Dr. James F. Osborne Spring Semester 2015

Office Hours: Wed., 2-4 pm ARCH 0370

Rhode Island Hall, Room 210 MWF, 1:00-1:50

(401) 863-2306 Rhode Island Hall, Room 008

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**ARCH 0370:**

**Before the Islamic State: The Archaeologies of Ancient Mesopotamia**

**Course Description**

Front-page news stories report the often-horrific actions and assertions of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).  This part of the world—ancient Mesopotamia, the “cradle of civilization”—is home, however, not only to modern geopolitical conflict, but to the world’s often equally violent earliest states and empires. This class introduces students to the archaeology and history of this extraordinarily rich region, whose cultures also pioneered the development of writing, astronomy, mathematics, urbanism and beer.

**Readings**

There are two textbooks for this class:

* Liverani, Mario. *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy*. 2014.
* Roaf, Michael. *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*. 1990.

These are available for purchase from the university bookstore. The remaining readings are available for download from the “Discussions” section of the course website on Canvas.

**Requirements and Grading**

(1) Regular attendance and participation. Lectures must be attended regularly, and with readings done ahead of time. Friday’s classes are discussion sessions on thematic topics related to the lecture material; it is especially important that students arrive with those class’s readings complete, and ready to talk about their content. (20%)

(2) Two map quizzes. (5% each, 10% total)

(3) Two short papers. Students will write a short (800-1,000 words) paper that responds to one or two questions provided by the instructor. Papers will incorporate material from the readings, lectures, and discussion sessions. (10% each, 20% total)

(4) A midterm examination. Short answers (multiple choice, true/false, etc.), IDs, and short essay questions. (15%)

(5) A final examination. Short answers (multiple choice, true/false, etc.), IDs, and short essay questions. (35%)

**Absences**

Absences are excused in the case of religious holidays, family emergencies, and illnesses (the latter with a signed letter from your physician). Each unexcused absence will result in a subtraction in your cumulative participation grade.

**WEEK 1**

Wed., Jan. 21: Introduction: scope, methods, overview

Fri., Jan. 23: Mesopotamian environments, south and north

*Reading*:

Postgate, chap. 1, pp. 3-21

Roaf pp.18-23.

**WEEK 2**

Mon., Jan. 26: Language and writing

*Reading*:

Postgate, chap. 3, pp. 51-70.

Roaf, p. 70, 150-51.

Wed., Jan. 28: The Neolithic period in the Near East

*Reading*:

Matthews, chap. 3, pp. 67-93.

Roaf, pp. 25-34.

Fri., Jan 30: *Discussion:* Defining Near Eastern archaeology as a discipline

*Reading*:

Roaf, p. 152-53

Matthews, chap. 1, pp. 1-26.

Liverani, chap. 1, pp. 3-16.

**WEEK 3**

Mon, Feb. 2: \* \* No class, instructor away \* \*

Wed., Feb. 4: Uruk and the rise of cities

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 58-63

Matthews, pp. 102-114.

Liverani, chap. 4, pp. 61-80.

Fri., Feb. 6: The “Uruk Phenomenon” and early urbanism in the north

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 63-73.

Matthews, pp. 114-126.

**WEEK 4**

Mon., Feb. 9: Settlement patterns and landscape archaeology

*Reading*:

Wilkinson, chap. 6, pp. 100-127.

Wed., Feb. 11: \* \* No class, instructor away \* \*

Fri., Feb. 13: \* \* No class, instructor away \* \*

**WEEK 5**

Mon., Feb. 16: \* \* No class, Presidents’ Day \* \*

Wed., Feb. 17: Early Dynastic period: 3rd Millennium city-states of the Diyala;

**First short paper due**

*Reading*:

TBD

Fri., Feb. 20: *Discussion:* (Re)interpreting art from the Diyala

*Reading*:

Evans, chaps. 1-2, pp. 15-75.

**WEEK 6**

Mon., Feb. 23: Early Dynastic period: 3rd millennium city-states of Sumer, royal cemetery of Ur

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 78-93

Liverani, chap. 6, pp. 93-114.

Wed., Feb. 25: The Akkadian Empire

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 96-99.

Liverani, chap. 8, pp. 133-54.

Fri., Feb. 27: *Discussion:* Understanding the royal tombs of Ur

*Reading*:

Pollock, chap. 8, pp. 196-217.

Dickson, pp. 123-44.

**WEEK 7**

Mon., March 2: The Ur III period

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 99-105.

Liverani, pp. 155-70.

***Wed., March 4: Midterm Exam***

Fri., March 6: *Discussion:* Style and rhetoric in royal monuments

Winter 1985, pp. 11-32.

Winter 1996, pp. 85-107.

**WEEK 8**

Mon., March 9: The Old Assyrian period, Assyrian trade network in Anatolia

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 112-116.

Liverani, pp. 207-20.

Wed., March 11: The Middle Bronze Age in Syria

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 116-20.

Liverani, pp. 221-39.

Fri., March 13: *Discussion:* Tribes and states

*Reading*:

Rowton, pp. 1-30.

Fleming, pp. 227-40.

**WEEK 9**

Mon., March 16: The Old Babylonian period in the south

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 121-23.

Liverani, pp. 240-55.

Wed., March 18: The era of international diplomacy: Hittites, Mitanni

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 132-139; “Hattusas” box on pp. 144-45.

Liverani, chaps. 16-18, pp. 271-325.

Fri., March 20: *Discussion:* Old Babylonian terracotta figurines

*Reading*:

Stone, pp. 83-107.

Assante 2002, pp. 27-52.

Assante 2006, pp. 177-207.

**WEEK 10**

Mon., March 23: \* \* No class, Spring Break \* \*

Wed., March 25: \* \* No class, Spring Break \* \*

Fri., March 27: \* \* No class, Spring Break \* \*

**WEEK 11**

Mon., March 30: The era of international diplomacy continued: Assyrian, Babylonians, and residential cities

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 139-46.

Liverani, chaps. 20-21, pp. 347-77.

Wed., April 1: The rise of city-states in southern Anatolia and northern Syria

*Reading*:

Liverani, chaps. 25-26, pp. 434-57.

Fri., April 3: *Discussion:* Art and diplomacy

*Reading*:

Feldman, pp. TBD.

**WEEK 12**

Mon., April 6: The Kingdom of Urartu

*Reading*:

Roaf, p. 172; “Urartian Metalwork” box on pp. 170-71.

Liverani, pp. 521-26.

Zimansky, pp. 103-15.

Wed., April 8: Nimrud and the early dominance of the Neo-Assyrians

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 158-75.

Liverani, pp. 475-84.

Fri., April 10: *Discussion:* Approaches to ancient empires

*Reading*:

Matthews, chap. 5, pp. 127-154.

Morrison, pp. 1-9.

**WEEK 13**

Mon., April 13: Later capital cities of the Neo-Assyrian Empire: Khorsabad, Nineveh

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 176-91.

Liverani, pp. 485-96.

Wed., April 15: \* \* No class, instructor away \* \*

Fri., April 17: \* \* No class, instructor away \* \*

**WEEK 14**

Mon., April 20: Nebuchadnezzar II and the Babylonians

**Second short paper due**

*Reading*:

Roaf, pp. 192-93; 198-204.

Liverani, chap. 31, pp. 537-53.

Wed., April 22: *Discussion:* Iraq, ISIS, and cultural heritage

*Reading*:

TBD.

Fri., April 25: \* \* No class, reading week begins \* \*

***Final Exam date to be determined.***

**Supplementary Reading List**

Assante, Julie. "Sex, Magic and the Liminal Body in the Erotic Art and Texts of the Old Babylonian Period." In *Sex and Gender in the Ancient near East.*, edited by S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting, 27-51, 2002.

Assante, Julia. "Undressing the Nude: Problems in Analyzing Nudity in Ancient Art, with an Old Babylonian Case Study." In *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*, edited by Silvia Schroer, 177-207, 2006.

Childe, V. Gordon. "The Urban Revolution." *The Town Planning Review* 21, no. 1 (1950): 3-17.

Cowgill, George L. "Origins and Development of Urbanism: Archaeological Perspectives." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 525-49.

Dickson, D. Bruce. "Public Transcripts Expressed in Theatres of Cruelty: The Royal Graves at Ur in Mesopotamia." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 16, no. 2 (2006): 123-44.

Evans, Jean M. *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture: An Archaeology of the Early Dynastic Temple*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Feldman, Marian H. *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient near East, 1400-1200 Bce*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Fleming, Daniel E. "Kingship of City and Tribe Conjoined: Zimri-Lim at Mari." In *Nomads, Tribes, and the State in the Ancient near East: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Jeffrey Szuchman, 227-40. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2009.

Matthews, Roger. *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: Theories and Approaches*. London; New York: Routledge, 2003.

Pollock, Susan. *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden That Never Was*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Postgate, J. N. *Early Mesopotamia : Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

Rowton, M. "Enclosed Nomadism." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17, no. 1 (1974): 1-30.

Stone, Elizabeth C. "Chariots of the Gods in Old Babylonian Mesopotamia (C. 2000-1600 Bc)." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 3, no. 1 (1993): 83-107.

Wilkinson, Tony J. *Archaeological Landscapes of the near East*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2003.

Winter, Irene J. "After the Battle Is Over: The "Stele of the Vultures" and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient near East." *Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985): 11-32.

Winter, Irene J. "Sex, Rhetoric, and the Public Monument: The Alluring Body of Naram-Sin of Agade." In *Sexuality in Ancient Art. Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, edited by N.B. Kampen, 11-26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Zimansky, Paul. "Urartian Material Culture as State Assemblage: An Anomaly in the Archaeology of Empire." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 299/300 (1995): 103-15.