

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA AND WESTERN ASIA

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History 270.001
Fall 2007

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Course Web Page: URL http://www.cofc.edu/~piccione/history_270/

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

A copy of this syllabus is also located on the class Web pages, and students should consult it regularly for any changes in the reading and assignment schedule.

Course Description: This course surveys the history of the ancient Near East, specifically in Western Asia, from the Neolithic Period through the Persian Empire, ca. 10,000-331 BC. It focuses on the rise of civilization in the Tigris-Euphrates river valley and the subsequent history and society of the kingdoms of Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean coast, Asia Minor and the Iranian plateau, including: Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittites, Syria, Phoenicia Canaan, and Persia. As such, it brings together the academic disciplines of Assyriology, Sumerology, Hittitology, Syro-Palestinian Studies and Achaemenid Studies. The class will explore the formation and interrelations of the different cultures, as revealed specifically in both their texts and archaeology, combining written documentation with material culture. This course can also be applied to credits in the Classics major and Archaeology minor.

Course Requirements

Term Paper: Due November 13. Students will complete a term paper (**7-8 pages**) on any topic related to a list of acceptable themes and subject areas pertinent to ancient Mesopotamia and/or Western Asia to be posted on the course Web pages. **Students will be required to submit an annotated bibliography for their paper on October 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.*

Examinations: This course includes a midterm and a final examination, each containing objective questions and essays drawn from the lectures and readings, and videos.

Attendance and Participation: Discussion figures prominently in the class-program. Participation and attendance in class will constitute a significant percentage of the course grade. According to College policy, attendance will be taken regularly in class; unexcused absences will result in grade reduction.

Absences are excused by presenting written documentation to the Office of Associate Dean of Students. Undocumented or self-documented excuses will not be accepted. Running errands is not a valid excuse. If you will miss class for a college function, please inform the instructor at least one week in advance, but **do not telephone him on the same day to say you will be absent, nor should you ever(!) call the History Department office to report your absence.** If the instructor does not call the roll, then a sign-in sheet will be circulated. If your signature is not there, you are counted absent. Students who sign the sheet and then leave are counted as absent and reported to the College Honor Board. Students who leave class for an *inordinate* period of time without valid excuse are marked as absent. *Any student who leaves class without permission and does not return after taking an exam will be recounted as absent, and the exam will receive an automatic failing grade (0 = F).* Students are responsible for all the material in the readings, lectures, videos, etc., whether they are present in class or not.

Make-Up Examinations: This course does not regularly provide make-up quizzes or exams. However, if students present a valid medical excuse documented in writing and processed through the Office of Associate Dean of Students, they will be permitted to complete a comparable written assignment to make up the lost work. This assignment will not be easy or convenient, and it will be graded with considered caution. Except by special arrangement with the instructor, students have only one (1) week to complete and submit any makeup assignment for a quiz before the grade reverts to zero (unless there is continuing documented illness). It is the responsibility of the student to assume the initiative in pursuing any make-up assignment within that time deadline. If a student misses a midterm exam (worth 23% of the grade), comparable make-up work will usually consist of a second term paper, and the submission date must be negotiated with the instructor.

Athletes and Special Needs: Participation in athletic events or practices is NOT(!) a valid excuse to miss examinations, term-paper due dates, etc.; make-up work will not be granted. *Any athletes who expect to miss exams should see the professor, and should seriously reconsider taking this class.*

Any student who has been formally certified by the College through the *SNAP Program* as having special needs entailing accommodations to complete the requirements for this course should consult with the instructor during office hours as soon as possible. They are also responsible for notifying at least one week before each accommodation is needed. Given that this course requires a facility with foreign terms (French, German, Arabic, etc.), including ancient Mesopotamian, Syrian, Hittite and Persian names, texts, and teleological concepts and metaphysics, any special-needs students taking this course as an alternative to a foreign language requirement might find themselves disadvantaged. They should see the instructor as soon as possible during office hours.

Course Textbooks

The required textbooks for this course are:

Kovacs, Maureen. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Stanford University Press, 1989. Paperback. ISBN: 0804717117.

Roux, Georges. *Ancient Iraq*. Third edition. Penguin, March 1993. Paperback. ISBN: 014012523X.

Van de Mieroop, Marc. *A History of the Ancient Near East, c. 3000-323 BC*. Second edition. Blackwell History of the Ancient World 1. Blackwell Publishing Limited, September 2006. Paperback. ISBN: 1405149116

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" and "Reading Assignments"-schedule below which will be updated regularly in the course's Web Pages. *Be sure to consult the Web pages on a regular basis.*

Grading Policy

Final course-grades will be constituted according to the following formula: mid-term exam 23%; term paper 23%; annotated bibliography 15%; final exam 23%; class participation and attendance 20%. Grades in this course are issued according to the numerical scale: A = 92-100; A- = 90-91; B+ = 87-89; B = 82-86; B- = 80-81; C+ = 77-79; C = 72-76; C- = 70-71; D+ = 67-69; D = 62-66; D- = 60-61; F = 0-59; WA = administrative withdrawal due to excessive absences = F; XF = failure due to academic dishonesty.

Paper Requirements

Term Paper. Due date: November 13. Topic: Students are required to complete a term paper on a specific topic of their choice related to ancient Mesopotamian and/or Western Asian social or political history or issues in the historical archaeology of these areas (combining textual sources with material culture). They should consult the 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. Then they must 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). Papers with unapproved topics 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: October 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 personal discussion 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 315), 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. Copies are also available for purchase in the College Bookstore on the general trade shelves.

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. The first place to look is in the bibliography at the end of the appropriate chapter in the course textbook. 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 should confine the bulk of their research to printed publications. They may use the World Wide Web selectively to help research the paper topic. However, there is a great deal of trash on the Web that does not conform to modern academic standards. The World Wide Web contains four types of materials pertaining to ancient Mesopotamia and the Near East:

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 written by Assyriologists (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, UFOlogists, and self-proclaimed prophets of the New Age revelation.

Sadly, this latter Assyrio-crypto-trash [no. 4] constitutes the bulk of Assyriological materials on the Web.

As of now, only very few peer-reviewed professional—specifically Assyriological—journals are published on the Web. Publicly available primary sources on the Web [no. 1] are usually out-of-copyright obsolete translations superceded by modern translations in print. For the purposes of this course, students are permitted to quote from these, **but only with the prior approval of the instructor and only if the texts are not available in print!** Because Assyriological secondary sources on the Web are rarely peer-reviewed, students may quote from [nos. 2 & 3] **but only after consulting with the course instructor on each source!** Web pages for [nos. 1 - 3] are usually identifiable by the domain-markers ".edu" or ".ac" in their Web addresses, and sometimes also by ".org" (denoting educational or charitable organizations).

Where professional peer-reviewed academic journals and books do exist in cyberspace, they are usually digital versions of paper journals and books, and they are collected into archives and full-text databases for easy searching and consultation, such as **Jstore**® (<http://www.jstor.org.nuncio.cofc.edu/jstor/>), **Project Muse**™ (<http://muse.jhu.edu.nuncio.cofc.edu/search/search.pl>), **Infotrac**™ and others. The College of Charleston Libraries subscribes to many of these archives, and they are found on the libraries' web pages under the link, "Databases" (http://www.cofc.edu/~library/search_collection/databases.html#j). *Students do not need the instructor's approval to consult and quote from these journals, books and sources.*

Students may freely consult reliable Web pages in their research to identify issues and research directions or printed sources of data. Note: *Wikipedia* is not consistently reliable because most of its articles are written only by interested amateurs and non-specialists. However, articles there often contain bibliographies of some

usefulness. **However, under no circumstances may students *quote* from the unprofessional Assyrio-crypto-trash [no. 4]** (usually identifiable by the domain-marker ".com" or ".net" in their Web addresses).

***GENERAL RULE:* students may not quote from *any* public Web pages, including encyclopedias, dictionaries, *Wikipedia*, translations, reports, and essays without prior approval of the instructor. The only exceptions are those electronic journals, sources and books located through the catalog and databases of the College of Charleston Libraries (see above). Each violation of this rule found in a paper will receive a significant grade reduction.**

If in doubt about the appropriateness of any research source--either on the Web or in print--please feel free to consult the instructor. He will be happy to examine or discuss individual Web sites with you. Students may never quote from any general encyclopedias, whether from the Web or in paper format..

Policy on Plagiarism, Cheating, and Disruptive Behavior

Plagiarism. As you prepare your papers for this course, be careful not plagiarize any of your sources. Any plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, whether blatant or merely inappropriate paraphrasing, will not be tolerated. If you have any questions as you prepare your assignments, please feel free to ask the advice of the instructor. **If in doubt about anything, quote it--even indirect quotations!** The Honor Code of the College of Charleston strictly prohibits plagiarism and cheating. It includes cheating with cell phones, attempted cheating, and aiding to cheat. Students found by the instructor to commit or abet 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. Additional penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the college at the discretion of the Honor Board. For definitions of these offenses and explanations of sanctions, see the *College of Charleston Student Handbook*, pp. 11-12 (<http://www.cofc.edu/about/handbook.pdf>). For examples of proper and improper quoting and paraphrasing, see "A Guide to Freshman English" on the English Department web pages (http://www.cofc.edu/~english/freshman_writing_guide.html).

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 reading newspapers, personal grooming (such as 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.

Computers in Class. Students are not permitted to employ laptop, hand-held computers, digital notebooks, *I-Pod's*, smart telephones or the like during class *without prior permission of the instructor*. Any authorized student who abuses this privilege by engaging in activity unrelated to the class (checking e-mail, surfing the Web, etc.) will forfeit permission to use the computer in class for the rest of the term and will receive a reduction in the class-participation grade.

Cell Phones in Class and Exams. Students may not make or receive cellular telephone calls or accept electronic pages during the class period. Turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc. at the start of class. **Anytime a cell phone or pager goes off in class, it will result in a 3-point reduction in course-grade for the student. Any cell phone or pager going off during an exam will also result in a grade reduction for that quiz exam.** During exams, students should put all cell phones away and out of reach. Any student found handling a cell phone during an exam will receive a reduction in exam grade and will also be scrutinized closely for cheating. *Thank you. Have a nice course!*

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."

Lectures and Assignments Schedule

The course readings listed below consist of: Van de Mieroop, *History of the Ancient Near East* (2nd ed.), Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (3rd ed.), Kovacs, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and miscellaneous readings located in the campus Library, either in the Reference Room (marked **Ref**), or on Two-hour Reserve (marked **Rs**). Other required readings are freely available for downloading from this Web Page (marked **W**) on this list, URL: <http://www.cofc.edu/~piccione/hist270-01/hist270assign.html>. The full bibliographical citations of all the readings in the listing are found in the course Bibliography on the Web Pages. Readings recommended but not required are listed as "[Recommended]".

Class will adhere to the following course schedule. Students are responsible for the full course material through the readings below. *The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule of lectures, discussions, video presentations, and reading assignments, quizzes and exams at any time.* Students should keep up with this schedule of weekly reading assignments, regardless of any deviation in the schedule of classroom lectures.

Week 1: August 21 and 23

(8/21) Introduction: Course Description

(8/23) Assyriological and Near Eastern Methodologies

Van de Mieroop, "Introductory Concerns," 1-15;

Roux, ch. 2, "In Search of the Past," 17-23;

Ref [Recommended: Frank Hole, "Assessing the Past through Anthropological Archaeology," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. J. Sasson, vol. 4, pt. 11, 2715-2727.]

Week 2: August 28 and 30

(8/28) Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent

Roux, ch. 1, "The Geographical Setting," 1-16;

(8/30) Mesopotamia: Land and Environment (II)

Ref Karl Butzer, "Environmental Change in the Near East and Human Impact on the Land," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. J. Sasson, vol. 1, pt. 2, 123-151.