



HUM 124.012
The Ancient World
Fall 2020

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Important links:

- [Moodle site for HUM 124.012](#)
- [My YouTube channel](#) – for lecture videos and streaming (both also linked on Moodle)
- [HUM 124 Wiki](#) – hosted at Wikiversity

My office hours:

- *Office hours streaming.* You can ask me questions or join in a discussion with me and your peers every Thursday from 9:55-11:35 am (even weeks) & from 1:20-3:00 pm (odd weeks) on YouTube, where I will be streaming live. [Here is a link to my channel](#). Links to the stream will be shared on Moodle and over email. You can ask questions or join the discussion in the chat!
- *Regular office hours on Zoom.* On Monday and Friday from 10-11 am, and on Wednesday from 3-4 pm, I will hold optional Zoom office hours to allow time for one-on-one interaction. You do not need to make an appointment. This is not a private meeting space, since anybody can join in.

- *Office hours on Zoom by appointment.* If you need to set up another time to meet with me, or would like to meet in a private setting, email me (jcross2@unca.edu) and we can set up a time that works best.

Course Description

In this course, we will discover ancient human societies—African, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Indian, Chinese, and American—by a close study of **primary sources**. These are some of the **questions** we will ask continually during the course:

- What does it mean to be human?
- How is living in society different from living in nature?
- What does it mean to live a good life?

These questions were asked by the ancients too, and the sources we will study are the record of their answers. When we put these answers together, constantly comparing, re-examining, and interlinking what we find, a series of perspectives will take shape, not only for individual cultures but for the ancients in general. We can call these perspectives the **worldview** of the ancient people we study.

All of our primary sources are **written literature**, which means that our perspective will frequently—but not always!—be limited to the worldview of a very small group of people who could devote their lives to learning and to reading and writing, and not supporting their own life and livelihood by growing food and raising families. We will try as much as possible to recover and listen to other voices in these sources, especially those of the marginalized and the invisible.

The class is organized around a set of questions about human experience focused on a **theme**. On occasion, we will uncover answers to our questions in the scriptures of religions which grew beyond their ancient origin, evolved throughout the ages, and currently have a worldwide

membership. We will also study primary sources of indigenous peoples with whom we share the earth today. Many of these answers are embedded in systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism, and contribute directly to the same kinds of oppression in our modern world. For this reason, we all must collaborate to make this class relevant and to let the ancient voices speak to us in an urgent way.

Learning 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

Message from the Office of 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://universityofncasheville.setmore.com/>; or drop by the Academic Accessibility Office in the Academic Success Center (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."

Course Texts

In order of appearance in the class:

The Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs (Stanford)

The Odyssey, translated by Emily Wilson (Norton)

Confucius, *Analects* (Oxford Classics)

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)

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

Course Components – Overview

This is an **online only** class with both **synchronous** and **asynchronous** elements.

Synchronous meetings (during official course times of T/Th 9:55-11:35 am)

1. **Tuesdays**: Live meetings with entire class on Zoom from 9:55-11:35 am

- **Participation requirement:** Attendance for the Tuesday Zoom sessions is

required just like for an in-person class meeting. More than **three unexcused absences** will hurt your grade.

2. **Thursdays:** Live office hours streaming on YouTube from 9:55-11:35 am (even weeks) & from 1:20-3:00 pm (odd weeks)

- **Participation requirement:** Attendance for the Thursday streams is required

for 50% of the semester, or a total of 7 streams. Students should join the stream for at least 30 min.

Tuesday meetings on Zoom will replace the class discussion and in-class small group work we would normally do during in-person class meetings.

Thursday live streams are more informal than the Tuesday meetings. You won't be connected via video, but will be able to ask questions and interact in the YouTube chat. Students from my second section of HUM 124 will be joining the Thursday livestreams.

Note: For week 1, the Zoom meeting will be held on Thursday, 8/14, and there will be no live office hours streaming until week 2.

Asynchronous activities

1. **Reading assigned primary sources:** Readings from assigned books and from PDFs will be assigned for each week. Students have all week to complete the reading, unless otherwise noted (see #2). Try to finish the reading by Friday, and get going again on the next week's reading over the week or Monday at the latest.
2. **Preparing for Tuesday live meetings:** For most weeks, I will have a short "ask" for you in preparation for the Tuesday meetings, based on the weekly readings. They will be posted on Moodle by Sunday night. These "asks" are designed to be done *while doing the assigned reading and will take 5-10 minutes*. There is no assignment related to these "asks," but not coming to the meetings prepared will hurt your participation grade.

3. **Watching short lecture videos:** For most weeks, one or two short video lectures by me will be posted to Moodle (via YouTube). They will give background to the readings, and will never add up to be more than 20 minutes.
4. **Editing the wiki:** This is a central part of our class. See “Assignments” below.

Assignments

1. **Wiki:** (See below for full discussion) You should work on the wiki frequently, especially when you are reading the assigned primary sources. To receive full credit for participating in the wiki, you should:
 - **Contribute approximately 500 words per week.** This includes both article content as well as discussion content. You can check your progress on the “Contributions” tab at the top of the page (as long as you are logged in). Each of your contributions is recorded along with a *net* character count. 500 words is roughly 3,000 characters. To stay on track, you should aim to contribute in a substantial **way to at least two pages** every week of the class.
 - For pages that you created or contributed to, you should stay engaged with discussion and continue to edit and add as is necessary.

For more information about the Wiki, see below.

2. **Reflection papers:** You will write two short reflection papers for our class:
 - **Reflection 1.** Due by Wednesday, 8/12, 11:59 pm (submitted by email to jcross2@unca.edu). Length: 2-3 pages, double-spaced.

- **Reflection 2.** Due by Sunday, 11/22, 11:59 pm (submitted by email to jcross2@unca.edu). Length: 3-5 pages, double-spaced.

If you have any questions about any course requirements, post on the class message board on Moodle: all will benefit!

Wiki Project

We will be collaborating on a wiki, “[a hypertext publication collaboratively edited and managed by its own audience directly using a web browser.](#)”

You are all familiar with Wikipedia, a free, online, collaborative encyclopedia. We will be using the same wiki technology used by Wikipedia. After creating an account on our wiki, you can begin to create, edit, discuss, and collaborate.

Our class wiki is similar to Wikipedia in some ways: it will consist of **written articles** on a variety of topics, such as a certain primary source, religion, artifact or theme, will be created collaboratively, as well as discussed, revised, edited, and expanded. Articles will include **links** to other articles, further reading and resources, **citations and bibliographies, images and infographs**, and more. The pages will be linked to each other and organized into groups. Unlike Wikipedia, our wiki will contain opinions as well as original research. It is not meant to be an encyclopedia, but it could resemble one in some respects. Although it will be accessible to the public through the web, in practice it will be available, and best understandable, as an expression of the goals and objectives of HUM 124.

Most importantly, **the wiki will be shaped by you.** While there are some general parameters already in place, its content, organization, and purpose is still to be decided. **What you contribute is entirely up to you: choose topics and formats that are of interest to you!**

That being said, as the course instructor and facilitator, I have a basic vision for what the wiki should be. This is primarily in order that we can use it to facilitate learning the course material and to achieve our course goals.

A Vision for the HUM 124 Wiki

1. The content of the wiki is **grounded on the primary sources of HUM 124**. It can also be based on topics relevant to these sources and our approach to them. For this reason, the basic structure of the wiki should consist of pages for all of the primary sources. All other pages created on the wiki should be linked back to the primary source pages whenever possible.
2. The wiki is **course material that we create**. Besides the primary sources and the occasional, short video lecture, there is no other course material for this class: no textbook, powerpoint slides, notes, or study guides. You should create material that is useful for the study of the course content, springing from your study and engagement with it. Thus, it is an example of **active learning**.
3. We are **demonstrating our growing skills** in understanding primary sources, especially how to read closely and critically, how to make comparisons with different texts, and how to find contemporary relevance in ancient sources. We are also practicing how to research and cite courses. For this reason, ample resources, available both online and in the library, are gathered on Moodle.
4. We are **creating a resource for instructors and students of HUM 124 that will continue to be used after this semester**.
5. We are **learning how to collaborate and converse** about our beliefs.

This “vision” can be found on the wiki, which means it can be edited, expanded, or changed by you. The wiki, and its purpose, are only going to take shape gradually. Thus, dive in and start creating!

On that note, what exactly are you going to contribute? Here are some possibilities:

- **Background information** about a primary source, religion, or any other relevant topic
- **Synthetic discussion** of a topic or theme that is found in several sources
- **Images or infographs** that you make yourself or find online (as long as they are licensed for re-use)
- **Citations** of primary sources and other resources, **links** to more reading online, and **bibliographies** for further research.
- **Connections** to other resources on the wiki

In addition to contributing content, you will also:

- Decide if there should be templates with basic kinds of information that should be followed for certain kinds of pages, and what that info should be
- Consider how to combine and split pages when necessary, as well as organize more than one page into groups
- Have discussions with your peers about the purpose of the wiki, or certain parts of it, building up a vision and deciding on a course of action.

You can do any and all of this **collaboratively**. Furthermore, everything you contribute to the wiki *can be edited or changed by anyone else*. Before changing a page significantly, especially removing or changing something already written, you are encouraged to use the “Discussion” tab of the page you are interested in. Instead of making major edits, changes, or deletions on your own, discuss what you think should be done and decide on a plan of action as a group.

I am teaching two sections of HUM 124 this semester. Both sections are collaborating on the wiki: the more the merrier!

There will be **ample** time devoted for everyone to learn how wikis work and how to create and edit content. Using a wiki does not require any

advanced computing or programming skills. It is mostly a matter of learning the ins-and-outs of the editing interface and, above all, practice. I have taught myself the basics of wiki editing by googling questions I had, using examples on Wikipedia as models, and trial and error!

Finally, some things to watch out for as you begin creating:

- **Plagiarism.** Anything you contribute should be your own work. Always cite sources that you use. Pages in the wiki will be automatically checked for plagiarism.
- **Etiquette.** Treat others with respect. Enter into dialogue, ask questions, respond respectfully and fully, and be open to changing your mind. Practice arguing in a civil way for why your opinion is sound or plausible. Do not significantly change someone else's content without discussing it first.
- **Burnout.** You do not need to create a complete, exhaustive page! **Contribute in the way that you want to**, focusing as much on a single topic as you would like, as often as you like.

Grading Breakdown

I will give you a B in the course if you meet all of the following requirements:

1. Meet the attendance requirements for both types of synchronous meetings
2. Participate in group work during Tuesday Zoom meetings (by doing the small "asks" and coming prepared)
3. Submit both reflection papers by the deadlines
4. Contribute to the wiki as required

I will lower your grade by a grade letter if you do not meet one of the four requirements. For example, if you have more than three unexcused absences for the Tuesday Zoom meetings, but do everything else, you will receive a C. Each failed requirement corresponds to a lowering by a grade

letter, which means failing to meet two requirements will give you a D, and three, an F. I can decide to lower your grade by half a grade letter if an objective is partially met; for example, submitting one but not both of the reflections, but meeting the other requirements, would result in a C+

You will receive an **A-minus** if, in addition to the above requirements, you **contribute regularly and in a substantial way to the wiki**. An important part of this contribution is contributing to discussion and continuing to work on and revise content that you create.

You will receive an **A** if, in addition to the requirements for a B, **you contribute regularly and in a substantial way to the wiki AND produce two thoughtful reflection papers that are the result of significant effort**.

There is an extra weight attached to requirement #1, in particular the Zoom meetings. If you have more than five **unexcused** absences on Tuesdays (about 1/3rd of the semester, in other words), you will receive a failing grade.

It is a privilege to be your teacher and I value your contribution to our class. This is an incredibly difficult time for all of us, and I understand that there are good reasons why you may need to miss class discussion on a Tuesday, or need flexibility with other assignments. **I am flexible and understanding** and want you to be happy, healthy, and feel in control. All that I ask is that you **stay in touch with me and be honest**. I can be reached by email (jcross2@unca.edu) and by phone/text at 972-841-5584.

***** Midterm Grades *****

UNCA is requiring all professors to assign a midterm grade at the end of Term I (9/29). You will receive a **B** at midterm if you:

1. You should contribute, on average, 500 words (3,000 characters) per week to the **Wiki**, with the exception of week 1.
2. **Reflection 1** must be turned in.

You will receive an **A-** at midterm if you **contribute regularly and in a substantial way to the wiki**. An important part of this contribution is contributing to discussion and continuing to work on and revise content that you create.

You will receive an **A** if, in addition to the requirements for a B, **you contribute regularly and in a substantial way to the wiki AND produce a thoughtful first reflection paper that is the result of significant effort**.

The requirements for attendance as listed above hold for the midterm grade.

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%

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.”

Weekly Course Schedule

Sundays “Asks” for Tuesday Zoom meeting will be posted

Mondays Video lectures will be posted

Tuesdays **Group discussion on Zoom from 9:55-11:35 am**

Thursdays **Streaming office hours on YouTube from 9:55-11:35 am (even weeks) and 1:20-3:00 pm (odd weeks)**

Reading Schedule

Week 1 – Why do we study humanities? ([The Humanities](#))

“How the World Was Made” – Cherokee (North America)

“The Laughing Girl” – Tewa (North America)

“The Chamelon Finds” – Yao (Mozambique, Africa)

“Why the Sun and Moon Are in the Sky” – Ibibio (Nigeria, Africa)

Genesis 1-2 – Israelite (Levant)

Popol Vuh, creation story – Mayan (North America)

Week 2 – What is the nature of human experience? ([The Human Experience](#))

Genesis 2-3 – Israelite (Levant)

The Epic of Gilgamesh – Mesopotamian (Iraq)

Week 3 – How do human beings relate to the sacred? ([The Sacred](#))

Ifá divination poetry – Yoruba (Africa)

Upanishads – Hindu (India)

Hymns from the Veda – Hinduism (Iran)

Hymns from the Avesta – Zoroastrian (Iran)

Covenant texts from Genesis – Israelite (Levant)

“Corn Woman Spirit” – Cherokee (North America)

Week 4 – Why are we here, and what happens next? ([The Afterlife](#))

Popol Vuh, descent to Xibalba – Mayan (America)

Book of the Dead – Egyptian (Africa)

“Daughter of the Sun” – Cherokee (America)

Life of the Buddha, “Departure” – Buddhist (India)

“Kisagotami” – Buddhist (India)

Plato, *Phaedo* – Greece

Week 5 – Text in focus: Homer’s *Odyssey*

Homer, *Odyssey*

Week 6 – How and why do we tell stories? ([Storytelling](#))

Homer, *Odyssey*

Week 7 – Text in focus: Confucius' *Analects*

Analects of Confucius – Confucianism (China)

Week 8 – What gives meaning to life? ([The Good Life](#))

Plato, *Euthyphro* – Athenian (Greece)

Plato, *Apology* – Athenian (Greece)

The Teaching of Amenemope – Egyptian (North African)

Epictetus, *Enchiridion* – Greek/Roman

Week 9 – Who are we? How do we relate to others? ([Ourselves and Others](#))

Behistun Inscription – Persian (Iran)

Maccabees – Israelite (Levant)

Esther – Israelite (Levant)

Isaiah 40-45 – Israelite (Levant)

Week 10 – Who has power over others? How did they obtain it? ([Power](#))

Code of Hammurabi – Mesopotamian (Iraq)

Cyrus Cylinder – Persian (Iran)

Augustus, *Res Gestae* – Roman (Italy)

Han Feizi – China

Qin Law – China

Lui Bang – China

Shang Yang – China

Week 11 – In what ways are societies unequal and exploitative? (Inequality)

Gospel According to Matthew (selections) – Early Christian (Levant)
Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; Luke 8:1-3; John 12:1-11; John 20 – Early Christian

(Levant)

Aristotle, *Politics* – Athenian (Greece)

Exodus 21 – Israelite (Levant)

Rig Veda, 1.10 – Hindu (India)

Week 12 – How do we experience and express love? (Love)

Sappho – Lesbian (Greece)

Book of Songs – China

Egyptian Love Poetry – Egyptian (North Africa)

Song of Songs - Israelite, from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (Middle East)

Natyasastra – India

Shakuntala – India

Week 13 – Text in Focus: *The Bhagavad Gita*

Bhagavad Gita – Hindu (India)

Week 14 – How do we relate to the natural world? (Nature)

Dao de Ching – Daoist (China)

“The Earth” – Cherokee (North America)

“The Magic Lake” – Cherokee (North America)

“Going to Water” – Cherokee (North America)

Week 14 – Can humans manipulate reality? (Magic)

Magic spells from Ancient Egypt – Greek and Egyptian (North Africa)