

HIS 220 Syllabus

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What is this course about?

This course surveys the history of the Near Eastern-Mediterranean world from roughly 6000 BCE to 650 CE. This is a very long time, marked by many different kinds of developments (including many “firsts” in human history). While considering many of these, we focus on one long term development in particular-- the creation over time of larger and larger political units of one kind or another, beginning with the formation of cities and culminating in the creation of a world state, the Roman Empire, in which everyone shares a common single citizenship and to a great degree a common culture. This is the “story” for this course. Keep it constantly in mind. We will be connecting many other stories to it to understand how they contributed to the main story.

For this course, “ancient” means 6000 BCE-650 CE and “world” means the Mediterranean and the Near East (at times stretching all the way to India).

What books or materials do students need?

We use Ralph Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, 3rd ed., as our textbook. We will be reading the whole book and quizzes and papers are based primarily on it. This is the only book students must purchase. Web readings in primary sources (materials from particular time periods and peoples in the ancient world) and videos supplement the textbook.

How is the course organized?

Following an introductory overview of the story of ancient history that we will be tracing, the course is divided into 5 modules or units, each dealing with distinct stages in our ancient history story:

- 1) The Rise of Complex Societies (6000-1200 BCE),
- 2) Expansive Empires (1200-400 BCE),
- 3) The West Takes Control—Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans (400-100 BCE),
- 4) Inventing a World System (100 BCE-200 CE),

5) Final Consolidation and Fragmentation (200-650 CE)

What are Student Learning Objectives in this course?

Students will gain an understanding of the major developments in the Ancient World.

Students will gain an understanding of the beginnings of fundamental features of the human experience: civilization, empires, monumental architecture, belief systems including Christianity.

Students will gain an understanding of the factors responsible for change in the Ancient World.

What does the student learning process in this course involve?

Students will read online overviews and chronologies for each module, then complete guided reading assignments in the required textbook (Ralph Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, 3rd ed.), focusing on questions posed for each reading assignment. Additional reading assignments in primary sources online. The aim in each module is to understand a set of specific developments in terms of 5 w's: who or what is involved, where and when the developments take place, and why they occurred and are of importance.

How are students' progress and performance in this course evaluated?

Students will complete 2 kinds of graded assignments:

- 1) quizzes for each or parts of each module,
- 2) 5 reflective essays (1 per module) providing a synopsis of developments covered in each module and a discussion of how these developments contributed to the larger story of ancient history that we are working with (see General Overview).

Quizzes test familiarity with important figures, events, places, and concepts. Essays test interpretive understanding

How to Ask Questions

Use Discussions for asking questions

Each Module has a *Questions and Comments* tab that will take you to Discussions

Upload your question or comment to the text box

Click Save

Check back for answers or comments

Students may provide answers and comments to questions and comments posted in Discussions