

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON  
ST: ANCIENT EGYPT: ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORY

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History 270.02

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Course Web Page: URL <http://www.cofc.edu/~piccione/egypt270/>

Username: **++++** Password: **++++** (necessary for accessing reading assignments and images)

**Course Description:** This course focuses on the role played by environment in the formation and progress of ancient Egyptian history and culture from the Neolithic Era to the Ptolemaic Period (7000-34 BC). By combining traditional text-based historical methodologies with archaeology, and with careful and circumspect inclusion of issues of environmental determinism, it examines the geography and topography of the Nile Valley (river, cultivation, deserts, climate, seasons, etc.) to understand how the Egyptians adapted them for development, and to understand the extent to which environmental issues could have impacted the course of history. Specifically, texts and inscriptions are used as a counterpoise to the physical and environmental evidence, assessing the degree to which they might or might not corroborate arguments of environmental causation. Archaeological data on specific sites and processes are also integrated into the argumentation.

Important topics covered are: the flood cycle of the Nile River, its connection to the agricultural system, land tenure, the distributive economy and taxation, the significance of the river as a means of communication and transportation, the irrigation system, the influence of geography on Egyptian conceptions of cosmos and religion, the calendar and reckoning of time, the relationship of time and space in the Egyptian psyche. In terms of cultural ecology, the course probes the extent to which Nile-flood levels could affect Egyptian history in any given period. Textual genres examined in this course include: Egyptian political and historical inscriptions, religious texts (hymns, prayers and myths), Nile flood-level records, tax and rental accounts, land leases and bills of sale, wills, deeds of endowment, royal exemption decrees, graffiti, private letters and autobiographical inscriptions, as well as Greek and Roman tracts on Egyptian geography, history and economy (viz. Hecataeus, Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, Plutarch, etc.).

### Course Requirements

**Research Paper:** Due **April 13**. Students will complete a term paper (**7-8 pages**) on any topic related to an acceptable theme pertinent to the subject of the course Web pages. **Students will be required to submit an annotated bibliography for their paper on March 23, which will be graded.** The specific requirements of the paper are located below under "Paper Requirements." *Completion of the paper is necessary to pass the course.*

**Assignments:** This course includes two take-home interim assignments, 7-8 weeks apart, each containing objective questions and essays drawn from the lectures and readings, and videos. The second interim exam will occur on the last day of class. There are no cumulative midterm or final examinations. See the "Lectures and Assignments Schedule" for specific dates.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** General Education Student Learning Outcomes are to be assessed in the research paper (30% of the course grade), and they include:

1. Students will learn how to analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted, and valued in various expressions of human culture.
2. Students will learn how to examine relevant primary source materials and the evidence of material culture as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.

**Attendance and Participation:** Discussion figures prominently in the class-program, and class participation and attendance will constitute a significant percentage of the course grade (20%). Attendance will be taken daily; any unexcused or unexplained absences will result in automatic grade reductions (see below for policies on missing 30% or more of classes).

All absences can be excused by presenting written documentation to the Absence Memo Office of Associate Dean of Students. Undocumented or self-reported excuses usually are not acceptable. Running errands is not a valid excuse. Students are responsible for all the material in the readings, videos, lectures, etc., whether they are present or not in class. **Students should never telephone the instructor on the same day to say they will be absent, nor should they ever(!) call the History Department office to report their absence.**

If the instructor does not call the daily roll, an attendance sign-in sheet will be circulated. Students are also marked as absent for the following reasons: they do not sign the attendance sheet; they sign the sheet then leave class; they leave class for an *inordinate* period of time without valid excuse. *Any student who leaves class without prior permission and does not return after taking a quiz or exam will be recounted as absent, and the quiz/exam will receive an automatic failing grade (0 = F).*

**VERY IMPORTANT: Any student who has missed a minimum 30% of class meetings, i.e., nine (9) or more individual classes, regardless of whether they have excused absences or not, will be subject to automatic withdrawal with a grade of WA which computes into the GPA as a grade of F.**

The professor's lectures contain more materials than are found in the textbook and readers, and discussion is an important part of the curriculum. If students have missed 30% of lectures, they are not getting all the materials, and they are not participating in classroom discussions in any significant manner. Therefore, if it is because of a valid medical reason that any student has missed nine (9) or more classes, he/she should discuss the matter with the professor and, if appropriate, seek a Late Withdrawal based on medical grounds in the Registrar's Office. Students must apply for a medical withdrawal for *all courses simultaneously* (not just for a single course), and they must do so before the last day of classes. **These attendance policies also apply to any athletes whose sport schedules conflict with course requirements** (see below, "Athletes and Special Needs").

**Athletes and Special Needs:** Participation in athletic events or practices is NOT(!) a valid excuse to miss class, due dates for assignments and exams. **N.B.: make-up work will not be granted to accommodate athletic schedules.** When athletes check their schedules of away-games against the course assignment schedule, they MUST also check the travel schedule for each game. Athletes are responsible for the academic consequences of missing exercises, exams, and due dates. **Any athletes who expect to miss exercises, exams or due dates MUST see the professor, and they should seriously reconsider taking this class.**

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying the instructor as soon as possible during office hours or after class by presenting their letter from the SNAP Office. They must also contact him at least one week before each accommodation is needed.

**E-mail Contact Policies:** The professor will contact students by e-mail, using their official campus G-mail address. If students regularly use addresses other than that, they still must check their official addresses on a regular basis to insure they have receive all mail. The professor can be reached by e-mail with the following limitations. He cannot guarantee to reply to every e-mail within 24 hour. Since, he does not assiduously check e-mail on weekends, students should not expect replies on Saturday or Sunday, nor the night before an assignment is due. He rarely checks e-mail after 7:00 pm weekdays.

### Course Textbooks

The required textbooks for this course are:

Brewer, D. and E. Teeter. *Egypt and the Egyptians*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. (Paperback).

Butzer, K. *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt: A Study in Cultural Ecology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. (Digital copy; available as needed for download on the Web).

Kees, H. *Ancient Egypt: A Cultural Topography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. (Digital copy; available as needed for download on the Web. Multiple paper copies on Reserve in Addlestone Library).

**Web Sources and Library Reserve Readings:** A variety of monographic extracts and journal articles are also required reading for this course. Some of these readings are located in the Addlestone Library (Reserve, Reference, or Periodicals). Others are available for downloading and printing from the course Web pages. The location of each reading is noted in the "Syllabus" or "Reading Assignments"-schedule which will be updated regularly in the course's Web Pages. *Please consult the Web pages on a regular basis.*

### Grading Policy

Final course-grades will be constituted according to the following formula: interim assignments (2) 30%; research paper 30%; annotated bibliography 20%; class participation and attendance 20%. Grades in this course are issued according to the numerical scale: A = 93-100; A- = 91-92; B+ = 88-90; B = 83-87; B- = 81-82; C+ = 78-80; C = 73-77; C- = 71-72; D+ = 68-70; D = 61-67; D- = 60; F = 0-59; WA = administrative withdrawal due to excessive absences = F; XF = failure due to academic dishonesty.

### Paper Requirements

**Research Paper. Due date: April 13. Topic:** Students are required to complete a research paper on a specific topic of their choice which combines a study of land or environmental issues with Egyptian social or political history or issues in Egyptian historical archaeology (combining textual sources with material culture). They can consult a list of "Subject Areas and Themes for the Term Paper," found on the course web pages. They should also refer to the extensive course bibliography to help identify sources and narrow topics. **They should confer with the instructor on the topic to ensure feasibility.** All topics must be approved in advance by the instructor (i.e., before the student has actually begun to write the paper). **Off-topic papers will not receive passing grades.** The specific requirements for the paper are described on the course Web pages under "Paper Requirements"-link. **Paper length: 7-8 pages.** *Completion of the essay is required to pass this course.*

**Annotated Bibliography. Due date: March 23.** Students are required to submit an annotated bibliography for their paper, which will be graded, and to meet with the instructor to discuss issues and strategies related to the topic and writing. These sessions will constitute a percentage of the bibliography grade.

**Late Policy.** *Late papers will be penalized 5 points for each day late (including Saturdays), up to three days, after which they will be graded no higher than a 59% (F).* All papers must be submitted *in person* to the instructor; failing that, they may be submitted to the History Department (Maybank 203), where the departmental administrators will certify and date-stamp their arrival. The instructor is not responsible for any papers simply dropped off at his office or shoved under his door. Regrettably, such papers cannot be deemed to have been submitted on time.

**Submission of Early Drafts.** Students are encouraged to submit a preliminary draft of their paper to the instructor for comment. The instructor will review it to ensure clarity, direction, and adherence to format. *The draft will not be graded.* Students should submit a draft not later than two (2) weeks before the paper's deadline.

**Form and Format.** All papers must be submitted in paper format. Papers submitted electronically via e-mail or on disk are unacceptable, since formatting changes do occur when transferring files between computers. See course Web page, "Paper Requirements"-link, for detailed information, advice, and suggestions on form, format, and grading criteria for the theme essay and term paper.

**IMPORTANT!!** Papers should contain 1-inch margins on all sides, top and bottom. They should be typed or printed double space in a 12-point type. The term paper must include: (1) cover page; (2) type-written page numbers; (3) citations (footnotes or endnotes); (4) separate Bibliography-page. *The cover page and the bibliography do not count toward the required number of pages.* Pagination begins on the first page of text.

In the preparation and execution of all papers for the class, students are required to follow the format presented by **Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)**, especially in regard to the style of block quotations, footnotes or endnotes, and bibliographies. Look over Chapters 8-11 on how to cite references. Choose the type of reference you want: footnotes or endnotes ("Bibliography"). Read Chapter 11 (pp. 185-213) to compare their forms and styles. Use footnotes or endnotes only; do not use parenthetical references (that means you cannot put references in parentheses at the ends of sentences).

The Turabian style is a standard for writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences. If you are not familiar with this format, open the manual and learn it. Don't try to "wing" it or fudge the format. ***Any papers that do not conform to Turabian will be graded accordingly.*** Four copies of Turabian are located in the College Library, two in the Reference Section, two on Permanent Reserve.

**WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT EMPLOY THE MLA STYLE OF PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES IN YOUR HISTORY PAPERS!!**

**Execution.** As a rule of thumb, *do not quote class-lecture notes in your paper.* If you wish to quote material mentioned in class, *you must find it in published sources* among the course readings and quote from there. If you cannot find the source among the readings, see the instructor for advice. Please feel free to consult the instructor at any time for advice and suggestions on preparing the paper.

Form and spelling are factors in grading both papers. If you are uncertain of your spelling, use a dictionary or a spell-check program. **You must proofread your paper before submitting it, and make any final corrections cleanly in ink, if necessary!!** *Why the emphasis on form?* A research paper is a means of communication. The purpose of any paper is to convey an argument as logically as possible according to standards of form that facilitate its communicative function. Form is not merely format and correct spelling; it also includes the logical arrangement of an argument and the rational ordering of historical and textual data to support a particular historical interpretation. Poor form can impede the communication of a valid point of view. When a paper cannot communicate due to a lapse of form, it has failed in its purpose.

### Using the World Wide Web for Research

**Students must confine their research only to professionally vetted, peer-reviewed academic publications.** One does not do research merely by sitting at a computer and surfing the Web. One does research by paging through books and journals; by following their bibliographies, and by backtracking sources from one footnote to another through a stream of relevant publications. Students should confine the bulk of their research to **peer-reviewed** printed publications. They may use the World Wide Web

*selectively to help research* the paper topic. Beware! There is a great deal of pseudo-historical trash on the Web that does not conform to modern academic standards. The World Wide Web contains four types of materials pertaining to ancient Egypt:

1. primary sources, i.e. editions of original ancient inscriptions translated and presented by reputable scholars, often used as classroom resources on the Web;
2. original archaeological reports and field data by archaeologists and bona fide researchers;
3. syncretical studies, essays, and old books prepared by Egyptologists (often as Web versions of reputable printed publications and books);
4. materials, idiosyncratic essays, and polemical tracts of uneven and inconsistent quality, prepared by non-professionals, dilettantes, radical Afro-centrists, and self-proclaimed prophets of the New Age revelation.

Sadly, the latter material [no. 4] permeates much of the historical content on the Web, and students must learn to recognize each instance of poor quality and to avoid it. Many of the primary sources on the Web [no. 1] include translations of foreign language documents into English. However, these translations tend to be obsolete, incomplete, or idiosyncratic. Obsolete translations are superseded by more modern accurate translations published in print.

On the other hand, many professional peer-reviewed historical academic journals [no. 2] are also published on the Web, and they are collected together into digital archives and electronic databases for easy searching and consultation. The Addlestone Library of the college subscribes to these archives and databases and many more (e.g., *JStore*, *Project Muse*, etc.), and they are located on the College's computers and can be searched in the College's library catalogue under the headings, "Databases" and "e-journals" ([http://library.cofc.edu/search\\_collection/databases.html](http://library.cofc.edu/search_collection/databases.html)).

**Students may never quote from from any general dictionaries and encyclopedias, such as *Wikipedia* (ugh!), *Encyclopedia Britannica*, etc. Of course, they may always quote freely from on-line sources found in the Addlestone Library Catalog of electronic databases and e-journals (as noted above). However, students may not quote from any public Web pages, including translations, reports, and essays without prior approval of the instructor. Each violation of this rule found in a paper will receive a 5-point grade reduction.**

While students may not *quote* from any public Web source without permission, they should still *freely consult* reliable Web pages (i.e., those that are authored by professionals) in order to identify issues, books, and other *printed* sources of information, which they could quote in their papers. Use public Web pages to identify issues and printed books. Reliable Web pages are usually identifiable by the domain-markers ".edu" or ".ac.uk" or ".org" in their Web addresses, while much less trustworthy pages are often—but not always—identifiable by the domain-markers ".com" or ".net" in their Web addresses. If in doubt about the appropriateness of any research source—either on the Web or in print—so consult the professor, and run these pages by him.

### Writing Lab

Take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, 1st floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all students' courses. They offer 1-on-1 consultations addressing everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to formatting, crafting strong sentences, and documenting sources. For more info, telephone 843-953-5635, or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>

### Policy on Plagiarism, Cheating, and Disruptive Behavior

**Academic Honor Code.** The academic honor code forbids lying, cheating, and plagiarism. As you prepare your essays for this course, do not plagiarize any of your sources. Plagiarism is copying or paraphrasing the words and ideas of others and passing them off as your own or misleading the reader into thinking that the words and ideas of other writers are your own. Any plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, whether blatant or merely inappropriate paraphrasing, will not be tolerated.

**WARNING: Never-ever(!) copy and paste from the Internet !!**

If you have any questions as you prepare your assignments, please ask the advice of the instructor. If in doubt about anything, quote it--even indirect quotations! **Students found by the instructor to commit these offenses will automatically fail the course with an "F", or else they will be reported to the College Honor Board and receive an "XF"-grade ("Failure due to Dishonesty")**, which will appear as such on the college transcript. Additional penalties can include suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the plagiarism or cheating, as determined by the instructor, the Dean and/or the Honor Board. For definitions of these offenses and explanations of sanctions, see: "The Honor Code," in *College of Charleston Student Handbook*.



You are responsible for informing yourself of all definitions and regulations on this subject. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse before the College Honor Board. Protect yourself; when in doubt, footnote it!



**Classroom Behavior.** Students are reminded that eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in the classrooms of the College of Charleston. The classroom is an inappropriate venue for eating meals, reading newspapers, personal grooming (e.g., combing hair, applying makeup, etc.), or even sleeping. The instructor reserves the right to expel any student from the classroom for unruly or disruptive behavior, and to contact Campus Police when necessary.

**No Electronic Devices in Class.** Students may not operate ANY type of personal electronic device in class, especially: iPods, Blackberrys, Android and Android-like devices of any kind, etc., MP3 players, iPhones, cell phones, smart telephones, smart watches, cameras of any kind, and any similar devices. Students may not use voice or video recorders of any kind, nor may they record any lectures without the prior permission of the instructor.

### !! NO COMPUTERS IN CLASS !!

**Students are not permitted to employ laptop, hand-held computers, digital notebooks, netbooks, iPads, Chromebooks, smartphones, smartwatches, nor any other electronic computing device in class without prior permission of the instructor.** However the professor will consider a request by a student to use an iPad or tablet in class to hand-write their notes. Any student authorized to use a computer, but who abuses this privilege by engaging in activity unrelated to the class (checking e-mail, messaging, surfing the Web, recording, gaming, etc.), will forfeit permission to use the device in class for the rest of the term **and will receive a 3-point reduction in the final course grade.**

Several major studies by Stanford University and other schools have shown, independently, that typically, students who type notes during class usually have less comprehension of the lectures' contents and implications than students writing notes by hand. Similarly a recent study by McMaster University shows that students multi-tasking with a laptop in class--**including those students sitting near them using pen and paper--both(!)** achieve average lower grades than other students. Freaky but true.



**Cell Phones in Class and Exams.** Students may not make or receive cellular telephone calls, podcasts, text messages of any kind, nor accept any electronic pages during the class period. Turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods, iPads, and all other devices at the start of class.

Each time a cell phone or pager goes off or is activated in class during lectures and discussions, it will result in a **3-point reduction in the FINAL(!) course-grade** for the student. However, if a student is found to be texting or receiving a text, it will result in a **5-point reduction in the final course-grade**.

Any cell phone, pager or electronic device going off or activated during an exam, in addition to the 3-point course-grade reduction, will also result in a **15-point grade reduction for that exam**. Any student found even handling a cell phone or electronic device, texting or receiving a text, during an exam will be considered cheating and will receive an automatic failing grade for the entire course, as well as be remanded to the College Honor Board for institutional sanctioning.

**Copyrights, Class Access, etc.** All lectures are the copyright of the instructor. He is their owner, and he reserves all rights to their content. Students do not purchase the lectures, but similar to computer software, they license access to them and their content for study purposes. Students may take and keep written notes from them, as detailed as they wish, and make all necessary use of them for their studies and to meet the academic requirements of this and other courses. Only registered students (or students in the process of registering) and those formally auditing are permitted to sit in this class. Any unregistered persons and guests must have the prior permission of the instructor to sit in on any class. **Students are not permitted to record any lectures without the prior permission of the instructor. Students are never permitted to make any video recordings of the class or activities in the class without permission of the instructor.**

### **Bibliography**

The official bibliography of this course, classified according to discrete subject categories and sub-categories, is located on the History 270 Web pages under the link "Bibliography."