Anthropology 118TS  Syllabus  Winter 2009

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

When Saddam came to power in 1979 he plastered 20 foot high portraits of himself in the streets of Baghdad and compared himself to kings, like Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over Babylon thousands of years ago and built massive monuments glorifying themselves and their gods. We'll examine the origins and accomplishments of the ancient civilizations of the Middle East that inspire modern politicians and historians. We'll see how the conflict over Israel/Palestine has roots that go back to struggles for independence in a world dominated by superpowers like Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. The rise of the first civilizations in the Fertile Crescent provides the focus of the first half of the course. The second half covers development of the great empires of Egypt, the Hittites, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, ending with the Hellenistic era brought about by the conquest of Alexander the Great in c. 330 BCE. Combining archaeological and historical sources, we'll look at the political, social, religious and economic underpinnings that allowed these great civilizations to flourish, along with the institutions and values that made up the fabric of daily life, and above all peaceful interactions and conflicts between the various cultures. We'll also investigate the origins of the Bible and the emergence of monotheism, as well as the contribution of the Middle East to the rise of western civilization in Greece and Rome.

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4.
TIME & PLACE: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12-1:15, NH 1111.

COURSE WEBSITE:
http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/faculty/stsmith/courses/118TS.html

COURSE GOALS
1. Investigate the rise and development of civilization in the Middle East through a focus on the Levant (Syro-Palestine) as a crossroads of civilization. We will cover both the great accomplishments and ferocious conflicts of the region, from the beginnings of settled life 12,000 years ago to the Roman conquest 2000 years ago.
2. Examine the relationship between archaeology and the Bible. What does archaeology tell us about the cultural setting from which the Bible emerged? What is myth and what is history? How was the Biblical narrative shaped by its times?
3. Assess the impact of the Middle East on the rise of Western civilization.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will have a midterm counting for 1/4 of the grade, a comprehensive final exam counting for 1/2 of the grade, and a short project paper counting for 1/4 of the grade. The mid-term will consist of a map section (20%), short description identifications (40%), and essay questions (40%). The final will consist of an image section (20%), short description identifications (40%), and essay questions (40%). For each section there will be some choice of what to answer (e.g., identify 10 of 15 place names listed, one of two essay questions, etc.). Exam questions will be drawn from both the readings and lectures. The Final Exam will focus on the second half of class, but will include a comprehensive component. Study questions and lists for the identification and map sections will be handed out before each exam. Make up exams can be scheduled if it is not possible to attend on an exam day. This should be arranged before the exam is given; otherwise a penalty may be assessed (a valid excuse such as illness or a family emergency will never be penalized). In the 10 page (double spaced, not larger than 12 pt. font) project, students will interpret an archaeological data set from the Levant. This project will be discussed in detail in class and through a series of handouts.

Readings will be assigned from the following (see Course Schedule for specific assignments):


The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible or Tanakh), whichever version you like or you can just go with the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), for example: The new Oxford annotated Bible, Reference Section, BS 191.5 A1 2001 .N49.

Several translations can be found on-line at: http://www.biblegateway.com/

ANTHRO 118TS COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1, JAN 6, 8
Δ Introduction.
Δ Middle Eastern Archaeology, Biblical Archaeology.
Readings: Ben-Tor, Chapter 1.

WEEK 2, JAN 13, 15
Δ Beer busts & Big Men (or Women): the Agricultural “Revolution” in Syria-Palestine and the beginnings of settled life at Jericho, Jarmo, Çatal Hüyük and Ain Ghazal.
Readings: Roaf, pp. 24-48; Ben-Tor, Chapter 2.
Project Begins – Step Trench 1&2.
Δ Film: Noah’s Flood in Context: Legend or History?

**WEEK 3, JAN 20, 22**

Δ The Road to “Civilization” – The Urban Revolution:  The Halafian, Ubaid and Uruk Cultures, the Egyptian Predynastic and Nubian A-Group.
Readings:  Roaf, pp. 48-68.

Readings:  Roaf, pp. 68-95.

**WEEK 4, JAN 27, 29**

Δ They came from Ur:  Early Bronze Age Syro-Palestine and Biblical Tradition – Creation, Floods and Patriarchs. The city-states of Ugarit, Byblos, and Ebla.
Project, Step 3.

Δ An Eye for an Eye.  Sargon, Hammurapi and the unification of Mesopotamia, the early Assyrians and their trading colonies in Anatolia.
Readings:  Roaf, pp. 96-130.

**WEEK 5, FEB 3, 5**

Δ Crossroads of Civilization: Trade and interaction in Middle Bronze Age Syro-Palestine, The Amorites/Hyksos.
Readings:  Ben-Tor, Chapters 3 and 6.
Project, Step 4.

Δ Imperial Babylon: The Kassites and Mesopotamian Civilization.
Readings:  Roaf, pp. 139-42; 155-159.

**WEEK 6, FEB 10, 12**

Δ February 10th:  Mid-Term Exam (covers all material through Week 5).
Δ Age of Empires: Pharaoh, the Syrian Mitanni and Turkish Hittites.
Readings:  Roaf, pp. 131-139, 142-147.
Project, Step 5

**WEEK 7, FEB 17, 19**

Δ Sailing the Great Green:  Trade and interaction in Late Bronze Age Syro-Palestine in an International Age.
Readings:  Roaf, pp. 148-51, 156-7; Ben-Tor, Chapter 7.

Δ Pillar of Fire: The Bible as history, myth or reality?  The Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. The invasion of the Sea Peoples, the fall of the Hittites and the Kassites, Egypt stems the tide.
WEEK 8, FEB 24, 26
△ Humping across the Desert – Camels and Empires in the Iron Age: Desert trade and the Assyrian domination of Babylonia and Nubian domination of Egypt.
Readings: Roaf, pp., 154-5, 158-191; Ben-Tor, Chapter 8.
Project, Step 6 & Final Report
△ Iron Man Competitions: The fall of Assyria and the rise of the Neo-Babylonians and Persians.
Readings: Roaf, pp. 192-221.

WEEK 9, MAR 3, 5
△ By the Waters of Babylon: The Archaeology of Syro-Palestine in the Iron Age, the Babylonian Captivity and its influence on the historicity of the Bible.
Readings: Ben-Tor, Chapter 9. Bible - David & Goliath: 1 Samuel 16-18, Queen of Sheba: 1 Kings 10-12, Fall of Israel and Judah: 2 Kings 16-25, Psalms & Proverbs, Prophets: Jeremiah.
△ Black Athena? Egypt, the Near East and the origins of Western Civilization. The historicity of Homer and influence of the early Greeks by Egypt and the Near East in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.

WEEK 10, MAR 10, 12
△ Toga Party: The Conquest of Alexander the Great, the Romans, and the Hellenization of the Near East.
△ Gilgamesh, Gnosis & Moses: The contribution of the Near East to Judeo-Christian Theology, Western Civilization & Pop Culture.
Readings: Roaf, pp. 222-223.

Papers due at beginning of class Tuesday, March 10

FINAL EXAM, TUESDAY, MARCH 17, NOON-3 PM.