Potential changes in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Please note that information regarding teaching, learning and assessment in this module handbook endeavours to be as accurate as possible. However, in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the changeable nature of the situation and the possibility of updates in government guidance, there may need to be changes during the course of the year. UCL will keep current students updated of any changes to teaching, learning and assessment on the Students’ webpages. This also includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which may help you with any queries that you may have.

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCL0007: INTRODUCTION TO EGYPTIAN AND NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

MODULE HANDBOOK 2020–2021

Year 1 Core module, 15 credits, Term II, Friday 14:00-16:00

Deadlines for coursework for this module: 19 February 2021, 16 April 2021
Target dates for return of marked coursework to students: 19 March 2021, 14 May 2021

Module co-ordinators: Claudia Näser and Georgia Andreou

c.naeser@ucl.ac.uk and g.andreou@ucl.ac.uk

Office hours: Monday 12am–2pm (CN) and Friday 12am-2pm (GA)
At other times via the ARCL0007 Teams chat (assessment/class-related queries) or email (personal queries)

Please refer to the online IoA Student Handbook (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook) and IoA Study Skills Guide (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-study-skills-guide) for instructions on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties for late submission.
1 MODULE OVERVIEW

Module description

The module offers an introduction to the archaeology of the Nile Valley and the Near East from prehistory to the Islamic period, with a focus on Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Anatolia, and Iran in the time between 10,000 BCE and 300 CE.

Classes will consider the nature and interpretation of archaeological and textual sources in approaching the history of these regions, focusing on key sites and key issues, including the origins and trajectory of sedentism, agriculture, complex societies, urbanism, literacy, interaction and trade, and empires.

Module aims

On successful completion of the module, students will:

- understand the outlines of Egyptian and Near Eastern history from prehistory to the Islamic period
- be familiar with archaeological key sites in Egypt and the Near East and be able to relate them to individual periods of the history of ancient Egypt and the Near East
- understand the geographical, historical and social contexts of a range of material and non-material cultural expressions of the Egyptian and Near Eastern past
- have a broad overview of specific themes that shaped the history of the study region
- understand the disciplinary underpinnings of Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology, and what it contributes to World Archaeology.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to demonstrate:

- appreciation of and ability to apply source-critical approaches to archaeological and textual data
- the ability to assess and integrate different research resources, including research literature, objects, archives and databases
- critical engagement with disciplinary reconstructions of the past
- independent problem solving based on real data sets
- written and oral skills in analysis and presentation.

Methods of assessment

This module is assessed by means of:

(a) two essays of 1500 words each, which each contribute 50% to the final grade for the module

Communications

Moodle is the main hub for this course. Important information will be posted by staff in the Announcements section of the Moodle page and you will automatically receive an email notification for these.
For personal queries, please contact the module co-ordinators by email: c.naeser@ucl.ac.uk and g.andreou@ucl.ac.uk.

Please post general queries relating to module content, assessments and administration in the MS Teams Module forum:
https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a7f74faf2c06a4917982582c6228d56e6%40thread.tacv2/contacts?groupId=bf13c151-b9d1-4b16-b934-da89874ec5fe&tenantId=1faf88fe-a998-4c5b-93c9-210a11d9a5c2

**Week-by-week summary**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Setting the scene</td>
<td>15.01.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The way to food production (10,000–5,000 BCE)</td>
<td>22.01.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Towards social complexity (5,000–3,000 BCE)</td>
<td>29.01.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Society and monumentality (3,000–2,000 BCE)</td>
<td>05.02.2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Society and administration (2,000–1,500 BCE)</td>
<td>12.02.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reading Week (no teaching)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The global age I (1,500–1,000 BCE)</td>
<td>26.02.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The global age II (1,500–1,000 BCE)</td>
<td>05.03.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Multiculturality I (1,000–late 4th century BCE)</td>
<td>12.03.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Multiculturality II (late 4th century BCE–7th century CE)</td>
<td>19.03.2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Multiculturality III (7th century CE–2021 CE)</td>
<td>26.03.2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Lecturers**

Lecturers: Claudia Näser (CN) and Georgia Andreou (GA)

Guest Lecturers: Wolfram Grajetzki (WG) and Cary Martin (CM)

**Weekly Module Plan**

The module is taught through a series of 10 lectures and discussions. Students will be required to undertake set readings and complete pre-class activities in order to be able to actively participate in the discussion.

**Workload**

This is a 15-credit module which equates to 150 hours of learning time including session preparation, background reading, and researching and writing your assignments. With that in mind you should expect to organise your time in roughly this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Staff-led teaching sessions (lectures, tutorials, discussion-board sessions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Self-guided session preparation and follow-up work (reading, watching, listening, note-taking and online activities), about 6 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Reading for, and writing, the two essays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2 ASSESSMENT**

Each assignment and possible approaches to it will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the Module Co-ordinators in advance (via office hours or class Moodle forum). You will receive feedback on your written coursework via Moodle and have the opportunity to discuss your marks and feedback with the co-ordinators in their office hours.

For further details see the 'Assessment' section on Moodle. The IoA marking criteria can be found in the IoA Student Handbook (Section 12: Information on assessment) and the IoA Study Skills Guide provides useful guidance on writing different types of assignment. Penalties for late submission: see UCL guidance on penalties (Academic Manual 3.12).

**PLEASE USE THE EXACT TITLE OF THE ESSAY, NOT AN APPROXIMATION.**

**Assessment 1: Essay 1 (1,500 words)**

This assessment contributes 50% to the final grade for the module.

The submission deadline is midnight 19 February 2021 on Turnitin. The marked essay will be returned to the students by 14 March 2021.

Choose ONE of the following titles:

1. What is the "fertile crescent" and why is it often referred to as the "cradle of civilization"? (See readings for Weeks 1 and 2)

2. In which ways did the trajectories towards food production, i.e. the Neolithisation, differ between Egypt and the Near East? Weigh the evidence using two sites as case studies. What do you see as the reasons for these differences? (See readings for Week 2)
3. What archaeological evidence is used to support arguments for social complexity in the 4th millennium BCE Near East? Discuss using examples of sites from one geographical region, e.g., Levant, Anatolia, Iraq. (See readings for Week 3)

4. On the basis of the archaeological record, what key transformations in Egyptian society can be discerned from the Predynastic through to the Early Dynastic period? Discuss under references to one or two sites which you use as case studies. (See readings for Week 3)

5. Are the relief sculpture palettes of the late Predynastic Period art, communication or propaganda? (See readings for Week 3)

6. How did the Uruk culture differ from previous cultures in Mesopotamia and wider Near East? Use artefacts, sites, and wider material culture as evidence. (See readings for Week 3)

7. Are there two cultures in Old Kingdom Egypt? Explore based on case studies of your choice. (See readings for Week 4)

8. Archaeologists and historians have placed notable attention to large, impressive structures and sites. Why do you think this is the case? Use one site from 3rd or 2nd millennium BCE Egypt or Near East to discuss (1) which groups of people are visible in the material record and (2) which groups are only indirectly visible or invisible in the material record? (See readings for Week 4)

9. What information does architecture provide us for the 3rd or 2nd millennium BCE Near East? Discuss with specific mention to monumentality, based on one or two case studies. (See readings for Week 4)

**Assessment 2: Essay 2 (1,500 words)**

This assessment contributes 50% to the final grade for the module.

The submission deadline is midnight 16 April 2021 on Turnitin. The marked essay will be returned to the students by 14 May 2021.

Choose ONE of the following titles:

1. How did the economy affect the spread and use of writing in the Near East in the 2nd millennium BCE? (See readings for Week 5)

2. The Middle Kingdom is considered a heyday of Egyptian bureaucracy and centralised planning. Do you agree? Discuss on the basis of one or two sites which you use as case studies. (See readings for Week 5)

3. Use two archaeological contexts from Egypt and/or the Near East to discuss (1) what evidence they provide for interregional interaction and (2) which potential and challenges they present for studying this topic. (See readings for Week 7)

4. The end of the Late Bronze Age is often described as “Crisis Years”. Do you agree? Discuss on the basis of one or two of the main interpretations of “crisis”. (See readings for Week 7)

5. What can the site of Amarna tell us about the composition of Egyptian society during the New Kingdom? (See readings for Week 7)

6. The Uluburun shipwreck offers unprecedented insights into maritime and terrestrial trade in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean. What kind of information does this unique assemblage provide? (See readings for Week 7)

7. Burial contexts offer important insights into both the identity of the buried person/people and their wider social context. Discuss this using two to three examples from the Near East or Egypt. (See readings for Week 8)

8. Visit the Assyrian collections at the British Museum (available virtually here: Galleries | British Museum Rooms 6–10) and discuss the role of monumentality in imperial politics of the 1st millennium AD. (See readings for Week 9)
9. What was the role of movement in shaping the 1st millennium AD universal empires? Discuss with emphasis on language or religion to support your arguments. (See readings for Week 10)

10. Foreign rulers and groups employed different strategies to gain and keep political, economic and social power in 1st millennium BCE and CE Egypt. Discuss using one or two case studies from either the Third Intermediate Period, the Late Period, the Ptolemaic period or the Roman Period. (See readings for Weeks 9 and 10)

11. What can we learn about the adoption of Christianity and/or Islam in the Nile valley through archaeology? Discuss using one or two case studies (See readings for Week 11).

3 RESOURCES AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS

Preparation for class
You are expected to watch the pre-recorded lectures, alongside reading the essential readings and completing the online activities set on Moodle each week. Completing this self-guided session preparation is essential for your effective participation in the activities and discussions that we will do, and it will greatly enhance your understanding of the material covered. Further readings are provided via the online-reading list for you to get a sense of the range of current work on a given topic and to draw upon for your assessments.

Online reading list:

When watching the pre-recorded lectures and reading the essential readings it is helpful to take notes for discussion in class and to consider:
• the wider significance of the topic explored, also in relation to topics discussed in previous weeks and in other modules
• the theoretical and methodological approaches to the topic which different researchers employ, their potentials, limitations and challenges
• the results and conclusions of the research undertaken and their implications for our understanding of ancient Egypt and the Near East.

Recommended basic texts and online resources
General reference works for the module as a whole, with useful bibliographies. Refer to this list for background research for essays.

Egypt and Near East

Egypt


**Near East**


**Encyclopedias, Egypt and Near East**


UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology: [http://escholarship.org/uc/nelc_uee](http://escholarship.org/uc/nelc_uee)

**Sources for maps, with useful background and bibliographies**


**Databases, online catalogues, open access resources, link lists**

- [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml) for access to the Online Egyptological Bibliography (OEB). Click on link, then choose “o” in the alphabetical list and scroll down the list until you find the database.

- [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml) for access to the ETANA: Electronic Tools and Ancient Near East Archives (ETANA), then choose “e” in the alphabetical list and scroll down to the list until you find the database.

- [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library/database/index.shtml) for access to Manar al-Athar (http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk/), then choose “m” in the alphabetical list and scroll down to the list until you find the database.

- [http://www.ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/](http://www.ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/) Portal for open access electronic resources

- [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/) Digital Egypt for universities run by UCL

- [https://uee.cdh.ucla.edu/](https://uee.cdh.ucla.edu/) UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology

- [http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/](http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/) Online catalogue of the Petrie Museum


- [http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/er/index.html](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/er/index.html) Comprehensive list of Egyptological online resources run by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

- [http://www.sefkhet.net/Oxford-Net-Res.html](http://www.sefkhet.net/Oxford-Net-Res.html) Comprehensive list of Online Egyptological resources run by Griffith Institute, Oxford
3  SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

1. Setting the scene

The Ancient Near East and Egypt are the oldest 'civilizations' on the globe and as such deeply ingrained in Western thought. This lecture outlines how scholars found their way into an archaeological engagement with Egypt and the Ancient Near East. We will also introduce the environments in which ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian societies emerged and explore their (dramatic) changes over time. Finally, we will delve into the 'deep history' of human occupation of these regions and discuss its major milestones up to ca. 10,000 BCE.

Essential Reading


2  The way to food production (10,000–5,000 BCE)

Two important changes in the last ten thousand years of human history were the transition to food production and the adoption of a sedentary way of life. In his session we explore the trajectories of these changes in Egypt and the Near East. We investigate their conditions and consequences and how they laid the foundations for the formation of early states a few millennia later. We will look into models which archaeologists have built to explain what triggered these changes and how they led to, or inversely were brought about by, social inequality or complexity.

Essential reading


3  Towards social complexity (5,000–3,000 BCE)

A major process in global history is the emergence of complex societies integrated on a larger scale than their prehistoric forerunners. In the Near East, the period of the Neolithic witnesses rapid social change and in Mesopotamia. In particular, we see the emergence of urbanism and complex societies by the early 4th millennium BCE and slightly later. The making of Pharaohs, the Egyptian kings, lies at the heart of this development as well. Archaeologists have identified a rapidly growing social stratification in late 4th millennium BCE Egypt which is related to, and announced by, the appearance of new ways of display and communication, including writing. This session introduces key archaeological evidence for these developments. We will also discuss competing interpretive
approaches to this evidence and analyse how they shaped conceptualisations and narratives of the emergence of complex societies.

**Essential reading**


**4 **Society and monumentality (3,000–2,000 BCE)**

The Near East witnessed the rise of literate and likely non-literate states in the 3rd millennium BCE. Monuments dedicated to the gods, and their incorporation with royalty, became a key characteristic that continued long after this period. In Egypt, the Old Kingdom (c. 2700–2200 BCE) is the first great phase of royal authority and social centralisation. Archaeologically, it is characterised by the emergence of monumental architecture, particularly the royal tombs in the form of pyramids. This class will explore to what extent these monuments can be used as a lens for understanding (elite) culture in the third millennium. We will also look at how current research moves beyond the focus on monumental architecture, detecting a hitherto overlooked social diversity through its manifestations in the archaeological record.

**Essential reading**


**5 **Society and administration (2,000–1,500 BCE)**

A successful integration of the administration and the management of resources formed the basis for the strong centralisation and the expansive politics which characterised Egyptian society and politics in the Middle Kingdom Egypt (c. 2040–1650 BCE). This session explores these features apropos Lahun, a prime example of a planned settlement, and the Middle Kingdom fortresses in Lower Nubia, which are vivid testimonies to the military and bureaucratic power which the Pharaohs of that period commanded. In the Near East, material evidence for states has been documented from the Mediterranean coastline through western Iran (2000–1600 BCE). Textual evidence from both private and institutional contexts offers valuable insights into internal politics and external politico-economic networks.

**Essential reading**


**6 **Reading Week: NO TEACHING**
The global age I (1,500–1,000 BCE)

In the early New Kingdom (1550–1070 BCE), Egypt expanded its borders in the south up to the Fifth Nile Cataract and in the north far into the Eastern Mediterranean. It became what is generally defined as an 'empire', i.e. a state with political and military dominion of populations who are culturally and ethnically distinct from the imperial (ruling) group. In this session, we explore the evidence of New Kingdom towns and temples. We investigate how they reflect Egypt's imperialist agenda and how religious and cultural practices were interwoven with the political aspirations and the reality of people's lives. In the Near East, this was a time of increased trade activity and interactions. We will look at how these aspects and wider diplomacy and politics of this 'globalized' era led to new political and social constellations.

Essential reading

See also The Uluburun Late Bronze Age Shipwreck Excavation here: [https://nauticalarch.org/projects/uluburun-late-bronze-age-shipwreck-excavation/](https://nauticalarch.org/projects/uluburun-late-bronze-age-shipwreck-excavation/)

The global age II (1,500–1,000 BCE)

Another facet of New Kingdom Egypt is its rich funerary culture. The session explores the Theban Necropolis, one of Egypt's major burial landscapes. Based on a discussion of the architecture and decoration of non-royal elite tombs we will investigate how people of that period organised their death and transition into the afterlife, how they imagined the hereafter and how they used the funerary realm as an arena of social display and self-identification. In the Near East, we will focus on the diversity in funerary culture through the lens of different customs in burial practices and the treatment of the dead. We will do that with the use of examples from Cyprus and the Levantine coast.

Essential reading

Multiculturality I (1,000– late 4th century BCE)

While the New Kingdom has been characterised by Egyptian culture going out of Egypt, the first millennium sees the rule of foreign polities over Egypt, including the Libyans, the Kushites, the Assyrians, the Greeks and the Romans. This session explores the earlier part of this trajectory, namely the Third Intermediate (1070–664 BCE) and the Late Period (664–332 BCE). We look at royal burials of that period and investigate how new elites and foreign rulers supported their claims to power and the Egyptian throne by adopting (and adapting) Egyptian cultural and religious practices. For the Near East,
the focus will be on the Neo-Assyrian Empire as it expanded across the region, setting the stage for a succession of continual polities that lasted until the fall of the Ottoman Empire. We also look at the Achaemenid Empire that followed soon after the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

**Essential reading**


**10 Multiculturality II (late 4\(^{th}\) century BCE–7\(^{th}\) century CE)**

The Ptolemaic (332–30 BCE) and Roman (30 BCE–395 CE) periods are often missing from accounts of ancient Egyptian history. Breaking down disciplinary boundaries and limitations, this session explores these eras and their archaeology, and links them to earlier and later developments. We discuss how cultural influences and religious concepts merge and how political and social agendas shape life and death in a multicultural society when Egypt was part of the Hellenistic and Roman world. We also look at the wider Near East from the time of Hellenistic and Roman influences to different Persian-based empires and investigate how multicultural ideals, already evident earlier, continued to be shaped and formed into (among other things) new religious and ideological concepts.

**Essential reading**

Altaweel, M. and A. Squitieri 2018. *Revolutionizing a World. From Small States to Universalism in the Pre-Islamic Near East*. Read one of the following Chapters: 7, 9, 10. [E-BOOK], INST ARCH DBA 100 ALT, ANCIENT HISTORY B 61 ALT


**11 Multiculturality III (7\(^{th}\) century–2021 CE)**

As we have seen over the past weeks, the history of ancient Egypt and the Near East has been divided into periods based on specific sets of criteria, most often those of political rule. Such periodisations need a clear understanding of the purposes and definitions used, and of the models explaining the transition from one to another period. The breaks between the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods have been framed in Western academic tradition as the victory of religious convictions and their prominent agents. Recent research has rejected this view because of its evolutionist and Eurocentric biases. In our last session, we will focus on archaeological evidence of the mid-first to second millennium AD, discussing different approaches to making sense of changes in religious convictions – paganism, Christianity, Islam – by situating them in their wider political and social contexts.

Finally, we will bring together the themes we have explored in the module. We will explore how our interests, agendas and knowledge bases shape our approaches to the past. This will help us to reflect
upon the processes of archaeological enquiry and the foundations upon which our (re)constructions of the past rest.

**Essential reading**
