ARCHAEOLOGY OF EGYPT & THE NEAR EAST: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

G313: Course Handbook 2016-17

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INTRODUCTION
This handbook contains information about the content and administration of the course. Queries about its objectives, structure, content, assessment or organisation should be directed to the Course Co-ordinator. Further information about coursework submission and other procedures can be found in the general MA/MSC handbook and on the Student Wiki, which is access through the Institute of Archaeology homepage (‘Intranet’ in top left menu, and enter ID and password). It is your responsibility to read and act upon this information, which relates to originality, submission and grading of coursework; disabilities; communication; attendance; and feedback.

AIMS
• To provide students with an advanced understanding of patterns and processes in the archaeology of the Egypt and the ancient Near East
• To situate those processes within a broader comparative understanding of World Archaeology
• To familiarise students with new evidence for interconnections and cultural exchanges between Egypt, the early Middle East and other parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe
• To familiarise students with the scientific methods now used to reconstruct processes of technological, economic, and environmental change
• To explore the implications of Egypt and the Near East for the writing of global history including their relevance to contemporary social theory and cultural heritage

LEARNING OUTCOMES
• To prepare students to undertake original research in world archaeology with an informed perspective on the archaeology of Egypt and the Near East
• To enhance students’ ability in reading and debate through assessment and evaluation of alternative interpretations, and presentation of reasoned conclusions
• recognition of the linkages between data, methods and ideas
• application of the methods and theories of inter-disciplinary analysis
• skill in integrating a variety of evidence from different disciplines into overall interpretations
• proficiency in the setting out information and ideas clearly in written form
• preparation for designing and operationalising research topics in this field, including the development of meaningful links between different scales of analysis (from the microscopic to studies of artefacts, landscapes, distribution patterns, and remote sensing from space)

TEACHING METHODS
The course is taught through a two-hour weekly seminar. Content ranges from general thematic overviews to detailed presentations of specialist research, and will include extensive visual illustration of key data. All seminars have weekly readings, which provide a focus for students to contribute actively to the discussion. Students will also be given more structured opportunities to present their views both visually and orally in class.

WORKLOAD
There will be 20 hours of seminars for this course. Students are expected to undertake around 120 hours of reading for the course, plus 40 hours preparing for and producing the assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of approximately 180 hours.

ASSESSMENT
This course is assessed by means of a total of 4000 words of coursework, divided into two essays of 2000 words each. Essay topics are normally to be chosen from the titles given at the end of each seminar summary, as below. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, or wish to propose an alternative title, they must contact the Course Co-ordinator in advance. The essential and recommended readings lists provided below are to be used as sources for writing the essay, but students are also encouraged to incorporate additional or alternative sources from their own reading. Please note: it is essential that students use the suggested essay question titles precisely as given and consult with the Co-ordinator if they wish to suggest any changes. Please remember to include the entire and exact title at the start of your essay.

SUBMISSION DATES FOR COURSEWORK:
Essay 1 11th November, 2016
Essay 2 12th January, 2017

Word-length
The following should not be included in the word-count: title page, contents pages, lists of figure and tables, abstract, preface, acknowledgements, bibliography, lists of references, captions and contents of tables and figures, appendices. Penalties will be imposed if you exceed the 2000 word limit by more than 100 words ((for details, see the IoA Student Wiki – accessed via the IoA ‘Intranet’)
TEACHING SCHEDULE
Students following this course participate as a single group in course seminars and practicals. Seminars will be held 2pm – 4pm on Fridays, in room 209. Please note that Session 7 runs from 2-5pm.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Autumn Term

1. Egypt and the Near East in world history (M. Altaweel, 7th October)
2. Neolithic transformations: worlds of the earliest farmers (K. Wright, 14th October)
3. Holocene environments, climate change, and human impact (M. Altaweel, 21st October)
4. Global villages: the later prehistory of Egypt and the Near East (M. Altaweel, 28th October)
5. Origins of cities and states (M. Altaweel, 4th November)

(No session Thursday, 11th November: Reading Week)

6. Commerce, cosmology, and sacrifice: the movement of goods (M. Altaweel, 18th November)
7. Emergence, functions, and development of writing systems (R. Sparks, 25th November) [NOTE: long session: 2-5pm]
8. Late Bronze Age, internationalism, and diplomacy (M. Altaweel, 2nd December)
9. Ancient empires and imperialism: current themes and perspectives (M. Altaweel, 9th December)
10. The Legacy of Egypt and the ancient Near East (M. Altaweel, 16th December)

READING LISTS

For essential readings information is provided below as to where in the UCL library system they are available; the location and status (whether out on loan) of all readings can accessed on the eUCLid computer catalogue system. Please note that many readings from major journals are now also available electronically via JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org/) and other internet sources, to which you will have access via your college IS account. A full list of journals available from a UCL computer terminal is provided at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/ejournal/ejtitle.shtml and includes titles such as American Journal of Archaeology, Cambridge Archaeological Journal, Oxford Journal of Archaeology, World Archaeology, as well as many others. You may also find the ‘Google Scholar’ search engine useful in location material from books and journals (including some not on the UCL list), to which your college IS account will often give access.

The essential readings are those required to keep up with the topics covered in the course sessions, and it is expected that students will have read these prior to the session under which they are listed. Where permitted by copyright, every effort has been made to ensure that multiple copies of individual articles and chapters identified as essential reading are in the Teaching Collection of the Institute of Archaeology (TC), Science (STC) or Main (MTC) libraries, or are kept as reserved copies behind the issue desk of the Institute library (ISSUE DESK IOA). As a last resort the Course Co-ordinator (M. Altaweel) may also be consulted. Note: readings marked EGYPTOLOGY and YATES are located in the Institute library. Readings available electronically cannot be kept in the teaching collection, and are identified as ONLINE in the reading lists below.

Recommended readings are intended to provide a starting point for students to follow up particular issues in which they are interested and to give a broader range of references for those who want to write their essay on that particular topic. Again every effort has been made to ensure that these are present within the Institute library or another UCL library, or are accessible via the online list.

MOODLE and TURNITIN

This course makes use of UCL’s online teaching resource: ‘Moodle’. At the start of the course please log on at: http://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/, and register for: ARCLG313: ‘Archaeology of Egypt and the Near East: A Comparative Approach’. Registration, if you need it, is IoA201617

Once registered you will find online materials such as weekly reading lists and lecture summaries that are available to you throughout your course, as well as links to important forms and documents. Moodle may also be used as a channel of communication between you and the Course Coordinator.

You will see that you can also submit your papers (electronic submission) via the Turnitin connections given via Moodle. Please do submit this way.
Seminar 1. Egypt and the ancient Near East in world history

Dr. Mark Altaweel

Essential reading:


Recommended sources for coursework:

Archeology, ‘orientalism’ and the legacy of the Enlightenment


Biblical archaeology


And for a critical point of view on current controversies in Israeli-Palestinian archaeology, explore the website: http://alt-arch.org/en/

Egyptology and Assyriology


London: Thames and Hudson.

**The comparison of ancient civilizations**

**Essay question**
Is the ‘ancient Near East’ still a viable concept in the writing of world history?

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Seminar 2. Neolithic transformations: the world of the earliest farmers

Dr. Karen Wright

Essential reading:

Recommended sources for coursework:
Comparative and theoretical perspectives
(Read for general approach rather than factual details, some of which are now out of date)

Ecologies of early farming


**Beginnings of sedentary life in the Fertile Crescent: social, economic, and cognitive aspects**


**Cattle before crops? The Egyptian Neolithic**


(again, read selectively: chapters by Bradley and Loftus, MacDonald, Hassan, and Grigson are particularly relevant to recent debates over indigenous cattle domestication in North East Africa)


Mitchell, P.J. and P. Lane (eds.) _The Oxford Handbook of African Archaeology_. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [chapters by Garcea, Fuller and Hildebrand, Haaland and Haaland]


The spread of farming: regional views


Trade and exchange in early Neolithic societies


Art and ritual in early Neolithic societies


Essay question

How do you account for the broad spectrum of social, symbolic, and technological innovations that accompanied the adoption and spread of domesticates in the Middle East?
Seminar 3.  Holocene environments, climate change, and human impact

Dr Mark Altaweel

Essential reading:


Rosen, A. M. (2007) Chapter 1, Holocene Climate and Society, pp. 1-16; and Chapter 9, Civilizing Climate, pp. 172-180 in Civilizing Climate: Social Responses to Climate Change in the Ancient Near East. Altamira, Lanham, MD. [INST ARCH DBA 100 ROS; ISSUE DESK IOA ROS 5; and ONLINE – consult Moodle website]


Recommended sources for case studies and coursework:


Essay question:

Explain the importance of data resolution, both time and spatial scales, in our understanding of environmental and/or climate change in the ancient Near East? Explain using relevant examples.
Seminar 4. Global villages: the later prehistory of the Middle East
Dr. Mark Altaweel

Essential reading:


Recommended sources for coursework:
Key transformations in village life (c.7000-4000 BC)

General:


Specific:


**Views from the field (Turkey and Syria)**

**Domuztepe:**


**Tell Kurdu:**


**Kenan Tepe:**

**Tel Zeidan:**
Consult pdfs at Oriental Institute, Chicago website, starting in numerical order with: [http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/08-09_Zeidan.pdf](http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/08-09_Zeidan.pdf)


The ‘breakdown’ and reconfiguration of early farming communities in the Levant (c.7000-4000 BC)


**Essay question**

Approximately 5000 years lie between the origins of farming from the earliest cities: why didn’t cities arise sooner in the Middle East?

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Seminar 5. **Origins of cities and states: a comparative perspective**
Essential reading:


Recommended sources for coursework:

For regional surveys see:


World systems theory: debating the ‘Uruk expansion’ in the fourth millennium BC


Secondary innovations in farming: contexts and consequences


Early urbanisation in Syro-Mesopotamia: economic and cultural aspects


The Early Bronze Age Southern Levant


Social and technological change in the Early Bronze Age of Western Anatolia


Şahoğlu, V. (2004) 'Interregional contacts around the Aegean during the Early Bronze Age: new evidence from the Izmir Region' Anadolu/Anatolia 27: 97-120.


Egyptian state formation: internal process and external contacts (c.4000-2500 BC)


Essay question:

Summarise the different paths towards state formation followed in Egypt and Mesopotamia – how would you account for these differences?

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Seminar 6. Commerce, cosmology, and sacrifice: the movement of goods
Dr. Mark Altaweel

Essential reading:

Recommended sources for coursework:
For the mechanics of ancient Near Eastern economies, see the collected articles in:

For material culture and industries, see in general:

Specific readings:


**Essay question:**

How would you characterise the relationship between craft, ritual, and trade in ancient Egypt and the Near East?

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**Seminar 7.** Emergence, functions, and development of writing systems [note: session runs from 2-5pm].
Dr Rachael Sparks

This session will comprise a 50 minute introductory lecture, addressing the archaeological evidence for the emergence and use of writing in the Near East, then a 2 hour handling session, using material from the Institute of Archaeology's Collections to explore concepts such as the materiality of ancient texts and their intended audiences. Please note that no food or drink will be allowed in the room during this part of the session.

In preparation, students are encouraged to read selectively from the list below, focussing on their primary areas and periods of interest.

Recommended sources for coursework:

General discussions and edited volumes


Earliest writing systems

*Egypt*


*Mesopotamia and Iran*

History of Science, Pre-Print 114’. (http://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/Preprints/P114.PDF).


Anatolia, Cyprus and the Levant


Social functions of writing in the Bronze Age: selected studies


Inception of alphabetic scripts


Methodological and theoretical approaches to ancient texts


Essay question:

How does the development of writing systems relate to wider patterns of social change? Discuss with reference to either the invention of the earliest writing systems, or the early development of alphabetic script.
Seminar 8.  Late Bronze Age, Internationalism, and Diplomacy

Dr. Mark Altaweel

Essential Reading:


Late Bronze Collapse


The Diplomatic Age


International Trade


Cline, E. 1994. Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean. George Washington University. INST ARCH DAG 100 Qto CLI


**Migration**


**Essay question**

Why did the states of the Late Bronze Age not leave longer lasting political legacies that would have enabled larger states to replace them after the Late Bronze Age? In other words, why did the Near East fragment to small states after the Late Bronze Age?
Seminar 9. Ancient empires and imperialism: themes and perspectives

Dr. Mark Altaweel

Essential:


And for further Egyptian and Near Eastern case studies, see:


Recommended:

Akkadian


Egypt


Hittite


Neo-Assyrian Empire


Additional readings on Iron Age empire and their peripheries


Debating the effects of empire: perspectives on Neo-Assyrian domination


Online resource: see the superb new website ‘Knowledge and Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire’: http://knp.prs.heacademy.ac.uk/

Regional perspectives on empire, ethnicity, and secondary state formation: the southern Levant


Regional perspectives: Syria and Anatolia


Harrison, T.P. (2001) ‘Tell Tayinat and the kingdom of Unqi’. In P.M.M. Daviau et al. (eds.) The World of the

Arabian perspectives

General
Liverani, M. (1990) Prestige and Interest. International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100 BC. Padova: Sargon. (Good background to understanding some of the basic political dynamics between empires and states in the later Bronze Age in the Near East).

Essay question
In what ways does the archaeological record provide a distinct perspective on the development and decline of ancient empires?

Why did a pattern of large states and empires emerge in the late Iron Age and continue into later periods?

What are the implications of large states and empires on modern institutions and current history?
Astronomy


Economy

Baumol, W.J. 2010. The invention of enterprise: Entrepreneurship from Ancient Mesopotamia to modern times. Princeton University Press. ECONOMICS N 46 LAN.


Technology and Medicine


Literature


**Ancient Egypt in Arabic Thought**


**Egypt in Western Thought (see also readings of lectures 6 “Civilization” and 9)**


What are some of the long-term legacies left behind by the ancient Near East that later influence cultural developments in the Near East and beyond in much later periods? Discuss this using clear evidence across time.