

**Faculty of Human, Social and Political Sciences**  
**Division of Archaeology**  
**Part I, ARC3: Introduction to the Cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia**  
**2014–15 Course outline**

**Lecturers:**

Dr. Kate Spence ([kes1004@cam.ac.uk](mailto:kes1004@cam.ac.uk)) Course co-ordinator

Dr. Yagmur Heffron ([yh356@cam.ac.uk](mailto:yh356@cam.ac.uk))

**Aims and Objectives:**

To provide a broad survey of the archaeology and history of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. To introduce the student to key themes and approaches in the study of these two regions. The paper provides outline histories of the regions and introduces the geography, archaeology, society, literature, belief systems and mortuary practices of these areas. The integration of archaeological, textual and artistic evidence as complementary sources for interpreting historical cultures is stressed throughout.

**Lecture Schedule:** (see detailed schedule below)

The paper consists of two lectures a week; one lecture deals with ancient Egypt and one lecture covers Mesopotamia.

The Introductory Lecture for this paper will take place on Thursday, 9th October, 2-3pm in the South Lecture Room, Division of Archaeology.

All subsequent lectures will be held at the following times:

Wednesdays 2–3pm (Egypt) in the South Lecture Room, Division of Archaeology

Thursdays 2–3pm (Mesopotamia) in the South Lecture Room, Division of Archaeology

**Seminars:**

Four seminars on common themes, designed to bring together approaches and materials from Egypt and Mesopotamia, will be held; one in Michaelmas term, one in Lent term and two in Easter term.

**Mode of Assessment:** There will be a three-hour written examination at the end of the academic year. The paper is divided into two sections: Section A consists of five comparative questions in which candidates are expected to refer to both Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures; Section B consists of five questions relating specifically to Egyptian archaeology, history, and culture and five relating to Mesopotamian archaeology, history, and culture. Candidates must answer three questions, with at least one taken from each section.

**Supervision arrangements:** Students should expect four essay supervisions per term in Michaelmas and Lent, arranged by their Director of Studies in consultation with the lecturers and recommended supervisors for the paper. Revision supervisions will be arranged for the Easter term.

## General Reading:

### *Egypt:*

K. Bard, *Introduction to the archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (Malden MA: Blackwell 2008)

T. G. H. James, *Pharaoh's people: scenes from life in Imperial Egypt* (London: Bodley Head 1984).

M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian literature; a book of readings I-III* (Berkeley. Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 1973, 1976, 1980).

B. Manley, *The Penguin historical atlas of Ancient Egypt* (London: Penguin 1996).

S. Quirke, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (London: British Museum Press 1992).

G. Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press 1997).

I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000).

I. Shaw. *Exploring Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003).

### *Mesopotamia:*

H. Crawford. 2004 ed. *Sumer and the Sumerians*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

R. Matthews. 2003. *Archaeology of Mesopotamia: Theories and Approaches*. (London: Routledge)

J. Oates. 2005 ed. *Babylon*. (London: Thames & Hudson)

N. Postgate. 1994. *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*. (London: Routledge)

M. van de Mieroop. 2007 ed. *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC*. (Oxford: Blackwell)

Online ancient text collections and info on themes (e.g., religion, Neo-Assyrian empire, etc): <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/>

Detailed reading lists will accompany individual lectures.

## Detailed Lecture Schedule

After a joint introductory lecture, one lecture per week will cover Egypt and one lecture per week will cover Mesopotamia. All lectures and seminars are held in the South Lecture Room, Division of Archaeology.

### *Michaelmas Term*

9 Oct (Thur) 2pm, Joint Intro: Environment and landscapes of Egypt and Mesopotamia

#### **Egypt:** Wednesday 2pm

- 15 Oct Chiefdom to state in ancient Egypt
- 22 Oct The Early Dynastic Period: kingship and the elite (Paul van Pelt)
- 29 Oct The Old Kingdom and the materialisation of power
- 5 Nov The Middle Kingdom and the power of word and image
- 12 Nov Provincial power including the First and Second Intermediate Periods
- 19 Nov The New Kingdom: kings and the political power of the gods
- 26 Nov The New Kingdom Egyptian Empire

#### **Mesopotamia:** Thursday 2pm

- 16 Oct Village to chiefdom in Mesopotamia
- 23 Oct Social complexity and heterarchy: Uruk Period urbanism
- 30 Oct City-states and networks: Early Dynastic
- 6 Nov Nation-states, ideology and ethnicity: Akkadian "empire"
- 13 Nov Warfare and conflict
- 20 Nov Bureaucratic states: Ur III
- 27 Nov Territorial states: Old Babylonian

3 Dec 2-3:30pm Seminar 1: Power, order and hierarchy

### *Lent Term*

#### **Egypt:** Wednesday 2pm

- 21 Jan Writing, knowledge and the role of literacy in ancient Egypt
- 28 Jan Trade and exchange in ancient Egypt
- 4 Feb Religious practices in ancient Egypt
- 11 Feb Death and funerary practices in ancient Egypt
- 18 Feb Settlement archaeology and urbanism
- 25 Feb Egyptian art
- 4 Mar Egyptian monumental architecture
- 11 Mar Egypt in the First Millennium BC

#### **Mesopotamia:** Thursday 2pm

- 15 Jan Mesopotamian texts and modern historiography
- 22 Jan Trade/Exchange: local networks
- 29 Jan Internationalism: private trade and state-organized exchange
- 5 Feb Religious practice in Mesopotamia
- 12 Feb Death and Funerary practices in Mesopotamia
- 19 Feb Empires and art
- 26 Feb Neo-Assyrian empire
- 5 Mar Neo-Babylonian neo-urbanism

12 March 2-3:30pm Seminar 2: Texts and historical archaeology

### *Easter Term*

Wed 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2-3.30

Seminar 3: Death and identity

Wed 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2-3.30

Visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum (Kate Spence)

Wed 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2-3.30

Seminar 4: Art and the human body

