 (TP III-Sennacherib) (LR)

**Week 7:** Oct. 3/5. What Do We Mean By "Empire"?

**[OCT. 5: MID-TERM EXAM; PAPER #1 DUE]**

Themes: Definitions of empire, imperial artifacts, ideologies of imperialism

M. Doyle, *Empires*, pp. 11-47 (BB)

R. Matthews, "Archaeology of Empire," in *Mesopotamian Archeology*, Ch. 5 (BB)

**[OCT. 10: FALL BREAK- HURRAH! NO CLASS]**

**Week 8:** Oct. 10/12. Late Imperial Assyria (Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal)

Themes: Assyrian and Babylonian relations, wealth of the empire, Ashurbanipal's lion hunt sculptures

\*B. Porter, "Images, Power, Politics," pp. 1-75; 119-153; Appendix One: Familiarize yourself with the sources for Esarhaddon and his policies; (Ch. 5, "Images of the King" a good read but optional) (BB)

\*B. Oded. 1992. *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, 177-90.

General/highly suggested:

P. Collins, *Assyrian Palace Sculptures*, pp. 96-141

**Week 9:** Oct. 17/19. Assyrian Collapse and Legacy

**[OCT. 19 QUIZ 3]**

Themes: Nineveh's Fall, The Babylonian Coalition, Ashurbanipal's Library

\*Grayson, Fall of Nineveh Chronicle (Chronicle 3, pp. 18-19, 90-96) (handout)

\*van der Spek, "Assyriology and History: A Comparative Study of War and Empire in Assyria, Athens, and Rome," pp. TBA

\*S.Parpola, "Assyrian Identity in Ancient Times and Today," or A. George, "Assyria and the Western World," pp. 69-76 (BB)

### PART III: BABYLONIA

**Week 10:** Oct. 24/26. Babylon from Kingdom to Empire: Hammurabi to Nabopolassar

Themes: State law to international law, palace structures, Babylonian vs. Assyrian aesthetics

\*HANE: Ch. 5 (skip 5.4) and Ch. 6 (intro, box 6.1, sections 6.2, 6.4)

\*J. Oates, *Babylon*, pp. 52- 114 (LR)

\*Codex Hammurabi (<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp>) (be familiar with basic format, individuals "protected," typical forms of punishment)

**Week 11:** Oct. 31/Nov. 2. Imperial or Neo-Babylonia: Nabopolassar to Nabonidus

[Nov. 2 QUIZ 4]

Themes: Nebuchadnezzar, Judaic Exile, Babylonian religion

\*HANE: Ch. 14 (short)

\*Atlas: 198-202, 222-23

\*S. Dalley, "Nineveh, Babylon, and the Hanging Gardens," in *Iraq* v. LVI, pp. 45-58 (BB)

\*A. Kuhrt, "Nabonidus and the Babylonian Priesthood," pp. 117-156 (BB)

### Part IV: ACHAEMENID PERSIA

**Week 12:** Nov. 7/9. Who were the Persians?

Themes: Nomadism, Medians and Maji, Cyrus II and Cyrus Cylinder, Pasargadae, Herodotus, Hebrew Bible

\*HANE: Ch. 15.1-3 (carefully read "Behistun inscription" doc. 15.1)

\*Atlas: 203-212 (due by Nov. 16) (BB)

\*Begin reading: J. Wiesehofer, *Ancient Persia*, Intro.-Ch. 3, pp. 1-65 (due by Nov. 21) (BB)

*Cyrus Cylinder* (Handout)

Herodotus, *The History* (pp. TBA) (LR)

General/highly suggested:

Curtis and Tallis, eds., *Forgotten Empire*, Ch. 3 (skim), Ch. 4, 5, 9 (all relatively short) (LR-ebook)

E. Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran*, Ch. 11-12 (art of Medians, Persians), pp. 143-178 (LR)

**Week 13:** Nov. 14. Darius I and Imperial Expansion

[Nov. 14 QUIZ 5]

Themes: Behistun, Persepolis, Achaemenid religion (Avesta, Zoroastrianism) and aesthetics

\*A. Kuhrt, "The Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550-330 BCE): continuities, adaptations, transformations" in *Empires*, pp. 93-124 (BB)

\*Curtis and Tallis, eds., *Forgotten Empire*, Ch. 8 (LR-ebook)

R. Kent, *Old Persian* (class handout)

[Nov. 16: Joy! No class- instructor at conference. Finish readings for week 13]

**Week 14:** Nov. 21. Imperial Administration and Ideology

Themes: Satrapies and peripheral rule, gifting, Darius at El-Hibeh, the "Persian Man"

\*"Assyrian Traditions during Achaemenid Times," in *Assyria 1995*, pp. 41-48

*The Book of Esther* (pp. TBA- LR or Handout)  
Additional readings TBA

[Nov. 23: Thanksgiving break]

**Week 15:**

Nov. 28. End of the Achaemenid Empire

Themes: Xenophon, Cyrus III, Alexander the Great

\*HANE: Ch.15.4

Nov. 30. Continuity of Empire?: Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians

[Nov. 30 QUIZ 6]

Themes: Definitions of “empire,” royal ideology and theology, traditions and innovations

\*\*“Making History: Sargon of Agade and Cyrus the Great of Persia,” S/ACH/13 pp. 347-361 (BB)

\*A. Khurt, “From Babylon to Persia,” in *Rituals of Royalty*, pp. 20-55 (BB)

**Week 16:** Dec. 5. Course Wrap-up and Review

[DEC. 5: PAPER #2 DUE (IF YOU WANT COMMENTS)]

[MONDAY, DEC. 12, 3:30-6:30: FINAL EXAM AND PAPER #2 DUE (FOR NO COMMENTS)]

**EVALUATION AND GRADING:**

1. Quizzes (50 points/6 @ 10 pts. each- lowest score dropped). Open notes, but remember, “open notes” means *your* notes, not those of your nearest classmate. There are no make-up quizzes.

2. Writing/Research Assignment: (50 pts. each) There will be two cumulative writing assignments, one short (3-5 pgs.) and one slightly longer (6-8 pgs.) on a topic or theme approved by the instructor. Papers will essentially be part of your mid-term and final exams. Paper #1 will analyze an aspect of ANE imperial history by interpreting primary sources to present an original argument. Paper #2 will incorporate secondary sources that refine the original argument, or preferably **offer a comparative analysis**. For instance, my first paper might analyze an Assyrian royal inscription and a monument, demonstrating how each contributes to our understanding of Assyrian warfare. My second paper might analyze and compare Old Testament passages and/or scholarly articles that also address Assyrian, Babylonian, and/or Persian warfare. Any secondary sources or articles must argue from different categories of evidence or different primary sources (see BB for review of “primary vs. secondary sources”). A list of potential topics will be posted in Week 3, but begin thinking of an aspect of Mesopotamian imperial history that interests you. See also “Writing Assignments” below.

3. Midterm Exam (50 pts.): Wed., Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> in class

4. Final Exam (100 pts.): Monday, Dec. 12, 3:30-6:30

5. Positive Class Contribution (up to 10 pts.): See “Attendance and Participation” below.

In sum, there will be a total of 250 points: 50 for quizzes, 100 for writing assignments, 50 for the midterm, and 50 for the final. The grades will be calculated as follows:

A:	235-250 pts. (94% +)	C:	182-191 pts. (73-76%)
A-:	225-234 pts. (90-93%)	C-:	175-181 pts. (70-72%)
B+:	217-224 pts. (87-89%)	D+:	167-174 pts. (67-69%)
B:	207-216 pts. (83-86%)	D:	157-166 pts. (63-66%)
B-:	200-206 pts. (80-82%)	D-:	150-156 pts. (60-62%)
C+:	192-199 pts. (77-79%)	F:	<150 pts. (<60 %)

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

1) **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is “**representing the words of another as one's own in any academic exercise.**” In other words, it’s *bad*. (For more detailed information, visit <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete>). Suspected cases of plagiarism, or **any other kind of academic dishonesty**, will be handled according to the Academic Integrity policy of the university.

2) **Writing Assignments:** Writing, grammar, and analytical skills are an important component of overall course evaluation. This is not to torture you if you are unused to writing, but to prepare you for more intensive research and writing courses to come. Therefore, papers must have a clear introduction with a thesis, supporting argument, and conclusion. They must be properly cited with a bibliography and at least two footnotes or endnotes. Any Internet articles must be fully documented (author, date, pg. numbers). Wikipedia or general inquiry sites are **not** acceptable sources. Wikipedia does provide bibliographies at the end of each topic, so investigate these for acceptable sources. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

\*Be sure to utilize the Writing Center in MHRA 3211. Their phone is 334-3125 and their hours are posted on their website: <http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/>. You may also come by office hours for any questions about writing *in your own words* or properly citing resources. Jackson Library has convenient citation guide links on its website. Other useful writing guides include: Kate Turabian’s [A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations](#) (University of Chicago Press) or Purdue University’s [Online Writing Lab](#) (“OWL”): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. For graduate students especially, [The Chicago Manual of Style](#) is a highly detailed industry standard for academic and professional writing, also available online for a fee.

3) **Classroom Code:** Respect your instructor and fellow students. Please do not come late to class as it disrupts the class for both your classmates and for me. Cellular phones **must** be silenced or turned off in the classroom. If you disrupt class by talking on the phone or text messaging, or if your head is on your desk, you will be asked to leave. Laptops may **not** be used in the classroom. One verbal warning will be given for each class disruption, after which your overall grade may be reduced by a fraction (e.g., A to A-) per occurrence.

4) **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance will be taken at each lecture. It is crucial to your success in this course, since exam material will come from not only from required readings but also class lectures and discussions. If you are absent more than three times, you must make an appointment with the instructor to discuss whether it will be necessary to withdraw from the course. More than three absences will result in grade reduction of a fraction of your letter grade (e.g., A to A-) for each absence thereafter. Leaving class before it is over does not qualify as “present.” Please let me know in advance if you have a pressing schedule conflict. Please arrive on time, read the assigned materials for that week, and come prepared to contribute your thoughts and ideas. Remember that classes will not only include lectures but discussions that will be key to writing successful exams and papers. \*If you come to class prepared and contribute positively you can earn up to **10 bonus points** (e.g., a “raise”) over and above your final score. Since these are given at the discretion of the instructor they are non-negotiable.

5) **Disabilities:** Students with disabilities should see me during the first week of class regarding any special needs.

