COURSE SYLLABUS – SOCIETIES OF THE WORLD

ANCIENT LIVES

Catalog Number: NELC ANE 103, Harvard College/GSAS 110014
Meeting times: Tu., Th. 11.30-1 pm (section, TBA)
Classroom: Science Center E
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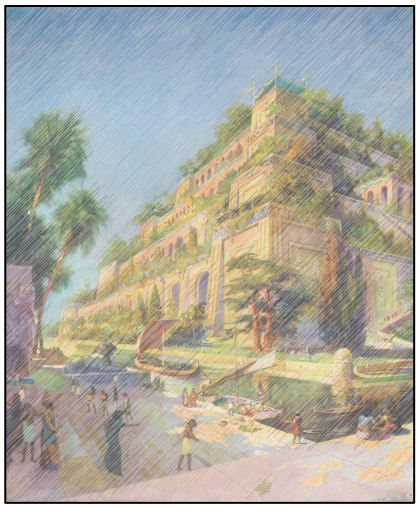

Cultural beliefs about the past—the origin of the universe and of mankind—are more than just interpretations of what came before. These beliefs actively shape society's present and future, as ultimate origin is directly tied in the mind to present purpose. The past not only gives form to, but also serves to justify, the present reality.

(From student assignment, Ancient Lives class of 2014)

1. Description

What are the essential elements of human society? Have our fundamental conditions developed, and how? Can we use themes from ancient history to think about contemporary society and culture?

These questions are the focus of this 'Societies of the World' (SW) course for the Harvard College Program in General Education. 'Ancient Lives' explores the earliest human civilizations in the region of Mesopotamia and the Levant c. 3500-300 bce – the territory now covered by the nations of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

Few elements in the way we live and organize ourselves today are to be taken for granted. There are – and have always been – a wealth of ways in which humans live. But biologically we are the same as our ancestors of 5500 years ago, at the dawn of history. Any likeness or difference between 'us and them' is therefore likely to be a product of history and culture.

'Ancient Lives' builds upon this realization to inspire a critical way of thinking about society in the broadest possible scope. Areas explored during the course are selected for their relevance across the range of contemporary life – they include freedom, music, public health, food, jurisprudence, trade, the visual arts, science, sexuality, religion and political power. You will learn about how societies and individuals have dealt with change on multiple levels, from large-scale societal revolutions to personal transformation.

Having taken this course, you will have gained a fundamental understanding and appreciation of human life in the broadest scope, as well as of your own life as a part of history. You will be able to critically assess contemporary discourses on the study of 'the other' in past and present; engage with core concepts of human society, such as justice, beauty, value and belief; be familiar with examples of classical social theory and thinkers through concrete cases in which their work has been applied to or shaped by the study of the past; and acquire skills in presenting scholarly work to a general audience.

2. Why is 'Ancient Lives' in the Gen Ed program?

Ancient Lives trains you how to identify and think about the cultural and social foundations that tie us to and constrain us in time. Through the study of the ancient past you will be confronted with changing personal and societal views on religion, race, colonialism, violence, art, happiness and wealth. You will learn how fundamental elements of contemporary life can at once be universal/ primordial and culture-specific. You will deepen your understanding and appreciation of human life, and understand in what ways your existence is part of deep history. You are taught to draw broad connections between yourself, cultural phenomena, the present, and the past. You will retain a deeper sense of what it means to be human by discerning the baseline of existence and recognizing what is secondary and cultural. You will be prepared to think about and relate to human culture and society on every scale and at any time.

3. Course Structure

'Ancient Lives' is structured around a set of themes and questions rather than a particular literature, chronological period, or political development. The goal is not to teach the history of the ancient Near East, but to teach you how think about and deal with key aspects of human culture and historical development over a long span of time. The evidence from the ancient Near East just happens to be eminently suited for this purpose.

The first week of class takes you from the known present to the unknown past, by way of art, belief-systems and technologies familiar to us all. The course ends with a class on how the deep past is appropriated by current political and religious actors to pursue their goals – from the Bible to ISIL. In between, each of the 12 weeks is dedicated to a specific subject where ancient life is studied in detail and meaningfully linked to current existence.

The class meets twice a week for a 90-minute lecture, and there will be a weekly 60-minute section led by a Teaching Fellow. Lectures are based on multimedia presentations and include interactive/sensory engagement with course topics through e.g. archaeological artifacts, ancient texts in translation, recordings of reconstructed language and music, sampling of ancient food, screened films, 3D-reconstructions, and visits to museums in the Cambridge area.

Each week has a set of readings (typically a mix of articles, book chapters, and a few ancient texts in translation) that we expect you to prepare before the first meeting of that week. This first meeting usually presents the weekly subject, its theoretical framework, and its main content. The second meeting will focus on application, discussions, and contains a 10-minute in-class assessment that tests and assists memorization, and helps you think about and apply the fundamental concepts introduced during the week. The in-class assessments will be ridiculously easy if you have done the readings. The weekly section teaches you how to apply theories and readings presented during the week, and it provides you with the tools needed to complete your course assignments.

Assignments for 'Ancient Lives' are focused on developing your ability to connect with the past and communicate the fundamentals of our own situation. This includes identifying behavior influenced by culture, and exploring how this is expressed in ancient and contemporary situations. You will be asked to consume, share and produce knowledge in a free and hands-on fashion. The main course assignment can consist of either: (a) a blog, (b) a casting project, or (c) a lab experiment. All three are required to explore and communicate a specific topic relevant to the course to a broad audience. The final exam is a take-home 48-hour, 2500-word essay assignment that tests the breadth of your command of the course material and your ability to synthesize it.

4. Course Assignments

Attendance and participation: 15% of your grade is dependent upon active engagement in class and section. This reflects the fact that both are key loci of student deliberation, discussion and critical engagement with the course material. Attendance, punctuality and careful preparation are the three basic requirements for effective learning. Each person's frequency and quality of contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the participation score. You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties: (a) offering a different and unique, but relevant, perspective; (b) contributing to moving the discussion and analysis forward; (c) building on other comments; (d) exceeding the 'I feel' argument to include some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs and thereby demonstrate reflective thinking.

In-class assessments: Weekly 10-minute in-class assignments test and assist memorization and promote ideas. Assignments rotate between questions on the readings and the writing of brief essays returned in class. A total of 15% of your grade is based on in-class assignments, which means that the 13 weekly assignments each count for about 1% toward the final grade. They will be ridiculously easy if you have done all your readings.

Draft Assignment: you each select a theme covered by the course that is to be agreed upon with the Teaching Fellow by Week 5. You present this as 1) graphically as a draft web presentation, 2) as a draft for the casting project write-up, 3) as part of a museum exhibit, or 4) as an experimental outline by the end of Week 6.

Examples for a **web presentation** theme could be: how do cities change the way people co-exist? How have changes in religious belief affected thoughts on gender? How does writing affect the storage and control of knowledge? How have concepts of acceptable social behavior changed over time? What media have been used to describe and understand the universe (physical and/or symbolic), and how does this affect the way one can think about the world? You are encouraged to think of more topics on your own. The assignment should include primary sources, such as images and objects, and/or quotes from ancient written sources. The assignment can also incorporate maps, graphics and a timeline as appropriate to the subject.

Drafts for the **casting** assignment should focus on one of the reliefs that the team is working on to provide a description of its architectural, artistic and historical context. What does it show? What message does it convey? How does it relate to its physical location in the building that it was placed in? The assignment should include primary sources, and may incorporate maps, graphics and a timeline as appropriate to the subject.

The **museum exhibit** uses the casts produced by last year's class to communicate ancient art to a modern audience using Harvard's art-making facilities Garden @ 29 as venue. The effort of putting together the exhibit must be a collaborative effort, whereas the task of writing e.g. museum labels for individual objects or descriptions of the process of making them will be divided between students choosing to engage with his assignment; this work will be assessed individually. The exhibit should include primary sources, and may incorporate maps and graphics as appropriate.

The purpose of the **experimental** outline is to design a project that addresses a problem related to ancient medicine using the applied sciences. It presents an opportunity to explore and assess how two different disciplines within the liberal arts curriculum can be combined so as to enhance and deepen learning in both. Using an ancient therapeutic recipe, scientific lab work is set up to help us understand the process the text describes, and to assess its medical effect through emulation.

The exact **shape of your assignment** will vary by subject, but the write-up should correspond to c. 1500 words of written text for blogs, 500 words for those doing the casting assignment, and 1000 words for the science experiments. Everyone is also required to submit brief a write-up of c. 300 words

alongside the draft, which explains your choice of sources and/or methods, and highlights the social, historical, political, religious, and/or economic context of the topic addressed. All assignments are uploaded onto the course web-page. You learn how to create maps and graphics in the section of Week 6. The draft assignment is due by the end of Week 6 and presented in the section of Week 7.

Assignment Review: You each review the work of another student. The drafts are circulated for review by the end of Week 7. The section of Week 8 is devoted to a discussion of how to write reviews. The review is structured like a book review, but applied to the assignment and explanatory write-up. You are asked to critically assess the selection of primary sources, the analysis provided in the write-up, and the engagement with secondary literature read for class. The review also includes a section on self-reflection. Here the task is to apply critical analysis to your own work after having done so for fellow student. The review and self-reflection will typically take up c. 1000 words total. The review is due by the end of Week 8 and counts for 15% towards your final grade.

Final Assignment: You submit the final assignment after you have received feedback from your peers. The assignment is due by Week 11. Depending on the subject, the final assignment should have a length of c. 1800 words for blogs, 1500 words for the experiments, and 500 words for those doing the casting assignment. All four assignments test your ability to engage in depth with a selected subject in a creative and productive fashion. You present your work in the final class of Week 13. All work is published electronically, and the casts also go on display in the Semitic Museum. The main assignment counts for 30% towards your final grade.

Final exam: Take-home 48-hour exam (max. 2500-word essay) of one or more essay questions that test the breadth of your command of the course material. The exam counts for 25% towards your final grade.

5. Course Grading

Course grading is based on the final assignment, the review, the final exam, weekly in-class assignments, and attendance and participation. The latter is dependent upon active engagement in section (which is mandatory and recorded), and reflects the fact that sections are a key locus of student deliberation, discussion and direct engagement with the course material.

Attendance and participation	15%
In-class assignments	15%
Assignment Review	15%
Main Assignment (web-presentation, casting, exhibit or experiment)	30%
Final Exam	25%

6. Collaboration Statement

The exploration of the past and our relationship to it thrives on dialogue. We encourage you to discuss themes and readings outside the classroom as well as within it. But in all written assignments the research and writing should be all your own. Teamwork for the web presentation, casting and experiment assignment is allowed (and encouraged), but students should be aware that collaboration on any work submitted for formal evaluation is not permitted. We have zero tolerance of cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without citation. Cite all sources consulted to any extent, including material from the Internet, whether or not assigned, and whether or not quoted directly. Remember that experienced teachers usually recognize passages that were written by colleagues. Students who copy assignments or parts of assignments, allow assignments to be copied, or who cheat on tests, will be referred to the Honor Council. Take time to familiarize yourself with the Harvard Honor Code at http://honor.fas.harvard.edu. Students found

responsible for a violation of the rules on academic honesty will fail the course. Many students have questions as to what constitutes 'too much' outside help on assignments; the answer is that you are always allowed to talk about your readings and assignments with other people, discuss your points, seek clarifications, and test arguments. This is an important part of the academic process. You are encouraged to consult with colleagues on the choice of assignment topics, and you may also share library resources. But you must ensure that the written work you submit for evaluation is entirely the result of your own research and reflects your own approach to the topic. You are not allowed to let other people write for you, copy passages from other people's work, or source without citation, get help from someone whom you do not quote or acknowledge, or copy during an in-class quiz. You are urged to take great care in distinguishing your own ideas from information and analysis derived from printed and electronic sources, and you hold final responsibility for knowing proper forms of citation, and you are required to uphold Harvard policies on academic integrity. If you are unsure about your particular situation, it is better ask us for clarification before you turn in an assignment. Also take time to read the Guide to Using Sources: http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do.

7. Course Policies on Expectation and Conduct

Attendance: You are required to come to every class and every section. Attendance is mandatory and recorded.

Deadlines: Hand in your written assignments on time. Extensions can be given for medical reasons, and not otherwise. The main assignment follows a tight schedule, and delays in submitting the draft assignment or the review will have adverse effects on the schedule for other students. The handling of late assignments or missed quizzes is left to the Teaching Fellow, but in general it won't be possible to hand in late assignments for course credit.

Conduct: Bear in mind you are a member of a learning community, and are expected to behave as a professional person. Be on time for class, do not leave while class is in progress (for other than emergencies), turn off cell phones, and be respectful of others' viewpoints even if you disagree.

The use of electronic devices: Computers/tablets are allowed for relevant use during class (such as for taking notes, or surfing for relevant information). Appropriate use does not include checking social media sites, news, weather forecasts etc. You are in charge of your own learning, and how much you decide to take in from class. But remember that you won't be alone in the room, and that you can all too easily distract people around you. The use of electronics for relevant purposes is based on trust. Misuse will result in a negative impact on others.

Commitment: If you opt to take this class, we expect from you a serious and sustained commitment to it. At the same time, you should expect an equal commitment from us. Our task is to help make you better at reading and thinking about the past and present and your role in it. That means, among other things, that we offer you prompt and constructive feedback on your work, create a stimulating and welcoming environment in the classroom, and make it easy for you to draw on our help outside of class. You may think of this as a contract: we strive to make 'Ancient Lives' inspiring, relevant and stimulating; your part is to show up well-prepared and well-reflected.

8. Study Tips

Readings are assigned for each week. Prepare them for the Tuesday class. Highlight or make marginal notes for important words or concepts. This will help you to fix ideas and actively learn the material. Write down questions about things you do not understand. Bring these questions to section and ask them. Reading actively, taking notes, and asking questions is the best way to learn the material. Start early. Do not leave all readings until Monday night. Discuss topics from the readings with other people. Use sections productively. Ask thoughtful questions about things that you do not understand. This will

make it easier to isolate what is giving you trouble and enhance learning. We will make every effort to help you learn the course material, and you should take full advantage of the resources that are made available to help you. You are always encouraged to come and talk to us – not only when you are having trouble, but also when things are going well.

9. Books to buy, and other reading materials

You need to get hold of just one book: Benjamin R. Foster and Karen Polinger Foster *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq*. Princeton: University Press. 2009. It is available at the COOP. It will give you the essential historical and geographical background for this class. You will need this book already in the first week of class. All remaining course readings and texts are available on the course site.

10. Academic Accommodations

Students in need of academic adjustments or accommodations due to a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the course instructor by the end of the Week 1 (i.e. September 11th). Failure to do so may result in our inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty may contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

11. Class Outline (twenty-four lectures, two evening meetings, eleven sections)

Week 0: Past in Present

Goals: to look at why and how we study the past; introduce some iconic examples of contemporary political and social institutions, technologies, sciences, and belief systems that come to us from ancient Mesopotamia; show how cultural beliefs about our past actively shape our present and future; explore the study of the ancient past and the political and social environment it formed in: colonialism, imperialism, religious criticism and the rise of the modern sciences in the late 19th century.

Lecture 1 (Sep. 3): Six degrees of Hammurabi

Readings: None during Shopping Week, but you may want to read: Bottéro, Jean. Ch. 3 'In Defense of a Useless Science.' In *Mesopotamia. Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1992. Pp. 15-25.

Week 1: Setting the Scene

Goals: to provide an introduction to the region and the material engaged by the course, including its chronological and geographical background. To introduce categories of source material, evaluate their nature, and discuss how they affect the way in which we interpret the past. To explore the rise of ancient society, and set the scene in terms of how the first complex societies, urban communities and states arose.

Lecture 2 (Sep. 8): An Outline of Things
Lecture 3 (Sep. 10): The Birth of Complexity

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on the readings)

Reading:
Foster, B. R. and K. P. Foster. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2009. Chapters 1-8.

Week 2: Writing and Control

Goals: to explore the invention and use of writing. How and under what conditions did it develop, and what changes did the new technology of communication lead to? What were the languages and scripts used in the region? Are our own writing systems related to the Mesopotamian ones? How is writing linked to state control and individual freedom?

Lecture 4 (Sep. 15): Control and liberation: the invention and role of writing
Lecture 5 (Sep. 17): Discussing readings (class led by TF)

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on the readings)

Readings:

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'What They Wrote on Clay.' In K. Schousboe and M. T. Larsen (eds.) *Literacy and Society*. Copenhagen: Centre for Research in the Humanities, 1989. Pp. 121-148.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'Introduction: Literacy and Social Complexity.' In J. Gledhill, B. Bender and M. T. Larsen (eds.) *State and Society: the Emergence and Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization*. London: Unwin Hyman. 1988. Pp. 173-191.

Rubio, Gonzalo. 'The Languages of the Ancient Near East.' In D. C. Snell (ed.) *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. 2005. Pp. 79-94. (Cursory reading)

Texts: The Epic of Lord Enmerkar and the Prince of Aratta.

(First section: Introduction, section policies, course readings and assignments. Discussion of readings)

Week 3: Power and State

Goals: to investigate the rise and role of the state. What social dynamics led people to move together into cities, and what effects did this have? What is the relation between the urban revolution and state formation, the dynamics of kinship groups and imperialism? How did the state create and legitimate its power, and who took part in the decision-making, and shared power in the early states?

Lecture 6 (Sep. 22): First states: cities, tribes and empires
Lecture 7 (Sep. 24): The rise of governance: elders, assemblies, kings

(Thursday in-class assignment: 10-minute quiz on states)

Readings:

Yoffee, Norman. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 1-41.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'The Mesopotamian Empires.' In Peter F. Bang and Walter Scheidel (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancient State in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. Pp. 120-160.

Jones, Phillip. 'Divine and Non-Divine Kingship'. In D. C. Snell (ed.) *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. 2005. Pp. 330-342.

Texts: Excerpt from the Annals of Sennacherib. Statutes of the Old Assyrian colony at Kanesh.

(Second section: Introduction to the Semitic Museum)

Week 4: Landscape and Movement

Goals: to outline relations between nature and culture. What factors were determining for the development of the early states? What ways of subsistence were available, and how did this affect social and political organization? How did people see the world, and how was it physically linked?

Lecture 8 (Sep. 29): Cities, villages and nomads
Lecture 9 (Oct. 1): Transport and travel in the ancient world

(Thursday in-class assignment: 10-minute write-up on cities and agriculture)

Readings:

Mieroop, Marc Van De. *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1997. Pp. 42-62.

Richardson, Seth. 'The World of Babylonian Countrysides.' In G. Leick *The Babylonian World*. New York and London: Routledge. 2007. Pp. 13-38.

Fleming, Daniel T. *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors*. Mari and Early Collective Governance. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. 2004. Pp. 24-39. (Cursory reading)

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The Middle Bronze Age.' In J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J. M. Evans (eds.) *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* New Haven: Yale University Press. 2008. Pp. 13-17.

Finkel, Irving. *The Ark Before Noah. Decoding the Story of the Flood*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 2014. Pp. 261-297.

Texts: The Sumerian Farmer's Almanac. The Story of Wen-Amun.

(Third section: Selecting a topic: how to construct, think about, get help for, and read up for the assignment)

Week 5: Wealth and Collapse

Goals: to understand how we interpret economy in ancient societies. How was wealth perceived and created? What regulated production and consumption? Are population growth, agricultural surplus and trade related? What were the means of exchange, and how are they different from ours? What mechanisms for credit, insurance and exchange existed? How was communal and institutional ownership managed? How were trade and private ownership regulated? Why did economies, states and even entire civilizations collapse?

Lecture 10 (Oct. 6): Understanding economies
Lecture 11 (Oct. 8): Trade, markets and collapse

(Thursday in-class assignment: 10-minute quiz on trade and production)

Readings:

Steinkeller, Piotr. 'Labor in the Early States: A Historical Overview'. In P. Steinkeller and M. Hudson (eds.) *Labor in the Ancient World*. Dresden: ISLET. 2015. Pp. 1-35.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Interlocking Commercial Networks and the Infrastructure of Trade in Western Asia during the Bronze Age' In K. Kristiansen, T. Lindkvist and J. Myrdal (eds.) *Trade and Civilization in the Pre-Modern World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In press. (36 pp.).

Liverani, Mario. *The Ancient Near East. History, Society and Economy*. London: Routledge. 2014. Pp. 381-400.

Yoffee, Norman. 'Collapse in Ancient Mesopotamia. What Happened, What Didn't.' In P. A. McAnany and N. Yoffee (eds.) *Questioning Collapse*. *Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability and the Aftermath of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. Pp. 176-203.

Texts: Assyrian, Babylonian and Ugaritic business letters. Excerpts of Pharaoh's correspondence from Tell el-Amarna.

(Fourth section: How to work with primary sources from the past: methods and approaches)

Week 6: Authority and the Foreign

Goals: to explore royal power, its legitimization and limits. To examine the practice of warfare and diplomacy. What were the functions of the king and the royal court? How did they claim, manifest and broadcast power? What was the relation between state ideology and foreign policy? How were foreign relations managed, and what practices and venues were developed for states to interact? What was warfare before the nation states? What role did deportations, social and political refugees play?

Lecture 12 (Oct. 13): Royal power and court culture
Evening Event #1 (Oct. 14): Hands on ancient music
Lecture 13 (Oct. 15): Diplomacy and warfare in the ancient world

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on court and diplomacy)

Readings:

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Pride, Pomp and Circumstance: Palace, Court and Household in Assyria 879 – 612 BCE.' In J. Duindam, T. Artan and M. Kunt (eds.) *Royal courts in dynastic states and empires – a global perspective*. Leiden: Brill. 2011: 27-61.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Propaganda and Practice in Assyrian and Persian Imperial Culture.' In P. Fibiger Bang and D. Kołodziejczyk (eds.) *Universal Empire: A comparative approach to imperial culture and representation in Eurasian history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012: 43-59.

Cohen, Raymond and Raymond Westbrook. 'Conclusions: The Beginnings of International Relations.' In R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*. Baltimore: JHU Press. 2000. Pp. 225-236.

Texts: The Prince's Mirror. Banquet Stele of Assurnasirpal. The Stele of the Vultures.

(Fifth section: Introduction to software for map-making and assignment illustrations)

Deadline for draft assignment: October 18th at 11 pm

EVENING EVENT #1: Hands on Ancient Music

Goals: to understand the world's earliest music. Music is universal to human society; but in what ways can structure, tonality and aesthetic ideals differ? How were early musical instruments conceived, constructed and played? Who taught music, dance and song? How was it performed? What role did music play in society? How are music, mathematics and philosophy linked?

The meeting takes place on Wednesday, October 14th between 4:00 and 8:00 pm in the 3rd floor hall of the Harvard Semitic Museum under the guidance of the world's two leading archaeo-musicologists, Prof. Richard Dumbrill, of the Institute of Musical Research, School of Advanced Studies, University of London, and Assistant Curator at the British Museum, Dr. Irving Finkel. Come play a reconstructed musical instrument from 5000 years ago, listen to the world's oldest preserved musical works, and ask questions of the experts.

Reading:

Kilmer, Anne Draffkorn. 'Music and Dance in Ancient Western Asia.' In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995. Vol. IV, pp. 2601-2613.

Michalowski, Piotr. 'Traveler's Tales: Observations on Musical Mobility in Mesopotamia and Beyond.' In R. Dumbrill and I. Finkel (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference of Near Eastern Archaeomusicology (ICONEA 2008), The British Museum, London, December 4–6, 2008*. London: Iconea Publications. Pp. 117-124.

Week 7: Ancient Bodies

Goals: to look at developing understandings of the human body, health and gender. How were our basic bodily functions described? How were illnesses treated? How was the mind explained? What was the function of magic? What was the role and understanding of gender? How was sex and homosexuality looked upon? How were children looked upon and raised?

Lecture 14 (Oct. 20): Health and psychology before the muses
Lecture 15 (Oct. 22): Gender, love and companionship

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on gender and personhood)

Readings:

Scurlock, JoAnn. 'Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine.' In D. C. Snell (ed.) *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. 2005. Pp. 302-315.

Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. (Rev. ed.) 1977. Pp. 198-206.

Foster, Benjamin R. 'The Person in Mesopotamian Thought.' In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 117-139.

Mieroop, Marc Van De. *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History*. London: Routledge. 1999. Pp. 137-158.

Texts: Epic of Gilgamesh tab. I-II. Selection of letters written by Old Assyrian women.

(Sixth section: Presentation and feedback on draft assignment)

Week 8: Life, the Universe and Everything

Goals: to study how belief-systems develop and what purpose they serve. How was the universe and our place in it explained? What was the role of temple institutions? How was religion practiced? How was the meaning of life, a 'good life', and success defined? What happens when religion fails to produce meaning? Did competing paradigms, doubt and opposition exist? What can we learn from studying a religion from its beginning to its end?

Lecture 16 (Oct. 27): Temples, gods, and the meaning of life
Lecture 17 (Oct. 29): Literature and political opposition

(Thursday in-class assignment: 10-minute essay on religion and collapse)

Readings:

Scurlock, Jo-Ann. 'Death and Afterlife in Ancient Mesopotamia.' In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1995. Vol. III, pp. 1883-1894.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The Collapse of Civilization: The Case of Mesopotamia'. In J. Chr. Johansen, E. L. Petersen and H. Stevnsborg (eds.) *Clashes of Cultures: Essays in Honour of Niels Steensgaard.* Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag. 1992. Pp. 107-129.

Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 1964. Pp. 171-183.

Texts: I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom (col. II, 1-48). The Poor Man of Nippur. Dialogue of Pessimism. Excerpt from The Babylonian Epic of Creation.

(Seventh section: How to write a review)

Deadline for assignment review: November 1st at 11 pm

Week 9: Science and Education

Goal: to search for the beginnings of scientific thought and instruction. How was the world explored and explained? What is the purpose of science, and how does it relate to religion in its origin? What is the history of counting, numbers and measurements, mathematical and astronomical description, music and medicine? How and by whom was knowledge accumulated, edited, stored, circulated and used?

Lecture 18 (Nov. 3): Controlling things to come: how science was (not) born
Lecture 19 (Nov. 5): Schooldays: instruction in the age of clay

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on divination)

Readings:

Rochberg, Francesca. 'Mesopotamian Cosmology.' In D. C. Snell (ed.) *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. 2005. Pp. 318-329.

Koch, Ulla Susanne 'Sheep and Sky: Systems of Divinatory Interpretation.' In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 447-469.

Robson, Eleanor. 'Mathematics Education in an Old Babylonian Scribal School.' In: E. Robson and J. Stedall (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Mathematics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009. Pp. 199-227.

Glassner, Jean-Jaques. 'The Use of Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia'. In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995. Vol. III, pp. 1815-1823.

Texts: Schooldays. Student's Drinking Song. At the Cleaners. A student's letter to his mother.

(Eighth section: Making the past come alive: visit to the Giza3D-project)

Week 10: Art and Aesthetics

Goals: To understand what defines art, and explore how modern definitions relate to ancient perceptions. Who made art, how paid for art, and who were the audiences? What forms and functions did art have? What does it tell us about aesthetic appreciation? What characterizes ancient visual imagery and how is it different from modern? How is ancient art exhibited in contemporary contexts?

Lecture 21 (Nov. 10): Šulgi's eye: patronage, fine art and folk culture

Readings:

Winter, Irene. 'Defining "Aesthetics" for Non-Western Studies: The Case of Ancient Mesopotamia.' In M. A. Holly and K. Moxey (eds.) *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2002. Pp. 3-28.

Bahrani, Zainab. 'The Babylonian Visual Image.' In G. Leick *The Babylonian World*. New York and London: Routledge. 2007. Pp. 155-170.

Texts: Gudea Statue B.

(Ninth section: Identifying aesthetics – applying art theory to objects in the Semitic Museum)

Week 11: A Day in the Life
Goals: to examine the physical world of a pre-modern society. How was everyday life? What did the world look like; taste; sound; feel? How did people dress? What did they do for sports and entertainment?

Lecture 20 (Nov. 17): Foods, feasts and entertainments of the past
Evening Event #2 (Nov. 17): Mesopotamian cook-in

Readings:
Yamauchi, Edwin M. 'Athletics in the Ancient Near East.' In R. E. Averbeck, M. Chavalas and D. B. Weisberg (eds.) *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda MD: CDL Press. 2003. Pp. 491-500.
Hoerth, Alfred J.. 'Games People Played: Board Games in the Ancient Near East.' In R. E. Averbeck, M. Chavalas and D. B. Weisberg (eds.) *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda MD: CDL Press. 2003. Pp. 471-489.
Nasrallah, Nawal. *Delights from the Garden of Eden. A Cookbook and History of the Iraqi Cuisine*. 2nd ed. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing. 2013. Pp. 1-30.
Reynolds, Frances. 'Food and Drink in Babylonia.' In G. Leick *The Babylonian World*. New York and London: Routledge. 2007. Pp. 171-184.

Texts: Selection of proverbs and sayings.

(Tenth section: Western perceptions of ancient art – definitions of beauty in the Fogg Museum)

EVENING EVENT #2: Mesopotamian 'Cook-in'
Goals: to experience the past and understand culture and history through food. What are the connections between economy, gender and food production? What can we learn about ethnic identity, animal domestication, cultural exchange, market economy and local continuity through the study of food? Think like a Mesopotamian by cooking and eating like one: the class builds on both formal talks and informal conversations during food preparation and dinner.

The meeting takes place on Tuesday, November 17th between 5:00 and 8:00 pm in the Harvard Cooking Lab (room NW B145) under the guidance of author and food historian, Prof. Nawal Nasrallah.

Deadline for the final assignment: November 22nd at 11 pm

Week 12: Justice and (in)Equality
Goals: to identify the ideals and principles behind justice and society. How was social conflict perceived and managed? How did inequality arise, and how was it explained and justified? What was the function of law, and who gave the law? What was social opposition? What role does slavery play in economy?

Lecture 22 (Nov. 24): State of mind: Law, slavery and freedom in the ancient world

(Thursday in-class assignment: 5 questions on law, freedom and slavery)

Readings:
von Dassow, Eva. 'Freedom in Ancient Near Eastern Societies.' In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 205-228.
Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2014. Pp. 158-163.
Patterson, Orlando. 'Freedom, Slavery and the Modern Construction of Rights.' In H. Joas and K. Wiegandt (eds.) *The Cultural Values of Europe*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2008. Pp. 115-151.

Texts: Excerpt from the Laws of Hammurabi. The Cyrus Cylinder. Selection of Old Babylonian judicial records.

(no section in Thanksgiving week)

Week 13: Clashing Agendas

Goals: to explore the use and importance of the past in the present. How is ancient history relevant today? How is it presented and (mis)used? And by whom? How is it managed?

Lecture 23 (Dec. 1): The invention and destruction of the past: from the Kaiser to ISIL
Lecture 24 (Dec. 3): Project presentation and reception

Readings:

Isakhan, Benjamin. 'Engaging "Primitive Democracy": Mideast Roots of Collective Governance'. *Middle East Policy* vol. 14/3. 2007. Pp. 97-117.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The "Babel/Bible" Controversy and Its Aftermath'. In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995. Vol. I, pp. 95-106.

Foster, Benjamin R. and Karen Polinger Foster. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq*. Princeton: University Press. 2009. Pp. 198-209.

Texts: Browse http://www.unesco.org/new/en/safeguarding-syrian-cultural-heritage/. Read http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/israeli-land-claims-archaeology-ideology-20131111130129566 87.html.

(Eleventh section: Course reflections: what does the past teach us about the present?)