

## **HIST368: To the Strongest: The Ancient Near East from the Death of Alexander to the Coming of Rome**

**Fall Semester 2018**

**Course Instructor: Dr. John Karavas**

**Class Hours:** Tuesdays/Thursdays: 13.05-14.40.

### **Course Description**

In many ways the conquests of Alexander the Great, which brought under Macedonian rule the regions of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, up to the borders with India, had a determinant and profound impact on the future course of the History of the Near East. Through the study of primary sources, both literary and archaeological, this course seeks to explore the long history of interaction between the Greco-Roman world and that of its Near Eastern counterpart and the significant influence this interaction had on the formation and development of a common cultural, religious and political identity, which modern scholars have labelled as "Hellenistic". Within this perspective, our main focus will be on the investigation of particular aspects of Near Eastern civilization: the emergence of new cultural and social institutions, new forms of economic life, and the creation, fusion, and amalgamation of religious institutions (to which this course will give a special emphasis). The main purpose of the course will be to provide significant insight into an often neglected and yet very important and formative era in world history, the Hellenistic period.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Assignments:**

Students will be expected to write one research paper, not more than 2.500 words, on subjects/topics relevant to this course. Details will be provided on the first day of classes. Assignments for topics will be decided by lot, one month before the deadline for the submission of essays. Papers must be properly documented and should include an appended bibliography. Credit will be given for originality, i.e. illustrations, maps etc, personal observation and evidence of independent reading-research. Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (Check Student handbook, pg 9).

Students who wish to turn in rough drafts of their essays for consultation are certainly welcomed to do so. The deadline for the submission of rough drafts is Friday, December 5.

Title proposals and general outlines must be handed in at least three weeks before the respective deadline.

**The deadline for the submission of the final essay is Thursday, December 20. No extensions will be granted.**

## **Exams:**

**Midterm:** Tuesday, October 16

**Final:** TBA

## **Class Attendance - Absences**

Student attendance is mandatory. All absences must be excused by the administration and not the instructor. Each unexcused absence will result in a lowered participation grade.

## **Grading and Evaluation**

The mid-term grade will be calculated on the basis of the mid-term exam (70%) and with regard to student's attendance of and participation in classes (30%).

The final grade will be an average of the grades assigned for the mid term-exam (25%), the final essay (25%), the grade assigned for the final exam (35%) and of that assigned for class participation and attendance over the course of the semester (15%).

## **Books, Course Materials, Moodle**

The standard prescribed textbook for this course is the one by G. Shipley, "The Greek World after Alexander". However, during the course of the semester, students will be expected to become familiar with specific passages or chapters from other relevant works such as:

M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*

M. Cary, *History of the Greek World*

P. Green, *From Alexander to Actium*

N. Hammond, *The Genius of Alexander the Great*

A. Stewart, *The Faces of power*

W. Tarn, G.T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilisation*

F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World*

I. Worthington, *Alexander the Great* (ed.)

In addition, further background or specialist reading material, including passages from ancient sources (in translation) as well as epigraphic texts, will be introduced to students at the beginning of each separate thematic entity.

## **1. Tuesday, September 11**

### **General Introduction.**

A brief overview of the history of the Near East after Alexander. Establishing the basic chronological brackets and objectives of this course. The nature of the available evidence and the problems usually associated with its interpretation.

## **2. Thursday, September 13**

### **Alexander the Great: The Dream, the Vision, the Legacy.**

D.B. Nagle, *The Cultural Context of Alexander's Speech at Opis*, *TAPA* 126 (1996), p. 151-172; Worthington, chapter 8.

## **3. Tuesday, September 18**

### **The Brake-up of Alexander's Empire and the wars of Succession.**

Green, 119-134; Shipley, 33-40; Bosworth, 246-278.

## **4. Tuesday, September 25**

### **The Formation of the "Successor" States. The Ptolemies, the Seleucids and the Antigonids.**

Walbank, chapter 3; Shipley, 40-59.

## **5. Thursday, September 27**

### **The Government of the Successor States. Cases in Study in the development of "Enlightened Despotism".**

Green, 187-200; Walbank chapters 6-7; Shipley, 59-86.

## **6. Tuesday, October 2**

### **Social and Economic trends. Daily Life in the Hellenistic World.**

Shipley, 86-106; Green, 382-395.

**(Class Visit to the Athenian Agora).**

## **7. Thursday, October 4**

### **Trade, Commerce and Interconnectivity – the Maritime approach.**

**(Class visit to Athenian Trireme at Floisvos)**

## **8. Tuesday, October 9**

### **Cultural developments. The creation and diffusion of Hellenistic Culture.**

Green, 286-312.

**(Class visit to the Panathenaic Stadium)**

**9. Thursday, October 11**

**Language, Literature and Learning in the Hellenistic Age.**

Tarn and Griffith, chapter 8; Walbank, chapter 4; Shipley, 326-330.

**(Class visit to the Lyceum of Aristotle)**

**10. Tuesday, October 16**

**MID-TERM EXAM**

**11. Thursday, October 18**

**The Age of Invention: Hellenistic Science and Technology.**

Shipley, 330-368.

**(Class visit to the Antikythera Mechanism Exhibition – National Archaeological Museum).**

**12. Tuesday, October 30**

**Pushing the Frontiers: Trade and Exploration in the Hellenistic World.**

Walbank, chapter 11; Tarn and Griffith, chapter 7.

**(Class Visit to the Maritime Museum)**

**13. Thursday, November 1**

**Excavating Material Culture from the Hellenistic World.**

**(Class Visit to the Voula Archaeological Site).**

**14. Tuesday, November 6**

**The Religious Developments. An outline.**

Shipley, 153-192; Walbank, chapter 12

**(Class Visit to Temple of Olympian Zeus).**

**15. Thursday, November 8**

**Towards a New World Religion: The Greek Pantheon meets the Near Eastern Religions.**

Tarn and Griffith, chapter 10.

**(Class visit to the Egyptian Collection, National Archaeological Museum).**

**16. Tuesday, November 13**

**Kingship, Cult and Court: The Added Dimension of Self Deification.**

Lund, chapter 6; Class handouts.

**(Class Visit to the Acropolis – South Slope).**

**17. Thursday, November 15**

**At the fringes of Hellenistic religion: Rural, foreign and mystery**

**cults.**

Green, 396-414 and 586-617.

**18. Tuesday, November 27**

**Exploring the Occult: Magic and Mystery in the Hellenistic World.**

Stewart, chapter 8. Class handouts.

**19. Thursday, November 29**

**“Jews and Gentiles”: Contact and Conflict.**

Tarn and Griffith, chapter 6.

**(Class visit to the Kerameikos)**

**20. Friday, November 30**

**Hellenistic Art – An outline.**

**(Class Visit to the National Archaeological Museum).**

**21. Tuesday, December 4**

**Hellenistic mosaics – A workshop.**

**22. Thursday, December 6**

**The Hellenistic Queens; Seleucid and Ptolemaic queens**

Macurdy, chapters 2 and 3.

**(Class visit to the Numismatic Museum).**

**23. Tuesday, December 11**

**Women in Hellenistic Society.**

**(Class Handouts).**

**24. Thursday, December 13**

**The Fall of the Hellenistic World – A Historical overview.**

**The Coming of Rome.**

Green, 647-682; Walbank, chapter 13.