

**History 2211: The Ancient Near East**  
Spring 2016  
Online

**Instructor:**

Kyle Tadlock  
Dulles Hall 009  
Office Hours: Appointment only  
E-mail: [tadlock.6@osu.edu](mailto:tadlock.6@osu.edu)

**Course Description:** An overview of the cultures and societies of the ancient Near East from prehistory until the invasion of Alexander the Great.

**GE Requirements Fulfilled:** Historical Study

**Enrollment:**

“All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the semester. No requests to add the course will be approved by the Chair after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of the student.”

**Instructor’s Goals for the Course:**

The goal of this course is for students to learn about the civilizations of the ancient Near East and their cultures and societies. Students will also gain some understanding of “how history is made,” that is, what the process is that historians go through in order to reconstruct the past. This will be accomplished through and discussion of primary source materials on a weekly basis. Finally, the exams and essays are intended to display student’s critical thinking and writing skills.

**Departmental Goal and Learning Outcomes:**

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students construct an integrated perspective on history and the factors that shape human activity.
2. Students display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding.
3. Students think, speak, and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts.

**Required Book:** William H. Stiebing Jr.’s *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition. ISBN: 9780321422972. This book has been in second edition since 2009, and so

should be easy to find used. Also for this reason, the first edition is **not** acceptable. This is the only required book for the course, all other content will be uploaded to Carmen.

**Academic Dishonesty:** It is your responsibility, as a student of this University, to avoid any kind of academic misconduct. In this class we want specifically to urge you to carefully avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is, simply, using material that you did not produce yourself without indicating its precise origin and ownership: this can mean 1) allowing someone else to write a paper or an examination for you, 2) copying and pasting something from a website and failing to mention clearly where this material is from, 3) assisting someone else to commit plagiarism by giving or selling your own work to someone else. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed, illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>.

**Course Structure Overview:** This course will be primarily a mixture of recorded lectures and online discussion. Each week there will be at least two recorded lectures with slideshows for you to listen/read. There will also be primary sources posted every week that deal with the same material as the lecture that should be read in association with it. These will provide both the background for the lecture and will be the basis for online discussion. There will also be textbook readings most weeks to supplement the lecture and primary sources.

**\*NB:** For the purposes of the class, a “week” runs from 12:01am on Mondays to 11:59pm on Sundays. All discussion forums will open and close on those times respectively unless otherwise noted. The Carmen dropbox for any given assignment and all quizzes and exams will likewise close to new submissions at 11:59 pm on the day they are due.

### **Course Assignments:**

**Participation:** Discussion is a valuable part of this this course and will be a large percentage of your grade. Every week of class, there will be a discussion forum open in Carmen for you to post questions and comments about that week’s material. For 12 out of the 14 full weeks of class, each of you is expected to provide **two** posts of 200-300 words (about two good paragraphs) on some aspect of the primary source readings/images that interested you. Your post must draw on evidence from the readings for that week (or a previous one) and must provide some sort of opinion or observation beyond what is in the selections. In order to keep it fair for everyone, you may not draw upon any material from outside of class.

Unlike other online courses you may have taken, and my own previous classes, I will not provide discussion prompts, but I instead want you to come up with your own questions and

comments. This is a bit of an experiment on my part, but I think it will make discussion better for all of us. Instead, you will just pick which reading you want to comment upon and post on that thread. If you are the first person to make a post on a reading, you may say what you wish and be done. If you are not the first person to post on a source, you have to engage in some way with what has been said before. You may agree, disagree, offer a different way to look at the issue, etc. In any event, your reply must also meet all the criteria listed above. Obviously, as the week goes on, it will be more difficult to provide original insight, so it is best to post early.

If your post is too short, does not use any information from the week's readings, does not engage with previous posts, or is otherwise unacceptable, I will delete it and notify you. You will then have until the end of the week to modify your post or put up a new one. Thus, it behooves you to post earlier in the week. On that note, I do not check posts on Sundays. If you post on that day and your post is unacceptable, I will not read it until Monday, and you will have no chance to resubmit. No late discussion posts will be accepted without a medical excuse or other valid reason.

Discussion will count for 30% of your total grade. Twelve acceptable posts by the 15<sup>th</sup> week of class will earn you a 100 for discussion. If you post in only 11 weeks, you will get a 90, for 10 weeks, 80, for 9 weeks, 70, 8 weeks 60, 7 weeks 50, 6 weeks 40, 5 weeks 30, 4 weeks 20, 3 weeks 10, and under that 0.

Quizzes: There will be seven quizzes throughout the semester, with the lowest being dropped at the end. The quizzes will be administered through Carmen and consist of ten multiple choice questions based on the lectures and primary source readings. All material presented after the previous quiz will be considered fair game for the current quiz. You will have twenty minutes plus a one minute grace period to complete them and may use the textbook, lectures, and primary sources while taking them. You will have two attempts to take each quiz, with the highest attempt becoming your grade. The questions are randomized from a larger pool, so you will not get the same questions on your second attempt. The quizzes will be open from Wednesday to Sunday each week, and you may take it at a time of your choosing during that timeframe.

Midterm Exam: The midterm will consist of a single essay question drawing on material from the first half of the class. It will be open from March 12:01am on March 4 to 11:59pm on March 6. You may take the exam any time during that period, although I strongly suggest not waiting until 11pm on the 6 to do it, since the internet and Carmen do not always cooperate. On that note: **You are solely responsible for insuring you have a reliable computer and a stable internet connection before taking the test.** I will not accept any excuses based on technical difficulties, barring a Carmen system failure or power outage on campus.

Once you start the exam, you will have one attempt and one hour in which to complete it. There will be a five minute grace period provided to help prevent anyone from accidentally going over the time limit. Once that limit is exceeded, five points will be taken off the final grade, with another ten points for every additional ten minutes after that. For example, an exam active for 66 minutes will get five points taken off its grade, while one that is turned in at 75 minutes will have fifteen points taken off. Anything after 95 minutes will simply not be accepted.

You will have a choice of three questions, all of which will draw upon the material from Weeks 1-8 of the course. You will answer **one** of the prompts with an essay based on both the primary and secondary source readings in the class. I expect a solid essay of at least four paragraphs (I don't particularly care if you have an introduction or not, but I do want a

conclusion) that draws on the relevant primary source evidence to answer the question asked. I won't be looking for a particular answer, just one that is well-argued from the evidence.

The exam will be open book, but I recommend studying so that you have previous knowledge of the material and won't have to look up everything on the fly. The use of any material outside of the textbook and Carmen content is prohibited and will be punished as cheating. Citations in the essay section are appreciated but not necessary beyond acknowledging the names or authors of the sources you are using for evidence. More information will be available closer to the time of the exam.

**I highly, highly recommend writing your essays in a separate program like Word and then pasting them into Carmen.** Doing so will protect you if Carmen decides to reload the page while you are typing, which has happened to me several times while I was making the site for this course. On that note, for whatever reason, Firefox does not allow pasting into Carmen via the right click context menu, but will allow it if you use the keyboard shortcut (Ctrl+V). Dragging and dropping the text also usually works

Final Exam: The final will be a two-hour, two-question essay exam that will open at 12:01am on Thursday, April 28 and close at 11:59pm on Saturday April 30. It will be divided into two sections of one essay question each. The first essay will be a cumulative one and will draw on material from the whole class. Thus it will be a "big picture" type question focusing on major themes developed throughout the course and will be worth sixty points. The second essay will concern only the material from the second half of the course. It will be worth forty points. For both essays, you'll be given a choice of questions to answer. You will have two hours plus a five minute grace period to take the whole exam, and the late penalties will be the same as for the midterm, adjusted for the longer time limit. More information will be given closer to the time of the exam.

Final Paper: In lieu of a final exam, you may opt instead to write a final paper of 2,000-3,000 words (about eight to ten pages; no longer than twelve) on a topic that you will develop with help from me. You will be required to submit a topic and at least three sources that you have found on that topic by 11:59pm on March 6. Failure to submit a topic by the deadline will result in a twenty point deduction on the paper grade. The final papers will be due by 11:59pm on April 28. More information is available in a separate document on the Carmen site.

Extra Credit: There will be an opportunity to exchange a little extra work for two points of bonus credit added directly to your final average. Details about this assignment will be given after the midterm.

**Attendance:** Being an online class, there is no attendance, per se. Carmen does provide me, however, with a number of tools that I can use to check on your progress and see how often and when you are logging in. The class is divided into weeks to facilitate discussion, and once a week is closed, there will be no going back to complete assignments in that week without a valid medical or other excuse. Thus, if you do not complete the assignments for a given week, you will forfeit whatever credit you would have earned.

**Grade Percentage by Assignment:**

Midterm: 30%

Final: 30%

Quiz Average: 10%

Discussion: 30%

**Grading Scale:**

I use the standard OSU grading scale, which is as follows:

**A:** 93-100; **A-:** 90-92.99; **B+:** 87-89.99; **B:** 83- 86.99; **B-:** 80-82.99; **C+:** 77-79.99;

**C:** 73-76.99; **C-:** 70-72.99; **D+:** 67-69.99; **D:** 60-66.99; **E:** 0-59.99

**Grading Policy and Feedback:**

Now that I've talked about your responsibilities, I'll talk a little about mine. My goal is to grade all of the major assignments within a week of the due date. Whether or not that actually happens will depend on many factors, several of which are out of my control. Nonetheless, I will try to have the exams and papers graded as quickly as possible. A few notes on how I grade:

- I will not start grading until the deadline passes and all assignments are in. This helps me avoid sample bias when I'm working out the grading scheme for that particular assignment.
- I do not use a formal rubric and thus cannot provide you with one. I find them to be too limiting and the cause of lower grades than I would otherwise give. I do have something similar that will be available before the midterm.
- All grades, except for quizzes, will be accompanied by feedback to explain your grade (more on this below).
- I will not listen to complaints or questions about grades until the next business day after I have returned assignments. Take the time to read over your answers and my feedback and allow any anger you might have to dissipate. Be civil when you ask about your grade for best results.
- If I agree to grade a paper again, I reserve the right to lower the grade if I find I was too generous the first time.
- Due to OSU policy, I cannot e-mail you grades. If you want to know how you did on an assignment, please check through Carmen.

The best way to get the grade you want on any given assignment is to read the instructions carefully before beginning and make sure you understand them. I am not lenient when it comes to mistakes caused by failing to follow the directions. Similarly, make sure you answer the question actually asked.

You should be to follow your own progress and grades throughout the course through Carmen. The only exception to this is discussion grades, which I will not input until the end of the semester. The system can tell you not only your grades, but also the number of times you've posted in discussion, what pages you've read on the site, etc. I highly encourage you to use these features to your advantage.

Just as all assignments are turned in through Carmen, all feedback will go through it as well. For exams, I will make my comments directly on the exam in Carmen, which you can then view.

If you feel that I haven't adequately explained your grade, feel free to e-mail me and we can discuss it that way.

### **Late Assignment Policy:**

I expect all work to be submitted in a timely manner. I understand, however, that technology doesn't always work the way we wish. The best way to avoid problems like this is to leave yourself enough time before the deadline to submit your work that you can solve any technical problems that might arise. **The burden to do this rests entirely and solely upon on you, as will the consequence of any failure to do so.** Failing that, if you are unable to turn in an assignment before the deadline due to technical reasons, please notify me *before the deadline passes*, with your completed work attached, and we can work out an arrangement. The acceptance of assignments that are late for any other reason is solely at my discretion.

### **Communications Policy:**

I prefer to be contacted via e-mail. I usually have Outlook open from about 9am-5pm on weekdays. During that time, you can usually expect a reply within one to two hours. Anything sent after 5pm will be responded to the next morning. The exception to this rule is the weekends. I will likely not respond to anything sent after 5pm on Saturday or anytime on Sunday until the following Monday. Feel free to send me e-mails at that time or post on the forums, just don't expect a prompt reply. If you ask me something that will take time to look up or that I don't think I can do within a twelve hour timeframe, I will acknowledge that I received your e-mail and let you know when I think I will have your answer. Discussion board posts are likewise sent to my e-mail, and will be answered within the same timeframe.

Office hours are by appointment only and preferably only for those things which can't be worked out online. As of the writing of this document, I don't know what my availability will be, but I will update this document when I do. My office is in Dulles Hall 009, which is in the basement. When you come into Dulles Hall, take the elevators on the left to the basement, turn left, and knock on the door by the water fountain. Again, I would prefer to deal with things through e-mail or discussion boards and I've become quite skilled at doing so.

I am also willing to Skype (or equivalent) by appointment, and can do so pretty much anytime during my normal working hours throughout the week. If you want to set up a Skype appointment, e-mail me and we can arrange it.

I will be communicating with all of you as a class primarily through the weekly lectures and the Carmen newsfeed. If I need to get some information out to you quickly, I will do so through mass e-mail, but I will try not to abuse that privilege. **Always make sure to check the Carmen homepage and the weekly lectures to be fully up to date on what is going on in the class.** Missing an assignment because you were not aware of it is not a valid excuse.

### **Weekly Assignments:**

In addition to the reading assignments listed below, there will be primary source documents and/or photographs posted to Carmen each week with which you will need to be familiar for discussion.

Week 1: Introduction to Near Eastern History

Sources, Geography, and Definitions

Pre-history of Mesopotamia

Geography of Sumer

Stiebing: chapter 1

Week 2: Sumer through the Early Dynastic Period

Early Dynastic Period

Sumerian Religion

Stiebing: chapter 2

Quiz 1

Week 3: The Rise of Empires

Semites and Indo-Europeans

Akkadia and Ur III

Stiebing: chapter 3

Week 4: Babylon and its Neighbors

Old Babylonian Kingdom

Hittite Old Kingdom

Intro to the Levant

Stiebing: chapter 4

Quiz 2

Week 5: Introduction to Egypt

Geography and Pre-history

Early Dynastic Period

Egyptian Culture

Stiebing: pp. 120-135

Week 6: Egyptian History From the Old Kingdom to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period

Old Kingdom and 1<sup>st</sup> Intermediate Period

Middle Kingdom and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period

Cultural Changes

Stiebing: pp. 136-170

Quiz 3

Week 7: Egypt and the Hittites

Egyptian New Kingdom

Egyptian Religion

Hittite New Kingdom

Stiebing: pp. 173-217

Week 8: Finishing the Bronze Age

Bronze Age Aegean  
Bronze Age Collapse and the Sea Peoples  
Stiebing: pp. 218-229  
Midterm opens March 4<sup>th</sup>

Week 9: The Ancient Israelites

The History of the Israelite People and Kingdom  
The Israelite Religion  
Stiebing: pp. 254-270  
Quiz 4

Week 10: The Dawn of the Iron Age

The Phoenicians and the Levant  
The Wine Dark Sea  
The Stumbling Powers  
Stiebing: pp. 234-254  
Quiz 5

Week 11: The Rise and Fall of Assyria

Assyrian Middle and New Kingdoms  
Military and Culture  
Provincial Administration  
Stiebing: pp. 275-290

Week 12: The Successors of Assyria

Chaldeans and Medes  
Lydians and Egyptians  
The Rise of Persia  
Stiebing: pp. 292-325  
Quiz 6

Week 13: Achaemenid Persia

Persian Administration and Armies  
Persian Culture and Religion  
The Return of the Jews  
Stiebing: pp. 326-340

Week 14: A Second Look at the Greeks

Dark and Archaic Age Greece  
Athens and Sparta  
The Wars and Culture of Classical Greece  
Stiebing: none  
Quiz 7



Week 15: The Hellenistic Age and the Legacy of the Near East  
Alexander the Great and the Invasion of Persia  
Stiebing: chapter 12

### **Mechanics of an Online Course:**

Below is some hopefully helpful information on navigating the online format of this class. I've tried to make the course as easy as possible to navigate, but in case you can't find something, please refer to the relevant section below.

Lectures and Primary Sources: The lectures and primary source readings are organized by weekly modules, which you can find under the Content tab in Carmen. Each week is then divided into sub-modules which contain a lecture and the primary source material that go with that lecture. In addition to the lecture sub-modules, each week will also have an activities sub-module which will contain links to the discussion forum for that week as well as any quizzes, exams, or other assignments. This sounds more complicated than it actually is, and I expect all of you will figure it out quickly once you see it on Carmen.

Start Module: You will not have access to any of the weekly content and activities until you complete the Start Module. This will be at the top of the list on the left-hand side when you click on the Content tab, and I'll also include a link on the news feed. You will have until Jan. 19 to complete the activities in the module, although I highly recommend doing so before class starts on Jan. 11. If you do not complete it by the later date, I will assume you plan on dropping the course. The instructions for the module are located in the module itself.

Course Documents: This module can also be found under the Content tab and will contain an updated copy of the syllabus, as well as information on the midterm, finals, extra credit assignment, etc. I will let you know through the news feed when I post something here, other than the syllabus and welcome letter, which will be available from the beginning.

Activities: If you don't want to use the links for whatever reasons, you can find quizzes and the discussion forums under the Activities tab in Carmen. Click on that and select either Discussion to see all the available forums, or Quizzes to see active quizzes and exams.

Discussion Forums: In addition to the weekly discussion forum, I've also created a forum called "Heckle the Historian" where you can ask any questions you have about the course, whether it be a concern about the way the class is being run or a question about some of the content. After the midterm, there will be another forum for the extra credit assignment.

Timing and Availability: As mentioned above, the course is arranged by weeks and contents and activities will only be available and/or visible for certain periods of time. Activities such as quizzes and exams will only be visible during the window for which they are active. Discussion forums will be visible from the time they are active until the end of the semester, although you will be unable to post after the week has ended. Weekly content (i.e. lectures and readings) will be likewise be accessible from the time it activates until the end of the course for reference purposes. Below is a list of when things will be available/active.

- Weekly content will be visible on the Friday before that week starts and remain visible for the whole semester. For instance, the content for Week 2 will be visible starting at 12:01am on the Friday of Week 1.

- Discussion forums will be visible and unlocked for new posts on 12:01am on the Monday of its week and be locked at 11:59pm on that Sunday. Visible forums will remain so for the whole semester.
- Dropboxes for assignments will be open from the first day of class until their corresponding assignment is due and will be visible for the whole semester.
- The main exception for the above rules will be the activities for Week 1. To accommodate those who might be enrolling late, the introduction forum and starter quiz will be open until 11:59pm on Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>. The content for Week 1 will be accessible starting on January 8, for those who have completed the Start Module.

Preventable Problems in an Online Course: The internet can be fickle and Carmen capricious, and this means online classes have some special problems that don't plague those in meatspace. The best way to avoid technical problems in this class and all other online classes is to leave yourself enough time before the deadline to submit your work that you can solve any technical problems that might arise. **The burden to do this rests entirely and solely upon you, as will the consequence of any failure to do so.** To borrow the old saying, "Your failure to plan does not constitute an emergency on my part." As I mentioned in the first section of the syllabus, if you do encounter technical problems that keep you from completing or turning in an assignment on time, please notify me immediately. I may not respond, but at least there will be a record. If you wait until after the deadline to contact me, it will be up to my discretion as to whether or not I accept your assignment.