

ARCH 337 | Beyond Greece and Rome: The Other Ancient Mediterranean Worlds

Archaeology, Art, and History of the Ancient Cultures and Civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean and Neighboring Regions

Spring Semester 2025

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Course Description

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of the ancient Mediterranean world, focusing on the diverse histories and cultures that shaped the region beyond the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome. From the emergence of the first agricultural societies to the complex tapestry of the Iron Age, students will embark on an academic journey across time and geography, uncovering the rich heritage of the ancient Mediterranean, Near East, Anatolia, North Africa, and neighboring regions.

The course will primarily focus on the Eastern Mediterranean basin, examining the rise of early state-level societies in Mesopotamia, the interconnected world of the Late Bronze Age, and the transformative period of the Iron Age, including the civilizations of the 1st millennium BC. However, to provide a broader context, the course will also explore the cultural dynamics of the Central Mediterranean, Iranian Plateau, and the Balkans, offering students a comprehensive understanding of the ancient Mediterranean world.

In the final weeks of the course, students will engage in thematic discussions covering literature, state formation processes, funerary practices, and the modern reception of ancient cultures, studied throughout the semester. These discussions will allow students to delve deeper into specific aspects of the ancient world and share their insights through presentations.

Learning Goals

- Gain a deep appreciation for the diversity of cultures and societies that flourished in the ancient Mediterranean world.
- Contextualize the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome within the broader framework of ancient Mediterranean art, archaeology, and history.
- Understand the major developments in ancient societies, including the emergence of farming communities, the formation of states, and the complexities of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age worlds.
- Develop critical thinking skills by analyzing primary sources, archaeological evidence, and scholarly interpretations of ancient cultures.
- Enhance research and presentation skills through the preparation and delivery of case studies and academic posters.

Course Requirements and Assessment

15% - Class Contribution

After the second week, students will take turns leading discussions of the readings. Each student will have approximately 10-20 pages of reading, depending on the class day. The class contribution grade is based on demonstrated reading knowledge, active participation in discussions, and attendance.

40 % - Take-home Quizzes

Four take-home quizzes will assess student knowledge throughout the semester. Students will have to prepare informative F.A.Q.s, create memes and other artwork, both answer *and generate* multiple-choice questions, based on the topics covered by the quiz,

30 % - Case Study Presentation

Students will present a case study during one of the four thematic days, selecting a topic under the general umbrella of the day's theme.

15% - Academic Poster

Students will prepare an academic poster based on their case study presentation.

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential, so attendance at all scheduled meetings is required. All absences are recorded and have consequences that may affect your grade.

Policy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Phones

In-class or on-site use of laptops and other devices is permitted if that facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if they are not used for class-related work.

Accessibility

This course requires students to give a verbal presentation in front of the class as part of their assessment.

CLASS SCHEDULE

#	Topic	Readings & Other Sources
1	Introduction to Course Syllabus Chronological Periods	
2	Introduction to the Prehistory of the Old World Hominin Evolution Agricultural Revolution Prehistoric Societies before the States	Fagan and Durrani 2022
3	Mesopotamia: Sumer and the Akkadian Empire Sumerian States Akkadian Empire and Anatolian Trade Colonies 4.2-kiloyear Event	<i>Atlas of the Ancient Near East</i> Crawford 2016 Stiebing and Helft 2023
4	Bronze Age Egypt The Unification Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms Egyptian Language and Religion	Kemp 2018
5	Bronze Age Anatolia The Land of the Hatti The Hittite Empire and Anatolian Kingdoms Troy and the Western Anatolian Coast	Bryce 2023 Steadman and McMahon 2011
6	Near Eastern Polities in the Bronze Age Assyria & Babylon Mitanni Kingdom & the Hurri The Levant Cyprus	Knapp 2013 Stiebing and Helft 2023 Thelle 2020
7	Aegean Civilizations in Context Cretan State Formation Bronze Age Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean What Do We Mean by "Mycenaean"? Ahhiyawa Question and Anatolia	Beckman et al. 2012 Cline 2010 Nakassis, <i>tbd</i>
8	Bronze Age in the Central Mediterranean Terramare & Apennine Cultures Corsica and the <i>torri</i> Sardinia and the <i>nuraghe</i> Maltese Bronze Age Sicily and the Aegean Connection	Fokkens and Harding 2013 Sagona 2015
9	The Bronze Age Collapse and The Early Iron Age Crisis in the Po Valley? Collapse of the Hittite Empire Collapse in the Aegean Collapse in the Eastern Mediterranean Was There Really a Societal Collapse?	Cline 2021 Middleton 2017

	Introducing the Early Iron Age	
10	<p>Theory and Discussion: Approaches to the Study of Ancient Cultures I</p> <p>Culture-historical Archaeology Processual & Post-processual Critique <i>Kossinna's Smile</i>: aDNA and Culture-historical Comeback Ancient <i>Cultures</i> as Modern Imagined Communities</p>	<i>tbd</i>
11	<p>The Iron Age in the Levant</p> <p>Canaan & Phoenicia Aramaeans Philistines and the <i>Peleset</i> Israel and Judah</p>	Keimer and Pierce 2023 Greenberg 2022 Quinn 2018
12	<p>Iron Age Assyria & Babylon</p> <p>Assyrian Empire as the Iron Age Superpower Assyrian Babylon and The Babylonian Revolt Chaldean Empire</p>	Düring 2020 Stiebing and Helft 2023 Radner et al. 2023a
13	<p>Ancient Iran</p> <p>Iran before Iranians: Elam and Kura-Araxes Avesta and Zoroastrianism Media & Persia The Persian Expansion</p>	Álvarez-Mon et al. 2018 Matthews and Fazeli Nashli 2022
14	<p>The Iron Age in Eastern Anatolia</p> <p>Syro-Anatolian City-States The Urartu The Satrapy of Armenia & Armenians</p>	Osbourne 2021 Radner et al. 2023b Steadman and McMahon 2011
15	<p>Phrygian & Lydian Kingdoms</p> <p>The Origin of the Phrygians Midas/Mita & The Muški The Destruction of Gordion The Rise and Fall of Lydia</p>	Steadman and McMahon 2011 Radner et al. 2023b
16	<p>The Iron Age in Western and Southern Anatolia</p> <p>The Troad, Caria, Lycia, & Pisidia Pamphylia, Cilicia & Mopsos/Mukšaš</p>	Sagona and Zimansky 2009 Steadman and McMahon 2011
17	<p>Greek Poleis of the Eastern Aegean</p> <p>Aiolia & Ionia – Founder Myths and Archaeology Dodecanese and Southwestern Anatolia</p>	Lemos and Kotsonas 2019 Steadman and McMahon 2011
18	<p>First Millennium BC in the Balkans</p> <p>BA-EIA transition in the Balkans Thrace, Dacia, & Illyria Macedonia</p>	Fokkens and Harding 2013 Haselgrove et al. 2023
19	<p>Central Mediterranean Iron Age</p> <p>Etruria and Etruscans Iron Age Archaeology of Italy Central Mediterranean Islands Magna Graecia & Phoenicians</p>	Haselgrove et al. 2023 Hodos 2020 Knapp and Dommelen 2014
20	<p>Theory and Discussion: Approaches to the Study of Ancient Cultures II</p> <p>Race & Ethnicity: How to and <i>not</i> to Define Ancient Population Groups Ancient and Modern Ethnogeneses Archaeology, Racism, & Ethnic Nationalism in the Modern World</p>	<i>tbd</i>
21	<p>Thematic Discussion: Literature</p> <p>Religious and secular written texts of the cultures covered</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	<i>tbd</i> by presenting students
22	<p>Thematic Discussion: State</p> <p>Comparative state formation processes, types of states, the role of agrarian economy, commerce, slavery</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	<i>tbd</i> by presenting students
23	<p>Thematic Discussion: Death</p> <p>Belief in the afterlife, funerary cults, burial customs, gender differences in the burial record, burial as a status marker</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	<i>tbd</i> by presenting students

24	<p>Thematic Discussion: Reception Early modern & modern reception of the ancient cultures covered (literature, cinema, comic books, fine arts)</p> <p>Student Presentations</p>	<p><i>tbd</i> by presenting students</p>
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