The Ancient Near East and Greece

Course Description

In this course we shall deal with four important ancient Mediterranean cultures: The Mesopotamian, the Israelite, the Egyptian, and the Greek. Taking them in that order, we shall trace their development from urbanization, about 3000 B.C., through the glorious cultural period of the Bronze Age (c. 2000-1000 B.C.), and the renaissance of the First Millennium B.C. Strong emphasis will be placed upon the themes of totalitarian government versus political freedom and man's perception of himself within nature and society. An attempt will be made to contrast these differing understandings amidst the Near Eastern and Greek civilizations. Ancient evidence and slides of archaeological remains will be used whenever possible.

Lectures: 2/week plus one discussion section.

Written Assignments and Examinations: 6 week, 12 week, and final exam.

Honors students and 4-credit non-honors students will also write papers (below).

Exams: Will be essay style. They will require an understanding of the fundamental questions, supported by evidence found in the readings and lectures.

Paper Option: Two short (3-5 pages) papers, based upon an analysis of specific ancient material read in this course, and due October 22 and November 24, may be substituted for the 12 week exam. These papers may be rewritten for improvement with consent of T.A. (4-credit students [see below] choosing this option must then write four papers.)

4-credit, non-honors students: Are required to write two short (3-5 pages) papers based on an analysis of specific ancient material read in this course. The first is due November 12; the second December 8. With the permission of the T.A., they may be rewritten for improvement.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you register for 4 credits, you MUST do the required written work. If after having signed up for the fourth credit, you decide that you don't want to complete the written work, you MUST formally drop the credit, with the Registrar, by the 12th week of classes. Otherwise, whether or not you complete the work, you shall be responsible for it.
Honors students: Will participate in a discussion with the instructor. You will choose your own paper topics or projects.

Grading: 3 units: approximately 25% for the 6 and 12 week exams (or paper option); 10% for participation in discussion sections; 40% for the final exam.

4 units: approximately 20% for the 6 and 12 week exams and papers; 10% for participation in discussion sections; 30% for the final.

Books to be Purchased:

Carl Roebuck, The World of Ancient Times
John A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt
Herodotus, The Persian Wars
Sophocles, The Oedipus Cycle of Sophocles
Revised Standard Bible

Lectures:

I. Introduction: History and Oriental Despotism
   Roebuck, 3-17

II. Mesopotamia

1. Early Mesopotamia and Babylonian Society
   Roebuck, 19-32
   Pritchard, 28-39

2. From Sargon to Hammurabi
   Roebuck, 32-46
   Pritchard, 85-86, 133-167

3. Mesopotamian literature: the Creation Story
   Pritchard, 31-19

4. Mesopotamian world outlook
   Pritchard, 40-76

5. Assyria
   Roebuck, 141-153
   Pritchard, 188-208

6. Persia (2 lectures)
   Roebuck, 157-170
   Herodotus I, 95-216

7. Slide lecture
III. The Hebrews

1. From Foundations to David
   Roebuck, 125-135
   I Samuel, 1-24, 31
   II Samuel, 1-20
   I Kings, 1
   Pritchard, 231, 267-274

2. From the Glory of Solomon to the Exile
   I Kings, 1-12, II Kings, 18-25

3. Covenant and Prophecy
   Genesis 1: 24-31
   Exodus, 19-24
   Isaiah, 40, 44, 49
   Pritchard, 278-282

6 WEEK EXAM: OCTOBER 22

IV. Egypt

1. Early Egypt: Pyramids to the Middle Kingdom
   Wilson, 43-153
   Pritchard, 1-2, 5-11, 234-243

2. From the Hyksos to the Empire
   Wilson, 154-205
   Pritchard, 173-182, 225-226, 262-277

3. The Strange Case of Ikhnaton/Fall of the Empire
   Wilson, 206-288
   Pritchard, 184-186

V. Greece

1. Myceanaean Age (2 lectures)
   Roebuck, 101-119

2. Transition to a Classical Mentality (Shame to Guilt Culture)
   No readings

3. Sparta
   Roebuck, 174-203
   Herodotus VI, 56-60

4. Athens
   Roebuck, 203-216
   Herodotus I, 59-64; V, 55-73, 94-95

12 WEEK EXAM: NOVEMBER 24
5. East Meets West: The Persian Invasion of Europe (2 lectures)
   Roebuck, 237-252
   Herodotus V, 96-105; VI, 94-136; VII, 201-VIII 96

6. From Freedom to Imperialism: the Athenian Empire
   Roebuck, 253-275
   Herodotus IX, 108-122

7. The Classical Spirit: What a Piece of Work is Man
   Sophocles, The Antigone

8. Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World
   Roebuck, 349-67, 391-414