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

**Contact information and Office Hours:**
Email: jwilli98@gmu.edu
Office hours: Offered virtually, at a time convenient to you, by appointment/for your health and safety. To schedule an office visit, email me. We will decide on a good time, then I will send you a custom zoom link.

Please note: Unless told otherwise, 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
- 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.

**Assignments and Grade percentages:** (see more details below, after the lecture and readings schedule):
Class participation 20%
1st critical thinking paper 15%
2nd 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.

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.

Course Health Requirements:

If you or a family member falls ill, I am very willing to work with you to figure out how we can best meet your needs. You can also contact the Sterns Center for help!

- All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university’s public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check prior to coming to campus. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, Red, or Blue email response. Only students who receive a “green” notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are
allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

- Students are required to follow Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An appropriate facemask must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks will always be welcome in the classroom.

Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Last day to add a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class (with tuition penalty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15-March 1</td>
<td>Student self-withdrawal period (with tuition penalty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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 23:** 1st critical thinking paper due
- **March 2:** Midterm exam
- **April 11:** 2nd critical thinking paper due
- **Final Exam:** TBA

Course Readings and Lectures:

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 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. Note that due to privacy requirements, I can only respond to GMU accounts.
- 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.
• “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 dates below (they are due dates, not start-by dates).

Class schedule:

Jan. 24 – Introduction and Methods
Bahrani: Introduction

Jan. 26 – 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

Jan. 31 – Prehistoric Mesopotamia
Bahrani, Chapter 1, pp. 28-37
Van de Mieroop, Chapter 1.4

Feb. 2 – 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. 7 – 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. 9 – 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. 14 – 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. 16 - 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. 21 – 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. 23 – 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

Feb. 28 – Midterm Review

March 2 – Midterm Exam

March 7 - 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 9 – 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 14th-20th: Spring Break

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 23 – 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 28 – 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 30 – 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

April 4 – 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.”

April 6 – The Neo Assyrian Empire IV: Palaces of Sargon II at Khorsabad and Sennacherib at Nineveh
Bahrani, Chapter 10, pp. 236-244

April 11 – 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 13 – 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 18 - The Persian Empire I: Cyrus to Darius I  
Bahrani, Chapter 13, pp. 293-299  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 15

April 20 – 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 25 - Alexander of Macedon and the Problem of Hellenization  
Bahrani, Chapter 14  
Van De Mieroop, Chapter 16.4

April 27 – Cultural Heritage in the Crosshairs: The Significance of the Past in the Present  
Bahrani, Epilogue

May 2  
Conclusions

May 4  
review

Final Exam: TBA

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance and Class participation: are necessary to pass this course.

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.

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 be sure to 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 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 without explicitly saying (citing) where you read it. 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

ILLNESS and MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES Be sure to communicate with me as early as possible so that we can work together and create the protections you need.

TESTS must be taken on the scheduled date. If you experience 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)

Please note that I do not engage in grade negotiation.

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 (including the day it was due), 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, Instagram, online shopping, TikTok etc. etc. etc. You are allowed to monitor emergency campus alerts of 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