

**Syllabus**  
**Art and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East**  
**ARTH 319 Spring 2021**  
**Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:15 pm**  
**Asynchronous class: new materials posted weekly to Blackboard**  
**on Mondays and Wednesdays**  
**Professor Jacquelyn Williamson**

This course satisfies **Global Understanding for the Mason Core**

**Please note that GMU decided there will be no spring break this semester (2021)**

**Contact information and Office Hours:**

Email: [jwilli98@gmu.edu](mailto:jwilli98@gmu.edu)

Office hours: Mondays at 4:30 by appointment

To schedule an office visit, email me your request then, once we have determined a good time, click on the "office hours" link on the left green stripe of the Blackboard page for this class.

Please note: professors are to be addressed by the professional title as given by the university and their peers: in this case "Professor" and/or "Doctor" (not "Mr." "Ms." "Miss" "Mrs." These titles indicate marital status and/or gender identity and are not professional titles in Universities.

**Course Description:**

Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of Western civilization. The earliest urban centers in this region appeared by 3500 BCE, near modern-day Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Urbanism also brought with it the emergence of temples and palaces and other large-scale elite institutions. Writing developed, and flourished. The arts of Mesopotamia, from painting to sculpture, follow an exciting course for several millennia.

This class explores the art and architecture of Mesopotamia (ancient Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria) starting in 3500 BCE. We will explore spectacular structures and objects in order to gain insight into the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia. We will also focus on many sites which have in recent years been damaged or destroyed by war. This class will include the most up-to-date scholarship on Mesopotamian art. Assignments will encourage critical thinking and awareness of difference, to enable understanding otherness.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Class participation and exercises: for this class that means discussion board assignments, readings, and the weekly lecture videos posted to Blackboard
- Assigned readings, including websites and documents on the Internet/Blackboard.
- Two short critical thinking papers (2 page minimum, not including bibliography, must cover an entire two pages at minimum)

- a midterm and a final exam.

**Final Grades (see more details below, after the lecture and readings schedule):**

Class participation 20%

1<sup>st</sup> critical thinking paper 15%

2<sup>nd</sup> critical thinking paper 15%

Mid-term 25%

Final exam 25%

Excuses or requests for late assignments, make-up exams, etc., will only be accepted if they reach Professor Williamson BEFORE the assignment is due or the exam begins, and will be approved only at Professor Williamson's discretion.

**Attendance and Class participation: for this class, this is defined as doing the reading, working through the materials posted to Blackboard each week, and the discussion board assignments. This** is necessary; much of the material will only be covered in our lectures. Remember, you will get a grade each week for your class participation, but the final class score will not always be a literal summation of these grades as I may also take in other factors for the final score.

**Although this is an online asynchronous class you must keep up with the assignments and lecture material each week.**

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

Students will understand the development of the art and architecture of ancient Mesopotamia and will be able to engage intellectually with specific monuments through a close visual analysis of their forms. Students will also situate these monuments in the broader historical and cultural contexts and develop a knowledge of the chronological and geographical parameters of ancient Mesopotamia. Students will also engage in the analysis of scholarly arguments, develop critical thinking, and understand how to apply evidence to construct arguments.

This course will also focus upon the following outcomes/objectives

1. the development of intercultural competencies.
2. individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.
3. how one's own values influence interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.

**Add-drop deadlines**

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

February 1, 2020	Last day to add a class
February 12	Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty
February 16	Last day to drop a class [tuition penalty TBD]
February 17-March 1	Student self-withdrawal period (note March 2-April 1: selective withdrawal period)

It is your responsibility to observe the add-drop deadlines to ensure that you are properly registered for specific courses.

**Assignment and test dates:**

**February 24<sup>th</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> critical thinking paper due**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Midterm exam**

**April 5<sup>th</sup>: 2<sup>nd</sup> critical thinking paper due**

**Final Exam: TBA**

**Course Readings and Lectures:**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Zainab Bahrani, *Art of Mesopotamia*, Thames and Hudson, 2016.
- Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC*, 3rd rev. edition, 2016.
- Several free OER (Open Educational Resources) modules created by Dr. Marian Feldman at The Johns Hopkins University. These are posted on an open-access website, OpenStax CNX, hosted by Rice University (cnx.org). You will look at the title posted in the reading and look for it on the OpenStax cite. Often this can be accomplished with a simple google search.

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:**

- GMU email accounts—**only GMU accounts** will get announcements.
- Ability to find on-line text documents from the Internet and Blackboard.
- Computerized word-processing with spell-checkers and decent printers for all written work.
- Internet access

**LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE  
(Students will be notified of any changes)**

**Note:**

- **“Bahrani” is short for Zainab Bahrani, *Art of Mesopotamia*, 2017.**

- **“Van De Mieroop” is short for** Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC*, 3rd rev. edition, 2016.
- **“OpenStax CNX” is short for the free OER (Open Educational Resources) modules** created by Dr. Marian Feldman at The Johns Hopkins University. These are posted on an open-access website, OpenStax CNX, hosted by Rice University (cnx.org). You will look at the title posted in the reading and look for it on the OpenStax cite. Often this can be accomplished with a simple google search.

**Assigned reading should be done before the lecture.**

**Jan. 25 – Introduction and Methods**

Bahrani: Introduction

**Jan. 27 – The Search For Mesopotamia: history of archaeology in the region**

Bahrani, Chapter 1, pp. 14-27

Van de Mieroop, Chapter 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3

**Feb 1 – Prehistoric Mesopotamia**

Bahrani, Chapter 1, pp. 28-37

Van de Mieroop, Chapter 1.4

**Feb. 3 – The Uruk Period I: Urbanism, Colonies, Trade**

Bahrani, Chapter 2, pp. 40-46, 57-60

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 2.1 and 2.3

**Feb. 8 – The Uruk Period II: Art and Writing**

Bahrani, Chapter 2, pp. 46-57

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 2.2

OpenStax CNX: Module “Cylinder Seals and the Development of Writing in Early Mesopotamia.”

**Feb. 10 – Early Dynastic Sumer I: Temple art and architecture**

Bahrani, Chapter 3

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 3.1 and 3.2

OpenStax CNX: Module “The Development of Sumerian Temple Architecture in Early Mesopotamia” and “Mesopotamian Votive Statuary from the Early Dynastic Period”

**Feb. 15 – Early Dynastic Sumer II: The Royal Cemetery at Ur**

Bahrani, Chapter 4, pp. 85-102

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 3.4

OpenStax CNX: Module “The Royal Cemetery of Ur and Sumerian ‘Kingship’ in Ancient Mesopotamia.”

**Feb. 17 - Early Dynastic Sumer III: Historical Narrative in Art – The Stele of the Vultures, cylinder seals**

Bahrani, Chapter 4, pp. 102-109

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 3.5

**Feb. 22 – Art of the Akkadian Period Dynasty: Charismatic Kings: Sargon the Great of Agade and the Divine King, Naram-Sin**

Bahrani, Chapter 5

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 4.1

OpenStax CNX: Module “Sargon the Great and the Charismatic Rulers of Ancient Akkad of Mesopotamia” and “The ‘Victory Stele’ of Naram-Sin of Akkad and the Development of the Public Monument in Ancient Mesopotamia”

**Feb. 24 – After Akkad: Independence. The Second Lagash Dynasty and Their Pious King, Gudea**

Bahrani, Chapter 6

OpenStax CNX: Module “Mesopotamian Piety and the Art of Gudea.”

<https://cnx.org/contents/CBMOHvTD@2/Mesopotamian-Piety-and-the-Art-of-Gudea>

**First critical thinking paper due**

**March 1 – Midterm Review**

**March 3 – Midterm Exam**

**March 8 - The Third Dynasty of Ur (also called the Neo-Sumerian Period)**

Bahrani, Chapter 7

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 4.2

OpenStax CNX: Module “Ur III: Continuity and Erasure.”

**March 10 – The Old Babylonian Period: The age of Hammurabi**

Bahrani, Chapter 8

Van De Mieroop, Chapter 5.4 and 6.2

OpenStax CNX: Module “Amorite Rulers in Mesopotamia: The Palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari, and Hammurabi, King of Babylon.”

**March 15 – The Late Bronze Age, pt. I: The Mitannians and Kassites. International Relations: Egypt**

Bahrani, Chapter 9, pp. 201-211

Van De Mieroop, Chapters 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1, and 9.1

OpenStax CNX: Module “Late Bronze Age Internationalism and the International Artistic Style.”

**March 17 – The Late Bronze Age, pt. II: The Hittites and Assyria**

Bahrani, Chapter 9, pp. 211-221  
Van De Mieroop, Chapters 6.1, 8.2, and 9.2

**March 22 – The Neo-Assyrian Empire I: Ashurnasirpal II and The End of the Late Bronze Age**

Bahrani, Chapter 10, pp. 225-231  
Van De Mieroop, Chapters 10 and 12  
OpenStax CNX: Module “Ashurnasirpal II, King of Assyria, and his Palace at Nimrud.”

**March 24 – The Neo-Assyrian Empire II: The throne room at the Center and the Boundaries of the Empire: Ashurnasirpal II**

and Shalmaneser III  
Bahrani, Chapter 11, pp. 232-236, 256-269

**March 29 – The Neo Assyrian Empire III: Reform and Burial – Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-Pileser III and the Queens’ Tombs**

Bahrani, Chapter 11, pp. 253-256  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3  
OpenStax CNX: Module “Neo-Assyrian Palace Reliefs of Kings Tiglath Pileser III and Sargon II.”

**March 31 – The Neo Assyrian Empire IV: Palaces of Sargon II at Khorsabad and Sennacherib at Nineveh**

Bahrani, Chapter 10, pp. 236-244

**April 5 – The Neo Assyrian Empire V: The Final Glory: Ashurbanipal**

Bahrani, Chapter 10, pp. 244-249  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 13.4 and 13.5

**Second Critical thinking paper due**

**April 7 – The Neo-Babylonian Empire: The City of Babylon**

Bahrani, Chapter 12  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 14.2  
OpenStax CNX: Modules “The Ancient City of Babylon” and “Mesopotamian Cosmology and Mythology.”

**April 12 - The Persian Empire I: Cyrus to Darius I**

Bahrani, Chapter 13, pp. 293-299  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 15

**April 14 – The Persian Empire II: The Royal City of Persepolis**

Bahrani, Chapter 13, pp. 300-321  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 16.1, 16.2, and 16.3

**April 19 - Alexander of Macedon and the Problem of Hellenization**

Bahrani, Chapter 14  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 16.4

**April 21 – Cultural Heritage in the Crosshairs: The Significance of the Past in the Present**  
Bahrani, Epilogue

**April 26**  
**midterm review**

**April 28**  
**Review class material for final**

**Final Exam: TBA**

## CLASS POLICIES

**Attendance and Class participation: for this class, this is defined as doing the reading, working through the materials posted to Blackboard each week, and the discussion board assignments.** This is necessary; much of the material will only be covered in our lectures. You are responsible for getting notes.

Although this is an online asynchronous class you must keep up with the assignments and lecture material each week.

**Discussion board atmosphere.** Courtesy and common sense, please.

**Late work will be graded down five points per weekday and ten points over a weekend.** Plan ahead--last-minute hard-disk and printer failures do not constitute legitimate excuses. Make-up tests and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician's or associate dean's excuse. There will be no make-up final exams.

If you miss a discussion board deadline you will not get credit for posting to that board after the deadline. You miss the deadline, you will get a zero for that week.

**English as a Second Language:** If English is not your first language, I will be happy to help you do your best in the writing assignments. The final result must be written in good standard English. Please work with **The Writing Center** in Robinson I, Room A116.

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/> and <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their web page for English language help, at:

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. You may also want to work with GMU's **English Language Institute (ELI)**. Call them at (703) 993-3664, or visit their website at <http://eli.gmu.edu>

**Learning disabilities.** If you are a student with disabilities, and you need academic

accommodations, please contact me *and* contact the Office of Disabilities Resources (ODS) or 703-993-2474. Website: <http://ds.gmu.edu/> All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Religious holidays.** This syllabus is arranged according to the George Mason University calendar. If you observe a religious holiday that the University does not, please let me know and I will make necessary accommodations for you (but not for the whole class).

**Honor Code and Academic honesty** is expected in all tests and writing, according to the GMU Honor Code. "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Please respect the Honor Code, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. Please report violations to the Honor Committee, using the procedures explained in the website.

### **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE**

#### What is it?

To **plagiarize** is (according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Definition) "to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own; use another's work without crediting the source." In other words: copying someone else's text/speech and trying to pass it off as your own. **This includes cutting and pasting from the internet.**

#### How to avoid it?

It is **very very easy to avoid** plagiarism: simply put the words in quotes and CITE the original writer/source. I take this very seriously. If you plagiarize anything, even something as simple as a museum label, I will fail your work and report your violation of the honor code to GMU.

### **GRADING POLICIES**

**TESTS** must be taken on the scheduled date. If there has been an emergency, it must be documented by a note from the dean's office or your doctor. In those cases, there will be one make-up test scheduled.

#### **Final grades may be raised or lowered from strict average in the following circumstances:**

Class participation improves/deteriorates

Reliability is stellar (always on time, always prepared, etc.) or poor (bad attendance, never prepared)

Significant improvement over the semester (Student begins semester poorly but then does better)

#### **Grades will be calculated as follows:**

A = 100% to 93%, or 4.00

A- = 92% to 90%, or 3.67

B+ = 89% to 87%, or 3.33

B = 86% to 83 %, or 3.00

B- = 82% to 80 %, or 2.67  
C+ = 79% to 77 %, or 2.33  
C = 76% to 73 %, or 2.00  
C- = 72% to 70 %, or 1.67  
D = 60% to 66%, or 1.0  
F = below 60% receives no credit

I may award a final A+ in rare instances: 4.0 average *plus* unusually good writing and class participation.

**WRITTEN WORK** may be graded by points, or by the following criteria, as appropriate:

A = Startlingly good, exceeding expectations, and well written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions.

B = Good effort with a good result.

C = Perfunctory; or, tried but missed the point; or did something well but it wasn't the assignment; or good idea but careless or sloppy.

D = Warning: accepted under protest.

F = Unacceptable as college-level work.

**Grades will be lowered** for lateness, lack of proofreading, bad English, lack of necessary documentation/supporting evidence/footnoting, faulty logic, or failure to follow directions for the assignment. Please study the directions for writing assignments, elsewhere in this syllabus.

**Late written work:** Papers are on the day specified. After that, late papers will be lowered five points a day, or half a grade, during the work week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even "A" work into "F" work after ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it *before* the due date** if you want to avoid a penalty.

**Class participation grade:**

**"A" Level: Great class participation**—student demonstrates understanding of subject and the ability to think critically about it, makes connections with other students and encourages friendly and positive discussion, no "one-upping."

**"B" level: Normal class participation**—student shows up on time, keeps up with classwork, participates in group activities, does not cause problems

**"C" level:** Student shows poor class attendance, does not pay attention, is not up to date with reading, is disruptive, etc.

**"D-F" level:** Student will get a D-F in class participation automatically if they use their personal technology devices in any way that is not connected to the classroom. IE no Facebook, Tinder, Snapchat, etc. etc. etc. You are allowed to monitor emergency campus alerts of course.

**TWO PIECES OF GRADED WORK MISSING WILL BE GROUNDS FOR FAILING THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF YOUR PRECISE AVERAGE. IF YOU FLUNK THE FINAL EXAM, WITH AN F ON ANOTHER MAJOR (20%) PIECE OF WORK, YOU WILL RECEIVE A FAILING GRADE FOR THE WHOLE COURSE.** To pass this course **you must demonstrate mastery of the material from all**

**parts of the course.**

**Outside of this class:**

If you or anyone you know has been subjected to any form of harassment (due to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.), please consider a visit to GMU's Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. They will be supportive and discreet. GMU is proud of its diverse student body and committed to protecting the rights and the dignity of all students.

GMU Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Website:  
<http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/titleIX.cfm>