

**COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON  
WITCHCRAFT, MAGIC AND RELIGION IN ANCIENT EGYPT**

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**History 370.02**  
**Spring 2015**  
**E-mail: piccione@cofc.edu**

Course Web Page: URL <http://www.cofc.edu/~piccione/hist370/>

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 studies the nature of ancient Egyptian religion and its essential magical character. Taking a texts approach supplemented by archaeology and material culture, it traces the history and character of Egyptian religion and magical practices from the Archaic Period (ca. 3050 BC) through early Christianity (c. 7<sup>th</sup> cent AD)—yes, Coptic Christian magic!. It defines the role and nature of Egyptian so-called "magic" in its native concept (*heka*, 'creative power') and sets it against Greek and Roman (i.e., Europe) conceptions of sorcery and witchcraft. It explores the esoteric nature of Egyptian religious thought and the wide variety of beliefs, often contradictory to modern thinking, yet which the Egyptians were able to combine into a unified religious system. Subjects include: the nature and character of magical practice, deities, mythologies and mythopoeic thinking, cosmology and cosmogony, state religion, personal piety and funerary beliefs and customs, temples and shrines, secret passages and crypts, religious rituals, spells and incantations, mystery rites and religious initiations, and the religious function of sports and athletics. Texts include selections from: the *Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*, *Book of the Dead*, the magical papyri, the Books of the Netherworld and ritual inscriptions from temple walls. A final project may include a recreation of an authentic mystery/religious ritual.

### **Course Requirements**

**Classroom Readings Presentation.** Each student will give three 10-minute class presentations on the reading assignments. Each presentation is a *précis* and analysis of a specific primary text or group of primary texts as part of the reading assignment for a given day. Students will sign up for their days and texts. *The presentations are necessary to pass the course*

**Term Paper:** In the second half of the term, each student will prepare a research paper (**12-14 pages**) on a specific topic of Egyptian religion, incorporating a significant number of religious texts with interpretive studies. Students will choose their unique topic from a list provided by the instructor, or they may request a special topic not on the list. The list of topics will be made available in the second week of the term. The term paper is due on April 16. Information about format is located below under "Paper Requirements." *A completed paper is necessary to pass the course.*

**Reading Quizzes:** Quizzes on the class readings will be administered if the professor feels that the class is not meeting its reading requirements.

**Examinations:** This course includes a midterm in seventh week, before the spring break. There is no final examination.

**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 percentage of the course grade. Attendance and participation improve the functioning of the class as well as students' grades. According to College policy, attendance will be taken daily; any and all unexcused absences will result in automatic grade reductions (*see below for policies on athletes and consequences on missing 30% or more of classes*).

Absences are excused by presenting written documentation to the College Absence Memo Office. Undocumented and self-documented ("self-reported") excuses 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 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 students who have missed 30% of class meetings or more, i.e., nine (9) or more individual classes, *regardless of whether they have excused absences or not*, will be subject to **automatic withdrawal** from the course by the professor with a grade of "WA". Why? Because the professor's lectures contain more materials than are found in the textbook and course readers, and discussion and question-and-answer constitute important parts 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 medical reason that any student has missed nine (9) or more classes, he/she should discuss the matter with the professor and consider seeking a medical withdrawal from the course in the Registrar's Office.

**Make-Up Exams:** This course does not regularly provide make-up 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 nor convenient, and it will be graded with considered attention. *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.

**Athletes and Special Needs:** Participation in athletic events or practices is NOT(!) a valid excuse to miss quizzes, paper and report due dates, or interim exams; *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 any due dates. *Any athletes who expect to miss quizzes, or exams should see the professor at the start of term, and must 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 and submit their *SNAP-notification letter*. They are also responsible for notifying at least one week in advance before each accommodation is needed..

## Course Textbooks

The required textbooks for this course are:

Pinch, Geraldine. *Magic in Ancient Egypt*. Revised Edition. University of Texas Press, 2010. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0292722620

Hornung, Erik. *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans., John Baines. Cornell University Press, 1996. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0801483844

Ritner, R. K. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 54. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1993. Free download from:

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/saoc54.pdf>

Meyer, Marvin W. and Richard Smith. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*. Princeton University Press, 1999. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0691004587

### Course Packet on the Web:

The course packet contains 452 pages of mostly primary sources. The readings are accessed through the course Web pages. Other sources are published in printed volumes located in the College Library (Reference or Reserve). The location of each reading is noted in the "Reading Assignments"-schedule below which will be updated regularly in the course's Web Pages. Consult the Web pages on a regular basis.

## Grading Policy

Final course-grades will be constituted according to the following formula: reading quizzes (3) 10%; mid-term exam 20%; oral presentation 10%; term paper 20%; final exam 20%; class participation and attendance 20%. Grades in this course are issued according to the following 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 = 63-57; D- = 60-62; F = 0-59.

## Paper Requirements

**Term Paper. Due date: April 16. Topic:** To be selected from a list to be made available in Week 2. Students should first consult the extensive course bibliography among the Web pages to identify viable paper topics, then confer with the instructor to ensure their feasibility. All topics must be approved in advance by the instructor before beginning to write the paper. Papers not approved in advance will not be accepted. *Completion of the term paper is required to pass the course.* **Paper length: 12-14 pages.**

**Late Policy.** Late papers will be penalized 5 points for each day late (including Saturdays), up to three days, after which they receive an automatic failure. 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.

**Submission of Early Drafts.** Students are strongly encouraged to submit a preliminary draft of their essay and 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 should be submitted in paper format only. Please do not submit term papers electronically on disk or through e-mail, since formatting changes can occur when transferring files between computers. See "Paper Requirements"-link on the course Web pages:

(<http://www.cofc.edu/~piccione/hist370/papers.html>)

for detailed information, advice, and suggestions on form, format, and grading criteria for the 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 citations, such as: footnotes or endnotes plus a separate "Bibliography." *The cover page and the bibliography do not count toward the required number of pages.*

In the preparation and execution of all essays and 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, and bibliographies. Look over Chapters 8-10 on how to cite references and their formats. Choose the type of reference you want: footnotes or endnotes (+ "Bibliography"). Read Chapter 11 (pp. 185-213) to compare their forms and styles:

foot/endnote style:    "**N**"              bibliographical style    "**B**"

Use the bibliographical style found only in Turabian, pp. 280-281 (*but not pp. 278-279!*).

Note: students should not employ "parenthetical references" ("PR") and "reference list" ("RL") for any paper or essay in this course, nor may they--under any circumstances--use the MLA style of notes and references. All papers must have a separate cover page, although students need not follow Turabian closely on the format of this page.

### **Do not employ the MLA style in writing 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 any source among the readings, see the instructor for advice. Please feel free to consult the instructor at any time for advice on preparing the paper. Alternatively, students may consult writing counselors in the Writing Lab, Addlestone Library (<http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/>).

Form and spelling are factors in grading the paper. If you are uncertain of your spelling, use a dictionary or a spell-check program. **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 Researching the Paper**

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 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. synthetical studies and essays prepared by Egyptologists (often as Web versions of reputable printed publications);
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.

As of now, there very few peer-reviewed professional--specifically Near Eastern--journals published on the Web. Publicly available primary sources on the Web [no. 1] are often 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 Near Eastern 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).

Also, some professional peer-reviewed academic journals are also published on the Web. They are usually, but not always, Web-versions of paper journals, and, and they are collected together into archives for easy searching and consultation. The College of Charleston Library subscribes to these archives and databases and many more (e.g., *JStor*, etc.), and they are located in the College's library catalogue under the headings, "databases" and "e-journals" (<http://www.cofc.edu/~library/databases.html>). Students do not need the instructor's approval to consult and quote from these journals.

Students may freely consult these Web pages in their research to identify issues and research directions or printed sources of data. **However, under no circumstances may students quote from the unprofessional Egypto-crypto-bilge trash [no. 4]** (usually identifiable by the domain-marker ".com" or ".net" in their Web addresses). 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 encyclopedias, whether from the Web or in paper format.

**Students should never quote from any general *encyclopedias*,  
whether from the Web or in paper format.**

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

The Honor Code of the College of Charleston strictly prohibits plagiarism, cheating, and attempted cheating. 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. 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, 2014-2015*, pp. 11-12 (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/documents-pdfs/2014-2015-student-handbook.pdf>).

**Electronic Devices in Class.** Students may not operate **ANY** type of personal electronic device in class, especially: iPhones, Blackberrys, Androids and Android-like devices of any kind, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, cell phones, smart telephones, 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 authorization of the instructor.

**Computers in Class.** Students are not normally permitted to employ laptop, hand-held computers, iPads, tablet devices, Kindles, Chromebooks, digital notebooks, netbooks, nor any other electronic computing device in class without prior permission of the instructor. Any student authorized, 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 independent studies, including one from by Stanford University, have shown that typically, students who use laptop computers and 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. Please 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. Any student found to be texting or receiving a text, will receive a 5-point reduction in the final 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 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 reminded that eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in the classrooms of the College of Charleston. 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.

**For: Paper Requirements, Policies on Web Sources, Plagiarism and Comportment, and Lecture & Assignments-schedule, and Bibliography**