

HPSC0082

Title: Science in Antiquity

Syllabus

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Session | 2021-22 |
| Web site | https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22917 |
| Moodle site | https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=22917 |
| Timetable | www.ucl.ac.uk/timetable |

Description

This course examines the activities of the ancients in attempting to understand, predict and control the world around them. The main focus is the Greek 'investigation concerning nature' and its philosophical, religious and social context. We look at the study of the heavens, including theories of how the world came into being, medicine, mathematics and technology. We also look at how the Greeks thought of disciplines such as astrology and alchemy and how their activities related to magic. While the main focus is the Greeks, we also look at the Babylonian, Roman, Chinese and Arabic cultures, their medicine, technology and how they conceived of the world around them.

Key Information

| | | |
|----------------|------|-----------------|
| Assessment | %100 | 4000 word essay |
| | % | |
| | % | |
| Prerequisites | None | |
| Required texts | None | |

Module tutors

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Module tutor | Prof. Andrew Gregory |
| Contact | @ucl.ac.uk t: 020 7679 2490 |
| Web | http://www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/sts/staff/gregory |
| Office location | 22 Gordon Square, Room 1.1 |
| Office hours: | Tuesdays 12-1, Thursdays 12-1 and by appointment |

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|-----------------|------|
| Assistant | None |
| Contact | |
| Office location | |
| Office hours: | |

Module plan

Schedule

| | UCL Wk | Date | Topic | Activity |
|----|--------|----------|--|------------------------|
| 1 | | 14/01/20 | Introduction. Babylonian & Egyptian Science | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 2 | | 21/01/20 | Ancient Medicine | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 3 | | 28/01/20 | The Early Greeks: Magic, Religion and the Natural World | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 4 | | 04/02/20 | Anaximander | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 5 | | 11/02/20 | Early Greek Philosophies of Nature | Read (see Moodle site) |
| | | | Reading Week: Ancient Science Conference | no lectures |
| 6 | | 25/02/20 | Ancient Theories of Matter | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 7 | | 04/03/20 | Ancient Philosophies of Science | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 8 | | 11/03/20 | The Ancient Cosmos | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 9 | | 18/03/20 | Chinese and Arabic Science | Read (see Moodle site) |
| 10 | | 25/03/20 | Alchemy & Astrology | Read (see Moodle site) |

Reading list

Please see the Moodle site.

Assessment

Summary

| | Description | Deadline | Word limit |
|---|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 | Essay | 27 April 2022 | 4,000 |

Aims and objectives

Aims

This course aims to examine the practices of several ancient cultures in areas such as healing, theory of matter, the origins of our world and the study of the heavens. How we should understand these ancient practices, and in what sense we should consider them to be sciences will be central concerns of the course. The ancient practices of alchemy and astrology will also be examined, as will the general relation of magic and science in the ancient world. Issues of the relation of religion and science in these various cultures will also be explored.

Objectives

By the end of this module students should be able to:

Engage with an enhanced understanding of science in the ancient world and several themes which run through the history of science, such as the relation of science and religion, the relation of science and magic, how we construct models of the origins of the world and how we construct models of the universe.

The following are the main criteria on which your essay will be marked. There are no set numbers/ percentages associated with these criteria but we will give you qualitative feedback on each of these criteria. These are the criteria for an advanced undergraduate ancient science essay. Note that the emphases on these criteria change as we move to higher level essays. In higher level essays, there is less emphasis on referencing/ bibliography as we simply expect you to have got this right. There is much more emphasis on independent critique and historiography.

Referencing/ Bibliography

You need to get into the habit of referencing properly. You must reference all quotes and all references/ summaries of books, etc. Pick one system for referencing and stick to it. You need to supply a bibliography of all works referenced. You must supply author, title, date, place of publication and publisher.

Answers question?

Increasingly important in higher level essays and critical in exams. Read the question carefully, answer it specifically, do not give irrelevant material or answer other questions.

Introduction

You should give an introduction to your essay in no more than one paragraph. Introduce your topic and your line of argument, no more. Good introductions are concise and precise.

Clarity

We place great emphasis on clarity of argument and expression. Avoid ambiguity and vagueness. Try to keep your line of argument clear. It often helps clarity to divide the main body of the essay into sections.

Organisation

Is the essay organized into an introduction, main body and conclusion? Does each part flow naturally into the next one? Is the evidence in a logical order?

Argumentation

Is the main argument of the essay clear, coherent and persuasive? Is it properly supported by the evidence available? Appropriate and persuasive historical examples used?

Use of literature/use of quotation?

Does the essay make appropriate use of the literature, does it engage with the literature and does it use an appropriate number of sources? Does the essay quote the literature in an appropriate manner

Conclusion

Your essay should have a conclusion which is clearly marked as such (new paragraph, 'In conclusion...'). It should be substantial in summing up what you have argued and exploring the implications of what you have argued. In higher level history essays, good substantial conclusions become increasingly more important.

Reading/ use of sources

How well have the readings and other resources been used? Does the essay reflect them accurately? Is the essay overly dependent on one source?

Independent critique?

Does the essay offer some independent critique or thought on the question or does it merely report what is in the literature? This criterion becomes increasingly more important for higher level history essays.

General Historiography?

How aware is the essay of assumptions and methods used to construct a history or to evaluate it? Is the essay aware of nuances/ critiques of the question asked?

Ancient Science Historiography?

How aware is the essay of specific historiography for ancient science? As appropriate, is the essay aware of issues of religion, art and magic and how they relate to science in the ancient world? Of issues about the nature of natural law and the use of mathematics in the ancient world.

Primary literature.

Does the essay make appropriate use of primary material? Please note that for this course it is NOT required that you engage with the primary material in the original language! You should though show evidence, where appropriate, of having examined the primary material in translation.