



## ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

When Saddam Hussein 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 like the former ruler of Iraq. 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.

**INSTRUCTOR:** STUART TYSON SMITH

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 and by appointment.

**TIME & PLACE:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5-6:15, 2001a HSSB.

Final Exam, Thursday December 10, 7:30-10:30.

**COURSE WEBSITE:**

<http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/faculty/stsmith/courses/118TS.html>

### COURSE GOALS

1. Investigate the rise and development of civilization in the Near (Middle) East, including the Levant (Syro-Palestine) as a crossroads of civilization and commerce. 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.
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):

Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia*. Facts on File, New York, 2002. In the non-circulating reference section of the library.

Amnon Ben-Tor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1994.

The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible or Tanakh). For example, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), *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/>

Project Prompts and other materials available for download from the [Course Web Site](#).

## ANTHRO 118TS COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1, SEPT 24

Δ Introduction: Middle Eastern Archaeology, Biblical Archaeology.

Readings: Roaf pp. 10-23, 152-153. Ben-Tor, Chapter 1.

### WEEK 2, SEPT 29, OCT 1 – PART 1: RISE OF CIVILIZATION

Δ Beer busts & Big Men (or Women): the Agricultural “Revolution” in Syria-Palestine. Jarmo, and Ain Ghazal.

Readings: Roaf, pp. 24-48; Ben-Tor, Chapter 2.

Project Begins – Step Trench 1&2.

Δ The Road to “Civilization” – The Urban Revolution: the beginnings of settled life at Jericho and Çatal Hüyük. The Hassuna, Samara, Halafian, Ubaid and Uruk Cultures. The “Uruk Expansion” and contact with the Egyptian Predynastic.

Readings: Roaf, pp. 48-68.

## WEEK 3, OCT 6, 8

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

*Readings: Ben-Tor, Chapters 3 and 4. Bible – Creation: Genesis 1-4. Babel & Flood – Genesis 6-9. Table of Nations: Genesis 10. Abraham: Genesis 12-17. Sodom & Gomorrah – Genesis 18-19.*

△ The Wedgies: Origins of Mesopotamian city states, Jemdet Nasr and the Sumerians in Southern Mesopotamia. Scribbles: Pharaohs and Hieroglyphs in Egypt. Royal Tombs at Ur.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 68-77.*

Project, Step 3.

## WEEK 4, OCT 13, 15

△ Sumer & Akkad. Rival city states and ephemeral unification under Sargon, Naram-Sin, & Ur-Nammu. Sumerian-Akkadian religious and cultural syncretisms. The City of Ur.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 78-95.*

△ An Eye for an Eye. Babylon, Hammurapi and Babylon. Syrian Ebla, Mari and the early Assyrians trading colonies in Anatolia.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 96-130.*

## WEEK 5, OCT 20, 22

△ Crossroads of Civilization: Trade and interaction in Middle Bronze Age Syro-Palestine, The Amorites/Hyksos. Joseph & his amazing coat.

*Readings: Ben-Tor, Chapters 5 and 6. Joseph & the Sojourn in Egypt: Genesis 36-50.*

Project, Step 4

△ October 22<sup>nd</sup>: Mid-Term Exam (covers material through Week 5).

## WEEK 6, OCT 27, 29 – PART II: EMERGENCE OF EMPIRES

△ Age of Empires: Pharaoh vs. the Hyksos, the Babylonian Kassites & Syrian Mitanni.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 131-139, 142-147.*

Project, Step 5

△ Hatti Land: The Hittite Empire.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 139-42; 155-159.*

## WEEK 7, NOV 3, 5

△ Sailing the Great Green: Trade and interaction in Late Bronze Age Syro-Palestine in an International Age. Ugarit & Ulu Burun. Egypt's Empire & the Canaanites.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 148-51, 156-7; Ben-Tor, Chapter 7.*

△ 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.

*Readings: Bible – Exodus: Exodus. The Law – Deuteronomy. Conquest: Joshua, Judges 1-2:5.*

## WEEK 8, NOV 10, 12

Δ Iron Men I: - Assyrian domination of Babylonia and the first regional empire.

*Readings: Roaf, pp., 154-5, 158-191; Ben-Tor, Chapter 8.*

*Project, Step 6 & Final Report*

Δ Iron Men II - Competitions: The fall of Assyria and the rise of the Neo-Babylonians and Persians.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 192-221.*

## WEEK 9, NOV 17-19

Δ Film: *Noah's Flood in Context: Legend or History?*

*Readings (for review): Bible – Creation: Genesis 1-4. Babel & Flood – Genesis 6-9. Table of Nations: Genesis 10.*

Δ By the Waters of Babylon: Early Iron Age Levant, Israelite origins and 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.*

## WEEK 10, NOV 24, 26 – PART III: LEGACY

Δ Toga Party: The Conquest of Alexander the Great, the Romans. Humping across the Desert – Camels & Trade in the Levant during the later Iron Age. Hellenization in the Near East. Focus on Petra and Jerash.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 214-15.*

Δ Thanksgiving Holiday, November 26-27.

## WEEK 11, DEC 1, 4

Δ Black Athena? The Hellenistic encounter with the Near East and the origins of Classical Civilization. Contributions of the Near East to Western Civilization. Focus on Alexandria.

Δ Gilgamesh, Gnosis & Moses: The Near East under Rome and Byzantium. Origins of Christianity. The contribution of the Near East to Western Civilization & Pop Culture.

*Readings: Roaf, pp. 222-223.*

*Papers due not later than Friday, December 5 in class or in 1003 HSSB.*

