**ARCH 1635 The Great Heresy: Egypt in the Amarna Age**

Rhode Island Hall room 108

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50am

Instructor: Laurel Bestock

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm and by appointment, Rhode Island Hall room 209

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Teaching Assistants:

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**Course Description:**

This class provides a critical examination of Egypt during the Amarna Period, roughly 1350-1334 BC. This era was one of great transformation, most notably the introduction by the king Akhenaten of a new religion that focused solely on the light from the disc of the sun. In order to properly worship this god Akhenaten not only closed old temples of Egypt, he built an entirely new city to house temples, palaces, an urban center and tombs. This city – known now as Amarna – was abandoned shortly after Akhenaten’s death. Because of this it is the most accessible and extensively documented ancient urban site in Egypt, meaning that its archaeological importance is greater even than the key role it plays in illuminating this particular period. In addition to constructing a new city, Akhenaten marked his theological ideas by promoting a new and very different style of art. Artistic production was high during this short period and the number of sculptures, paintings and reliefs we have help us to understand both changes and continuities in Egyptian culture at this time. In addition to archaeological and artistic sources, we have large numbers of extant texts from the Amarna period. These document not only the religious “revolution” of Akhenaten but also the workings of international diplomacy at a time when great powers were increasingly coming to rule the Eastern Mediterranean world.

This course will take an integrated look at this diverse set of evidence. We will delve into both the physical and ideological settings of the time, and will examine some of the most interesting and enigmatic characters from Egyptian history, including not only Akhenaten himself but his wife Nefertiti and his probable son, Tutankhamun. At the end of the course we will turn to the reaction against the Amarna period, which was almost entirely forgotten from shortly after its occurrence until its rediscovery in the 19th century.

While some background in Egyptology is useful for this course, there are no prerequisites. The instructor is happy to provide suggestions for additional reading to students who require basic grounding in Egyptian history and culture.

**Course Objectives:**

Often considered to be the first monotheistic religion, Akhenaten’s “revolution” has led to great interest since it was rediscovered. Much of this interest, scholarly and popular, has been biased because of the emotional and religious backgrounds of those who have studied Amarna. Because this secondary literature is so varied and problematic, and because the primary source material is so extensive, studying Amarna offers the student the perfect opportunity to hone critical thinking skills. As such, students in this class will not only come to understand one of the most interesting periods of Egyptian history and culture, they will develop their ability to evaluate evidence and secondary literature. Mastery of the material will be demonstrated in two exams; development of critical thinking and evaluation of evidence will be demonstrated in a research paper on a topic of choice.

**Course format:**

This class will be primarily lecture-based, with some classes devoted to discussion of assigned readings. During both lectures and designated discussion days students are always encouraged to ask questions and present their own ideas and interpretations. Regular attendance and engagement in class form the course participation element of your grade.

**Assessment:**

Exams: 30% each (2)

Paper: 30%

Course participation: 10%

**Exams:**

There will be two exams for this course, one at the middle of the term and one on the last scheduled course day. The second exam is not cumulative, but deals only with the second half of the class. Each exam will last 80 minutes and will consist of a combination of short answers and one long essay. The exams are closed-book; you may not access the internet or any electronic devices during the exam and may not bring books or notes with you. If you require special accommodation for exams please get in touch with the instructor at least ten days prior to the midterm.

First Exam: March 3

Second Exam: April 23

**Paper:**

One substantial research paper for this course will allow students to explore in depth a topic of interest to them. Topics and preliminary bibliographies must be handed in for approval three weeks prior to the paper due date. You must use original sources in your research, including translations of texts and archaeological reports as appropriate, as well as secondary sources. While you are encouraged to identify topics in part based on the general readings for the course, you must go substantially beyond these general works in amassing a bibliography. At the time the preliminary bibliography is due, you should have identified at least five sources directly relevant to your topic. The paper itself should cite at least eight sources. No more than two of these should be general works, and you may not cite internet sources unless they have been explicitly discussed with and cleared by the professor. You are *strongly* encouraged to speak to the professor and/or TAs about potential topics before developing your proposal and bibliography; identifying focused research topics is one of the most difficult tasks facing the student of the ancient world and we are more than happy to help you narrow your interests into a feasible, question-oriented topic. Your paper should be approximately 2500-3000 words long and must include proper citations. Failure to cite properly will result in a full grade deduction. Papers will be graded on quality of research, strength of argument, organization and writing style.

Topic and bibliography: March 19

Final paper: April 16

**Course policies:**

Late work is unacceptable. The paper topic with bibliography and the final paper are due at 11:59pm on the dates specified, uploaded to Canvas. No extensions on the paper or exams will be granted without a signed medical excuse presented to the instructor *prior* to the deadline or exam.

**Books (available at the Brown Bookstore)**

**Required**

1. Hornung *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*

2. Silverman, Wegner and Wegner *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun: Revolution and Restoration* (Silverman et al. in the syllabus)

This is a very basic overview with excellent illustrations. We will read it in its entirety early in the semester as background, and you are encouraged to return to it frequently for introductions to topics we will treat in more depth. The weekly readings after the first two weeks will be more detailed and technical; it will help you put them in context to have read Silverman et al. first.

3. Kemp, *Amarna: City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti*

4. Dodson, *Amarna Sunset*

**Suggested**

Murnane *Texts from the Amarna Period* (Murnane in the syllabus)

This book is available as an ebook through Josiah, but it can be clunky to read online. Since it is available free I have not ordered it from the bookstore, but it is an invaluable resource and you might want to get it yourself if your interest in the topic is deep.

Redford, *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*

This is not required because it is out of print, but it is very worth owning if you are interested enough in the period that you will want to look at your books again some day. The assigned readings will be posted to Canvas.

To be aware of: There is more written on the Amarna Period than any other time period in Egypt. A bibliography compiled by Geoffrey Martin lists over 2000 titles (*A Bibliography of the Amarna Period and its Aftermath*, London, 1991). This is an excellent place to start for research; most of the readings assigned below are more recent and, through footnotes, can provide access to more that has been published in the last decades.

**Week 1: Introduction**

**January 22**

Readings:

Silverman et al., 1-92 and 185-188

Kemp 17-46

**Week 2: Setting the stage: Early 18th Dynasty Egypt**

**January 27 and 29**

Readings:

Bryan “The 18th Dynasty Before the Amarna Period” in Shaw *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, 218-60

Kemp *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* Chapter 6, 247-301

**Week 3: Amenhotep III: changing relations between king, divinity and the sun**

**February 3 and 5**

Readings:

Bryan, 260-71 (included in the pdf of that chapter from last week’s readings)

Silverman et al., 93-184

Murnane, pages 1-28

Cline, Eric “Overview of Amenhotep III and His Reign” in *Amenhotep III, Perspectives on his Reign*, 1-26

O’Connor “The City and the World: Worldview and Built Forms in the Reign of Amenhotep III” in *Amenhotep III, Perspectives on his Reign*, 125-172.

**Week 4: Amenhotep IV: coregency(?) and Theban beginnings**

**February 10 and 12**

Readings:

Baines “The Dawn of the Amarna Age” in *Amenhotep III, Perspectives on His Reign*, 271-312

Murnane 6, 10, 22, 26, 28

Redford *Akhenaten: The Heretic King*, 57-136.

Johnson, W. Raymond. 1996. “Amenhotep III and Amarna: some new considerations,” *JEA* 82:65-82.

Allen, James, William Murnane, and Jacobus van Dijk. 1994. “Further Evidence for the Coregency of Amenhotep III and IV.” *Amarna Letters* 3: 26-31.

Dodson in KMT, Summer 2014, 19-35.

**Week 5: Theology of Atenism and its Historiography**

**(no class February 17) February 19**

Readings:

Murnane 58-B.4

Hornung *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, 1-146

Eaton-Krauss “Akhenaten versus Akhenaten”, *BiOr* 47 (1990), 541-59.

Montserrat “Protestants, psychoanalysts and Fascists” in *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy and Ancient Egypt*, 95-113.

Gunn, Battiscombe; 1923. ‘Notes on the Aten and His Names’, *JEA* 9: 168-176

Redford *Akhenaten: Heretic Pharaoh*, 157-184

Allen, “The Natural Philosphy of Akhenaten” in *Religion and Philosphy in Ancient Egypt*, 89-102.

**Week 6: The principles of Amarna Art**

**February 24 and 26**

Readings:

Freed et al., Pharaohs of the sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamun. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 38-197.

Aldred *Akhenaten, King of Egypt*, 273-312.

Braverman et al., “Akhenaten and the Strange Physiques of Egypt’s 18th Dynasty” in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2009 (150.8), 556-560

Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, 170-94

Robins, “the Representation of Sexual Characteristics in Amarna Art” *JSSEA* 1993, 29-41

Kosloff, “The Malqata/El-**Amarna** Blues: Favourite Colours of Kings and Gods” in *Chief of Seers*, 178-92

Reeves *Akhenaten, Egypt’s False Prophet*, 37-84

**Week 7: MIDTERM EXAM – March 3**

**Women in the Amarna Period** **– March 5**

Readings:

Robins *Women in Ancient Egypt*, 21-55

Reeves “The Royal Family” in Freed et al., 81-96

Sampson, J. *Amarna, City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Nefertiti as Pharaoh,* 1-144

Reeves “New Light on Kiya from Texts in the British Museum” in *JEA* 1988, 91-101

Robins “*hmt nsw wrt* Meritaton” in *GM* 1981, 75-81

Murnane, 45

*Royal Women of Amarna: Images of Beauty from Ancient Egypt*, 6-41

**Week 8: Geography and city layout 1: Boundary Stelae and Temples at Amarna**

**March 10 and 12**

Readings:

Murnane, 37, 38 (p. 73-86)

Murnane and Van Siclen *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten*, 1-10, 111-82

Mallinson, “The sacred landscape” in Freed et al., 72–9.

Kemp Chapters 2 and 3

**Week 9: Geography and City Layout 2: Palaces at Amarna**

**March 17 and 19**

**PAPER TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE March 19**

Readings:

Kemp Chapter 4

O’Connor “Beloved of Maat, the Horizon of Re” in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 263-300

Spence, K., 1999. “The North Palace at Amarna”. Egyptian Archaeology 15, 14–16.

Kemp “The Window of Appearance at el-Amarna and the basic structure of this city” in *JEA* 1976, 81-99.

Kemp, B.J., 2000. Bricks and metaphor. Cambridge Archaeological Journal 10, 335–46.

**Week 10: Geogrpahy and City Layout 3: Domestic space and non-royal constructions at Amarna**

**March 31 and April 2**

Readings:

Kemp Chapter 5

Troy, Lana. “Resource Management and Ideological Manifestation. The Towns and Cities of Ancient Egypt.” In *The Development of Urbanism from a Global Perspective*. 107-132

Arnold, Felix. "A Study of Egyptian Domestic Buildings." *VA* 5 (1989): 75-93.

Spence, K., 2004. “The three-dimensional form of the Amarna house”. Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 90, 123–52

Stevens, A., 2003. “The material evidence for domestic religion at Amarna and preliminary remarks on its interpretation”. Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 89, 143–68.

Ikram “Domestic Shrines and the Cult of the Royal Family at Amarna” *JEA* 1989, 89-101

**Week 11: Military, diplomacy, and foreigners in the Amarna Period**

**April 7 and 9**

Readings:

Moran *Amarna Letters*, Introduction xiii-xxxix, and selections posted to Canvas

Dodson *Amarna Sunset* 1-60

Cohen and Westbrook, eds. *Amarna Diplomacy*, 1-53; 71-140.

Darnell and Manassa *Tutankhamun’s Armies* Chapter 5, 137-186

**Week 12: Funerary religion during the Amarna Period**

**April 14 and 16**

**FINAL PAPER DUE April 16**

Readings:

Martin *The Royal Tomb at el-Amarna*, selections

Kemp Chapter 7

Owen, G. and B. Kemp, 1994. Craftsmen's work patterns in unfinished tombs at Amarna. Cambridge Archaeological Journal 4, 121–9.

Kemp, B.J., 2007. The orientation of burials at Tell el-Amarna. In Z. Hawass and J. in Richards (ed.), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: essays in honour of David B. O'Connor*, 21-31.

Murnane 46, 58, 70

de Garis Davies, N.; 1905. *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna: Part III- the tombs of Huya and Ahmes*

*The Tomb of Kheruef: Theban Tomb 192*. 1980. Chicago: Oriental Institute

**Week 13:Post-Amarna: proscription and echoes**

**April 21**

Readings:

Murnane, 91-96, 99

Meltzer, “Herodotus on Akhenaten?” in *DE* 1989, 51-56.

Allen “The Amarna Succession” in *Causing His Name to Live*, 9-20

Dodson *Amarna Sunset,* 61-138

**Dodson** “Kings' Valley Tomb 55 and the Fates of the Amarna Kings” Amarna Letters 3 (San Francisco, 1994): 92-103.

Redford *Akhenaten: Heretic King*, 204-235

Hawass et al "Ancestry and Pathology in King Tutankhamun's Family" *JAMA*. 2010; 303(7):638-647

**April 23: SECOND EXAM**