



HUM 124.001 The Ancient World

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Course Description

HUM 124: The Ancient World is the introduction to the Humanities sequence. Pursuing the central questions of the Humanities, we will explore the diverse cultures of Ancient Asia, Africa, America, and the Mediterranean. The foundation of this course is close reading of the written record of antiquity, but we will also investigate artifacts, monuments, and ruins, using them to illuminate and challenge what we learn from texts. We will take care to promote an understanding of each object of study in a way intelligible to the people that produced them. Nevertheless, because of the long time span we are dealing with—nearly 3,000 years—as well as the extensive geographical scope—most of the world’s ancient peoples that have left us a substantial textual record—we will necessarily have to sacrifice depth in order to cover ground. This won’t be a problem: our course is built on the assumption that there are fundamental concerns that people have living anywhere in the world, at any time. Some of these are:

- What does it mean to be human?
- How is living in society different from living in nature?
- What is the meaning of life, and of suffering?
- What is the basis for a virtuous life?

We may even challenge some of the assumptions that these questions make.

The *method* of the course is largely comparative: over 3 short weeks we will create a knowledge base reinforced by a constant return to the same cultures, and often the same text. The general *structure* of the course is thematic, allowing us to zero in on fundamental aspects of cultures and allowing us to make comparisons across space and time. For each day of the course, a core theme will tie the readings together and give us a launching off point for questions. In addition to comparing cultures and thereby research human nature, we will focus in particular in the way that knowledge is transmitted, collected, and created by means of oral traditions and, especially, the use of written literature.

Course Goals

Following the guidelines of the UNC Asheville Humanities Program, there are four primary learning objectives for this course:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge in the interdisciplinary study of ancient cultures, both in writing and orally
2. Students will identify the key features of a primary text or an artifact
3. Students will write well-supported, organized, and clearly articulated arguments
4. Students will articulate their own values and beliefs and compare them with those of diverse cultures studied, both in writing and orally

Academic Accessibility

UNC-Asheville values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources.

Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know, and/or make an appointment to meet with the Office of Academic Accessibility as soon as possible. To make an appointment, call 828.232.5050; email academicaccess@unca.edu; use this link <https://uncaoaaintake.youcanbook.me/>; or drop by the Academic Accessibility Office, room 005 in the One Stop suite (lower level of Ramsey Library). Learn more about the process of registering, and the services available through the Office of Academic Accessibility here: <https://oaa.unca.edu/>

While students may disclose disability at any point in the semester, students who receive Letters of Accommodation are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester.

Required Books to be Purchased

The Rig Veda, trans. Wendy Doniger (Penguin)

The Odyssey, trans. Emily Wilson (Norton)

Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)

Myths from Mesopotamia, trans. Stephanie Dalley (Oxford)

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau (Penguin)

Confucius, *The Analects*, trans. Raymond Dawson (Oxford)

The Bhagavad-Gita, translated by Barbara Stolen Miller (Bantam Classics)

The Bible, ed. David Norton (Penguin)

- Note: if you have your own Bible you may use it instead, as long as it contains both the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and the New Testament

Note: the following book is listed by the bookstore as required, but it is **optional**. Readings from this book will be provided in PDF form:

The Literature of Ancient Egypt, ed. W.K. Simpson (Yale)

Course Requirements

Quizzes

Throughout the course, fourteen online Video Modules produced by the Humanities Program at UNCA will be assigned for viewing at home. These are crucial for student success in this course, since they will teach basic concepts and succinctly present important historical and cultural overviews, covering fundamental topics that we do not have time to cover during class. Thus, each video should be viewed as a necessary prerequisite to being able to read, question, and seek understanding from the assigned readings.

On the day after a Video Module is assigned, there will be a quiz on major concepts and facts that you learned from these videos. Accompanying each video is a blank outline that should be filled in while watching the video. *The quizzes will be based on information contained in these outlines.* Students will take the quiz promptly at 8:30 am when class begins.

Format: multiple choice and fill in the blank; 10 minutes max.

Grading: 10 questions worth 1 point each. **When the quizzes are tallied at the end of the class, receiving 8/10 on a quiz will be counted as achieving a 100% grade. In addition, your lowest grade will be dropped from consideration, and any points you earn on quizzes beyond the required 8 to receive a 100% will be distributed to other exams where you learned less than 8 points. (90 points for 9 quizzes, minus a dropped quiz)**

Theme Journal

Each student will take a keyword that relates to a major theme of the course (e.g. "virtue," "nature"). A complete list of these is given at the end of the syllabus. Throughout the course, **you should take notes in a small journal when you encounter ideas relevant to your theme in the course material.** You should do this when you do your readings at home, during class, and when you work in small groups. Your journal should be organized by day, and you should write your own reflections as well as comments and questions about course readings.

Your theme journal is a great way to contribute to class discussion. You should always seek to add your perspective!

Format: The journal can be a Word document or a Google Doc file (if electronic, it should be double-spaced with 12 point font), or can be written out by hand in a notebook. Having a written journal is encouraged since you can use it throughout class (electronics will mostly not be allowed). You should write on average a page per day of the course, totaling at least 20 pages. The journal does not need to be formal, but can take any format you would like to organize your thoughts, e.g. notes, bullet points, mindmaps...

Grading: 100 points.

Final Exam

There will one exam which will be given at the end of the course. It will be written at home and turned in over email (either on Google Drive, or as a Word or PDF file). A study guide will be distributed on Monday, 5/27. The exam will be distributed during class on the last day, Friday 5/31. The exam will be due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday 6/5. **If this timeline does not work, students should speak with the professor ASAP.**

Format: 6-8 short identification questions and 1 essay. A list of possible short answer questions that will appear on the exam will be shared on the study guide. Students will be given three possible essay topics when the exam is distributed, and will be required to answer one of them.

Grading: 100 points total.

Group project

There will be four to seven small groups, with 3 to 5 members each. Each group will create a project over the three weeks over the course and present it to the class on the last day. There is a great deal of leeway for what these projects will look like, ranging from creative to more traditionally academic or research-based. The fundamental requirement is that the project engages with the texts, cultures, and ideas of our course. The idea is that students will pool their talents and create something that allows them to make connections between this course and skills they use for their major. Some ideas:

- Adapt a work of literature (into comic book, film, animation, podcast...).
- Encode an ancient text into XML.
- Do a substantial edit of a group of Wikipedia pages surrounding a single topic.
- Introduce a culture, civilization, or mythology that we have not covered in this course, but for which you can make pertinent connections to course material (e.g. Mayans, Native Americans...)
- Write and perform a dramatic dialogue, or short play, where important figures from our course interact with each other, engage in debate, etc. (e.g. Confucius and Aristotle)
- Create a comprehensive inventory of gods and goddesses, with creative groupings, comparisons, etc.

Format: There are three deliverables associated with the group project:

1. **A short, 2-3 page writeup** (25 points). This should: describe what your project is; briefly narrate the actual creation of the project (making sure to indicate who did what); describe your goals (and whether you had to modify them as you worked on the project); explain what you found challenging or rewarding about the project and process. This should be turned in to me over email on the last day of class.

2. **A presentation to the class** (25 points). You have flexibility here, but you should at least describe and show or display, in whatever way is appropriate, the project itself. If your project is creative, you might perform or play some or all of it. Presentations should last 15 to 25 minutes. Projects will be presented on the last day of class, 5/31.
3. **The project itself** (50 points). Depending on its nature, you should be able to turn in some form of your project to me on the last day of class.

Grading: 100 points total. See individual deliverables above for the point breakdown.

Participation

Full participation in the course, in the most basic sense, means doing the required readings at home to the best of your ability, and participating in class discussion and group work.

Because this is a 4-credit course in a three week span, there is an unusually high demand on each student regarding work done at home. This is unavoidable, but I have endeavored to make the homework reasonable and clear. Ideally, each student should spend at least 3-4 hours every day on coursework in the afternoons or evenings. **Please be in touch with me if you are having difficulties keeping up with the class**, especially if you have obligations like work and family. I am understanding and want to work with all of you to make sure that you do your best work and earn a good grade.

The guaranteed way to earn full participation credit is to always have the course texts and your notes with you, to be visibly engaged with the texts during class, to contribute questions, comments, or responses to other students during class discussion, and to participate fully in group work.

If you have concerns or anxieties about your participation, please don't hesitate to contact me at the beginning of the course, as well as whenever concerns arise. There are many ways to contribute beyond just raising your hand or answering questions.

The guaranteed way to lose participation credit is to not have the course texts with you, to use a laptop during class discussion, to use your phone, and to be visibly non-engaged with the class.

Grading Breakdown:

Final exam – 150 points (27%)
Quizzes – 140 points (25%)
Theme journal – 100 points (18%)
Group project – 100 points (18%)
Participation – 70 points (12%)

Total: 560 points

Grading scale:

A	93%+	C+	77-79%
A-	90-92%	C	73-78%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	0-59%

Electronics Policy

While certain in-class projects may require the use of electronics, the use of laptops as well as tablets and phones in class is prohibited unless you have express consent from me (for this, please see me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester). This means that, when doing assigned readings in the course texts, you should take notes in a notebook and bring that to class with you.

Academic Integrity

As a community of scholars dedicated to learning and the pursuit of knowledge, UNC Asheville relies on the honesty and academic integrity of all the members of its community. Any act of plagiarism, cheating, or use of unauthorized materials or assistance is academic dishonesty. A person who knowingly assists another in academic dishonesty is likewise guilty of dishonesty. A student may be punished by a failing grade or a grade of zero for the assignment or test, or a failing grade in the course. The faculty member may also require that the student complete additional sanctions, such as the completion of an online course on plagiarism or resubmission of the original assignment. In all situations where a student has been disciplined for academic dishonesty, the instructor must submit a brief statement of the case to the Senior Director of Student Success with a copy to the student. The Senior Director maintains records of academic dishonesty incidents and notifies the instructor when a student is found to have multiple offenses. Depending upon the severity and/or repetition of the offense, the Senior Director and/or instructor may recommend that the Provost impose an additional penalty, such as cancellation of graduation with honors, cancellation of scholarships, or dismissal from the university. If the Provost decides that additional penalties are warranted, the student will be notified in writing. If a student feels that he or she has been unjustly accused of academic dishonesty, the student has ten (10) class days from the date of the instructor's written notification to the student to respond in writing. This response is to be sent to both the instructor and the Senior Director of Student Success. The instructor should then meet with the student to discuss the charges within five (5) class days. If needed, the student may then contact the Senior Director for assistance in identifying options for possible resolution. If needed, the Faculty Conciliator will be contacted to mediate and/or convene the Academic Appeals Board.

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

All members of the University community are expected to engage in conduct that contributes to the culture of integrity and honor upon which the University of North Carolina at Asheville is grounded. Acts of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking jeopardize the health and welfare of our campus community and the larger community as a whole and will not be tolerated. The University has established procedures for preventing and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic

violence and stalking that are compliant with Title IX federal regulations. To learn more about these procedures or to report an incident of sexual misconduct, go to titleix.unca.edu. Students may also report incidents to an instructor, faculty or staff member, who are required by law to notify the Title IX Office.

Academic Alerts

Faculty at UNCA are encouraged to use the university's Academic Alert system to communicate with students about their progress in courses. Academic Alerts can reflect that a student's performance is satisfactory at the time the alert is submitted, or they can indicate concerns (e.g., academic difficulty, attendance problems, or other concerns). Professors use the alert system because they are invested in student success and want to encourage open conversations about how students can improve their learning, and students who respond to alerts quickly are consistently more likely to earn credit for the course. Please note, professors of 100-level courses are required to submit at least one alert about each student on or before the seventh week of classes.

When a faculty member submits an alert that expresses a concern, the student receives an email from Academic Advising notifying them of the alert and subsequent registration hold on their account. To clear the hold, the student must complete a short Google Response Form included in the alert e-mail; the results will be shared with their instructor and advising staff. Instructors may also request to meet with the student to discuss the alert.

Questions about the Academic Alert system can be directed to Anne Marie Roberts (amrober1@unca.edu) in OneStop Advising and Learning Support.

Attendance Requirement

Students are expected to attend the entirety of every class, especially given the short and intensive nature of a Maymester course like ours. **Every unexcused absence will count against your overall course grade:** for one unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered 5 percentage points; for two, 10 points; for three, 15 points; for four, you will receive a failing grade.

Please be on time to class. If you are continually late without excuse, you will accrue unexcused absences as well.

Daily Class Overview

- 8:30-8:40 Quizzes, recap & overview

Session 1 (70 min)

- 8:40-9:10 Lecture/Presentations I
- 9:10-9:50 Class discussion

15 min. break (9:50-10:05)

- 10:05-11:15 Group work

Session 2 (60 min)

- 11:15-11:45 Lecture/Presentations II
- 11:45-12:15 Class discussion

Course Schedule

<i>Key to readings:</i>	A	Confucius, <i>The Analects</i>
	B	<i>The Bible</i>
	BG	<i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i>
	LAE	<i>The Literature of Ancient Egypt</i> (PDFs of readings will be provided)
	MM	<i>Myths from Mesopotamia</i>
	O	<i>The Odyssey</i>
	P	Plato, <i>Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo</i>
	PDF	PDF of reading on Moodle
	RV	<i>The Rig Veda</i>
	TTC	Lao Tzu, <i>Tao Te Ching</i>
	VM	Video Module (linked on Moodle)

NOTE: As of 4/7, each "Reading assignment due next class" (i.e. homework) is set, but there may be some changes in the "In-class readings." Moodle will always have the most up-to-date listing of readings.

Monday, May 13 - Introduction to the Humanities - Creation Stories

To be read before class:	Genesis 1:1-2:4a (B 3-4) Genesis 2:4b-3:24 (B 4-6)
<i>In-class readings</i>	"How the World Was Made" (PDF) <i>Rig Veda</i> , "Creation" (RV 23-40) <i>The Epic of Creation</i> , tablets 1, 4, and 6 (MM 233-238, 249-254, 260-267)
<i>Reading assignment due next class:</i>	<i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , tablets 1-11 (MM 50-120) Watch: VM – Mesopotamia; VM – Ancient Israel

Tuesday, May 14 - The Epic of Gilgamesh - Flood Stories

Quiz: VM – Mesopotamia; VM – Ancient Israel

In-class readings: "The Book of the Heavenly Cow" (LAE 289-298)
Atrahasis (MM 9-35)
Flood story from the Chinese *Records of the Grand Historian* (PDF)
Flood story from the Indian *Satapatha Brahmana* (web)
Genesis 4-9 (B 6-12)

Reading assignment due next class: Homer, *The Odyssey*, books 1-4 (O 105-179)

Wednesday, May 15 - Ancient Journeys

In-class readings: "The Shipwrecked Sailor" (AEL 45-53)
"The Story of Sinuhe" (AEL 54-66)
"The Report of Wenamon" (AEL 116-124)

Reading assignment due next class: Homer, *The Odyssey*, books 5, 13-14 (O 180-196, 316-349)
Asvaghosa, *Life of Buddha*, "Departure" (PDF)
Watch: VM – Vedic India; VM – Buddhism

Thursday, May 16 - Ancient Journeys - The Ways of Dharma

Quiz: VM – Vedic India; VM – Buddhism

In-class readings: The Four Noble Truths from the *Mahavagga* (PDF)
"Kisagotami" (PDF)
Upanishads selections (PDF)

Reading assignment due next class: *Bhagavad Gita*, chapters 1-13 (BG 23-118)
Watch: VM – Bhagavad Gita

Friday, May 17 - The Ways of Dharma (cont'd)

Quiz: VM – Bhagavad Gita

Reading assignment due next class: Confucius, *Analects* (A 1-82)
Watch: VM – Confucius in Praise of Sage Kings

Monday, May 20 - Individual and Society

Quiz: VM – Confucius in Praise of Sage Kings

Reading assignment due next class: Plato, *Apology* (P 1-44)
Plato, *Euthyphro* (P)

Tuesday, May 21 - Individual and Society (cont'd)

In-class readings:

Reading assignment due next class: Epictetus, *Handbook* (PDF)
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (PDF)
Watch: VM – Hellenistic Philosophy

Wednesday, May 22 - Virtue and the Good Life

Quiz: VM - Hellenistic Philosophy

In-class readings:

Reading assignment due next class: Homer, *The Odyssey*, books 9-10 (O 240-278)
1 Maccabees 1-4 (B 1475-1485)
Daniel 1-6 (B 1153-1163)
Watch: VM – Second Temple Judaism

Thursday, May 23 - Identity and Other

Quiz: VM – Second Temple Judaism

In-class readings:

Reading assignment due next class: Genesis 15:1-19, 17:1-27, 22:1-19 (B 17, 18-19, 24-25)
Rig Veda, “The Elements of Sacrifice,” “The Horse Sacrifice,” “Agni,” “Soma” (RV 59-138)
Isaiah 40-45 (“Second Isaiah”) (B 938-951)

Friday, May 24 - Gods, Kings, and Messiahs

In-class readings: Treaties from the Near East
Biblical selections

Reading assignment due next class: Matthew 1-28 (B 1549-1588)
Watch: VM – Rise of Christianity

Monday, May 27 - NO CLASS (Memorial Day)

Tuesday, May 28 – *The Gospel According to Matthew*

Quiz: VM – Rise of Christianity

Reading assignment due next class: Homer, *The Odyssey*, book 11 (O 279-300)
Rig Veda, “Women” (RV 245-281)
The Book of Songs, selections (PDF)
Sappho, selections (PDF)

Wednesday, May 29 - Death and the Afterlife; Gender

Reading assignment due next class: Homer, *The Odyssey*, book 19-23 (O 425-506)
The Song of Solomon (B 877-884)
Plato, *Symposium*, speech of Aristophanes (PDF)
Dao De Ching, selections
Watch: VM – Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece

Thursday, May 30 - Gender; Daoism

Quiz: VM – Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece

In-class readings *Dao De Ching*, selections

Reading assignment due next class: Watch: VM – Laozi and Daoism

Friday, May 31 – Daoism – Group Presentations

Quiz: VM – Laozi and Daoism

Final exam distributed. Due Wednesday, 6/5 at 11:59 pm.

Keywords/Themes

Authority
Culture
Death
Divinity
Ethics
Gender
Humanity
Literature

Morality
Nature
Reality
Religion
Scripture
Society
Story/Myth
Virtue
Wisdom