

This course surveys the history of the ancient Near Eastern (= Western Asian) and Mediterranean world from about 10,000 BCE to about 500 CE. This means that it covers a time period far greater than that from 500 CE to the present. It means also that a tremendous amount of stuff happened, particularly many “firsts”—agriculture, cities and civilization, writing, war making, kingship, empire, democracy, monotheism, and more. To try to make sense of all this, we are going to approach developments on the basis of a simple principle governing human behavior: “If it ain’t broke, people don’t fix it”. What this means in the context of ancient history is that if what people—human societies small or large—are doing (organizing themselves, gaining nutrition, dealing with outsiders’ attacks, managing relations with divine forces, etc.) works, people/societies don’t change their practices. When we see change or innovation, what we are seeing is not “progress” but response to failure or “adaptation” to an altered “environment”. We must then ask “what went wrong?” What made longstanding practices ineffective? How did new practices represent successful response or adaptation to change. Given this approach, think of this course as subtitled “Challenges and Changes: The Human Experience in Western Asia and the Mediterranean, 10,000 BCE to 500 CE”.

We will be using Ralph Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., as our basic narrative guide and a companion volume *Sources in Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, for most of our primary source readings. Occasional web readings and handouts supplement these volumes. The syllabus lists the reading assignments for each class meeting. These are to be completed by the day they appear as assignments in the syllabus. There are also brief Reading Responses due for almost every class. These assignments appear in the syllabus after the reading assignments. They are to be completed and emailed to me before class time on the day assigned. My email is [sgruzick@uncg.edu](mailto:sgruzick@uncg.edu).

There will be 3 examinations of equal value—last one is not cumulative. Study guides will be provided before each exam.

Grading: 3 Exams 75%  
Reading Responses 25%

Full attendance is expected. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in lowering of your grade.

---

*Class Schedule* (AMC = Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*)

8/20 Introduction: What is History? What is Ancient History? What happened 100,000 to 10,000 BCE?

8/22 Mesopotamia General Picture 10,000-4,000 BCE

AMC 3-33

8/27 Sumerian Cities, Priests, and Kings AMC 37-58; Sources 3-10; Gilgamesh Epic; <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh>

*\*\*Reading Response #1: According to “The Creation of Humans by Enki and Ninmah”, what are humans created for? According to the Gilgamesh story, what is the ultimate lot of humankind? (Make sure you read the whole of the Gilgamesh epic including the full story of his journey to Utnapishtim in the online version.) According to the Enuma Elish story (Source #1), what can Marduk do that merits given him supreme power?*

8/29 Patterns of Power: Hegemonies and Early Empires AMC 58-66 (up to Law Code part); Sources 43-48

*\*\*Reading Response #2: Most of the kings in the Sumerian King List (Source #15) are characterized only by the lengths of their reigns—nothing about their origins or background. What are the exceptions to this? What inferences or conjectures might you make about political circumstances surrounding their kingships?*

9/ 3 Laws and Babylonian Society AMC 66-70; Sources, 52-63 (#18,19,20)

*\*\*Reading Response #3: Who did the actual destroying of Agade in “The Cursing of Agade”? What kind of actual event may lie behind this story of the anger of Enlil? How do Ur-Nammu and Hammurabi explain that their “lawmaking” is a result of the will of the gods in Sources 19 and 20)?*

9/5 Indo-European Migrations AMC 70-72

9/10 Egypt through Old Kingdom AMC 75-92; Sources, 13-15; *Theology of Memphis* (handout); Sources 67-70

*\*\*Reading Response #4: What can we learn from “The Autobiography of Weni” about the organization of government in Old Kingdom Egypt? Why do you think Weni is so concerned with documenting his great services to the King and so proud of the fact that the King has a great sarcophagus delivered to him?*

9/12 Egypt: Disintegrations and Restorations AMC 92-100; Sources 77-80

*\*\*Reading Response #5: Compared to the conditions in Egypt evident in “The Autobiography of Weni”, what seems to be wrong with Egypt—what’s missing—at the time described by “The Admonitions of Ipuwer”? (Note: contrary to the dating suggested in the book, this is better dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Intermediate Period, ca. 2100 BCE.)*

9/17 Imperial Egypt AMC 100-106; Sources 93-99



*\*\*Reading Response #11: What does the Pelopidas story reveal about the state of affairs in southern Greece in the 4th century BCE?*

10/22 Rise of Macedon: Philip and Alexander AMC 240-253; 242-251

10/24 Hellenistic Age AMC 253-273, 274-281; Sources 260-263

*\*\*Reading Response #12: How does Epictetus recommend that one can achieve tranquility through apathy (= a-pathos, not feeling)?*

10/29 Judaism AMC 273-274; Sources 264-267

10/31 SECOND EXAM

11/5 Early Rome—Beginnings to Italian Hegemony AMC 310-311, 325-347; Sources 295-311; <http://thelatinlibrary.com/law/polybius.html>

*\*\*Reading Response #14: What topics do each of the Tables of the 12 Tables deal with? What do the various laws suggest about the kinds of problems Roman society had to deal with?*

11/7 Rome in the Mediterranean AMC 347-360; Sources 334-338

*\*\*Reading Response #15: How is Roman culture changing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE in Cato's view?*

11/12 Failure of Republic/Creation of Principate AMC 361-392; Sources 341-347; 383-390; 394-398

*\*\*Reading Response #16: In Selection #81, "The Land Law of Tiberius", why are members of the Senate so angry at Tiberius Gracchus that they murder him? On the evidence of Selection #90, "Deeds of the Deified Augustus", how is the Senate treated by Augustus?*

11/14 Imperial System/Imperial Society AMC 392-436; Sources 421-423, 430-432

11/16 Third Century: Challenges and Adaptations AMC 439-460

11/19 Imperial Christianity AMC 460-475

<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/pliny-trajan1.asp>

<http://www.ntcanon.org> (development of the New Testament canon)

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/edict-milan.asp>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/codex-theod1.asp>

*\*\*Reading Response #16: How does Constantine's religious policy (as announced in the Edict of Milan—link above) differ from Theodosius (as stated in the Theodosian Codex—link above)?*

11/21 Late Empire AMC 475-487

11/26 Germanic Settlements and End of Western Empire AMC 487-513  
<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/jordanes-goths20.asp>  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/salvian1.asp>

11/28 THANKSGIVING BREAK

12/3 End of the Ancient World AMC 513-535

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