

Georgetown University
The Mediterranean World in Antiquity
Professor Tommaso Astarita

Department of History
HIST 130-61
Fall 2009 Syllabus

Office Hours: no formal office hours, but you will see me around the Villa most days, and I am always happy to talk to any of you
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This survey course will cover the general historical developments of the Mediterranean region and the Middle East from the rise of Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations in the fourth millennium B.C. through the rise of Islam and the emergence of a new Christian empire in western Europe in the late first millennium A.D. We will review major political, economic, social, religious, cultural, and artistic developments. One of our main themes will be the interaction and mutual influences between different cultures, civilizations, and religions. The course aims thus to offer a broad introduction to a complex period of history; to lead us to reflect on cultural interactions, differences, and similarities across long spans of time and wide geographical areas; and to allow students to further their understanding of historical thinking and analysis. The latter goal will especially be the focus both of our readings and of the writing assignments. The readings will consist of primary sources, works of many genres and origins, and we will examine how different types of sources shed light on various elements of the past. Writing assignments will push students to develop their critical reading, writing, and analytical skills. There will also be regular discussions, and a final examination.

Format: The class meets twice a week, on M at 2:45-4:15, and on W afternoon at different times depending on the week. We will try to mix lecture and discussion formats virtually for every class.

Readings: The following readings will be required and have been ordered. We will also read excerpts from many other readings, which will be all available on Blackboard (see below for details). I will also distribute in class packets with print-outs of the somewhat longer excerpts. All these excerpts are briefly introduced in a handout (also on Blackboard). For each of the longer readings (i.e., those listed here in this section), there will also be a handout with a brief introduction and possible questions for discussion; these handouts (available on Blackboard) will also indicate when we are only reading selections from these texts. There is no textbook for this class.

Books ordered:

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Herodotus, Histories

Aristophanes, "Clouds" and "Lysistrata"

Suetonius, The Twelve Caesars

Augustine, Confessions

Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks

Einhard and Notker, Two Lives of Charlemagne

Excerpts from other sources (details below), available on Blackboard and/or distributed in class

Requirements: There will be a final examination and several writing assignments; separate handouts on the paper assignments are available on Blackboard. Participation in discussion will also form part of the course grade, which will be calculated as follows:

short papers:	20%
first paper:	15%
second paper:	15%
final exam:	20%
class participation:	30%

Final Exam: The final exam will be scheduled later on, depending on the Villa exam calendar.

Field Trips: we will have a couple of short local field trips reserved for this class, and one day-long trip, in which our entire group will participate (see details below).

Blackboard: All students in the class are automatically registered for this course on Blackboard. When you log on to Blackboard and access the site for this course, you will find all course documents, in Word format, including several short readings. Please familiarize yourselves with the Blackboard course site, and let me know if you encounter any problems accessing it or the materials.

Syllabus: The present syllabus of lecture topics and discussion readings may be revised during the term, but you will be informed of any change.

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

- Sep 7 Introduction; Prehistory and Ancient Egypt
- Sep 9 Mesopotamia and Israel
Read: excerpts from Genesis and from Code of Hammurabi (on Blackboard)
- Sep 14 Near Eastern Empires
Read: Gilgamesh

GREECE

- Sep 16 Greek Beginnings
Read: excerpts from Iliad and from Strabo (on Blackboard)
- Sep 21 The Greek Polis
Read: Herodotus
- Sep 23 Tour of Fiesole archeological area and museum (during class time, details to be discussed)

- Sep 28 Greece in the Fifth Century
Read: excerpts from Aeschylus' "Persians" and from Thucydides (on Blackboard)
- Sep 30 Greek Thought and Art
Read: excerpts from Sappho, Pindar, Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex", and Plato's Apology (on Blackboard)
- Oct 5 The Age of Alexander
Read: Aristophanes, "Lysistrata" and "Clouds"
- Oct 7 The Hellenistic World
Read: excerpts from Plutarch, Life of Alexander, and from Leonardo Bruni (on Blackboard)
- F Oct 9 FIELD TRIP (morning) to Downtown Florence and Archeological Museum (details to be discussed)

ROME AND THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

- Oct 12 Origins and Growth of the Republic
Read: excerpts from Pliny the Elder and from Livy (on Blackboard)
- Oct 14 The Fall of the Republic
Terence, "The Mother-in-Law" (distributed in class); excerpts from Sallust (on Blackboard)
- Oct 19 The Age of Augustus
Read: Suetonius, Lives of Caesar and Augustus; excerpt from Virgil's Aeneid; Tacitus, Annals, I.1-10 (Aeneid and Tacitus on Blackboard)
- Oct 21 The Principate
Read: excerpts from Seneca's letters and from Petronius (on Blackboard)

- **First Paper Due** -

- Nov 2 From the Principate to the Dominate
Read: Suetonius, Lives of Gaius and Nero; Tacitus, Histories, I.1-11 (Tacitus on Blackboard)
- Nov 4 The Rise of Christianity
Read: excerpts from the New Testament (on Blackboard)
- Nov 9 Christian Thought
Read: Augustine

THE LATE ANTIQUE AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

- Nov 11 The Christian Empire and the Fall of Rome

Read: excerpts from Ammianus Marcellinus and first excerpts from Bede's History (on Blackboard)

- F Nov 13 FIELD TRIP: Ravenna (with the whole group)
- Nov 16 The Christian West
Read: Gregory of Tours; and second excerpts from Bede (Bede on Blackboard)
- Nov 18 Byzantium
Read: excerpts from Procopius and Anna Comnena (on Blackboard)
- Nov 23 The Rise of Islam
Read: excerpts from the Koran (on Blackboard)
- Nov 25 Carolingian Europe
Read: Einhard and Notker
- Nov 30 The Feudal System
Read: excerpts from Rule of St. Benedict and feudal documents (on Blackboard)
- **Second Paper Due** -
- Dec 1 Final Review; Evaluations

The Honor System

In order to facilitate the functioning of the University Honor System, I wish here to clarify various issues related to grading for this class.

Academic honesty is not only a standard to which all of you have pledged yourselves, but is also the foundation of any intellectual exchange, and thus of any intellectual community such as a University. Academic honesty does not consist simply in the avoidance of outright cheating on exams, but more generally represents a set of standards all of us must follow in our academic work in order to protect the integrity and effectiveness of that work, and to preserve the ideals and essence of teaching, learning, and research. This implies, for instance, never submitting as our own scholarly work which we have not personally produced in its entirety, not collaborating with others on assignments and projects that are not specifically designed as collaborative efforts, and learning how to acknowledge properly all sources we may use in our written work. The latter includes not only proper documentation style for direct citations, but also references when we paraphrase sources and acknowledgements when we employ or develop ideas we have found in the work of others. These practices apply to sources of any type, from books to newspapers, from lectures to materials available on the Internet, and so on.

I urge you to think about these standards and to familiarize yourselves with the University's Honor System. Please remember that

violations of the Honor System are very serious actions, and can have extremely serious consequences that will affect your work at Georgetown and potentially your future career opportunities. It is much wiser to turn in a weak paper you wrote in a rush than to submit a plagiarized paper; doing the latter will ruin your entire work for the course and, at the very least, your entire semester.

I also wish to clarify some of the grading procedures I will use in this course. To calculate your overall course grade I use a point scale based on 400 total points. If, for instance, an assignment is worth 25% of the total grade, an A on that assignment will give you 100 points, a B 75, a C 50, and so on. Your total points are then converted into your final letter grade for the course. Thus an F on any assignment will count as a zero. If you fail to submit anything at all for any assignment (e.g. if you do not turn in a paper before the final deadline, or never take an exam) you will not only receive zero points for that assignment, but I will lower your total grade by one grade.