



Classics of the Ancient World

Fall 2025

HUMN 2013/4013

TR 12:30-1:50, PY 201

Professor Kirsten Lodge, kirsten.lodge@msutexas.edu

Office: 218 Bea Wood Hall. 940-397-4363

Office Hours: MWF 10-11, TR 11-12, and by appointment

This interdisciplinary course will introduce students to ancient cultures, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the Byzantine Empire. We will look at all aspects of culture, including history, art, literature, philosophy, and music. Students will thus acquire an understanding of these cultures and how they developed during this time period; encounter different ways of viewing the world; learn to analyze, interpret, and think critically about diverse works of art, literature, and music; experiment with interdisciplinary approaches to the material; and learn to identify, describe, and discuss major religions, philosophies, works of art, and historical events. Participation in class discussion and activities will help them to express themselves and support their ideas at an advanced level. In exploring these different cultures, students will hopefully wish to continue to learn about them after the end of the semester, and even visit some of the countries we will discuss.

Course Goals

- Study primary texts in religion, literature, philosophy, and other disciplines, as well as the historical and cultural contexts for the primary texts
- Think critically about primary works in context and in comparison with one another
- Learn interdisciplinary approaches to the study of cultures
- Learn how to discuss other cultural artefacts, including art, architecture, and music
- Gain a sense of historical chronology and the interconnectedness of various cultural movements, including the ways in which they respond to one another, as relevant

- Gain a detailed knowledge of the well-known works covered in class
- Practice expressing and supporting ideas both orally and in writing

THECB Core Course Objectives and Assessments

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - All assignments will assess critical thinking skills. The Humanities Essay Rubric will be applied to essays on the final exam for assessment purposes.
- Communication Skills
 - To assess written communication skills, the Humanities Essay Rubric will be applied to essays on the final exam to evaluate readability, clarity, and the ability to support an argument with specific and accurate examples and details as evidence.
- Personal and Social Responsibility
 - To assess personal and social responsibility in critical thinking, the final exam will be evaluated on the ability to support an argument with specific and accurate examples and details as evidence and to evaluate different ways of viewing the world.

Textbook: Sayre, Henry M. *The Humanities: Culture, Continuity & Change*, Vol. I, 4th ed. on Pearson's Revel Digital Learning Platform, available through D2L.

Course Requirements

1. Participation (2013, 10%; 4013, 5%). It is essential that you participate in class discussion and activities to help you understand and master all of the material we cover. Please note that participation is different from attendance. Participation means talking in class.

2. In-Class Writing (2013, 30%; 4013, 25%). At the beginning of most classes, I will give you a brief question on or a quotation from one of the primary texts assigned for the day to respond to. These are low-stakes assignments, and your grade for these reflections will be check plus, check, check minus, or X, which will be entered in D2L as A+, B+, C+, or zero. Your response should demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of the text. Spelling and grammar will not count. If you miss an in-class writing, you may make it up in my office within one week, unless you make other arrangements with me. You must schedule a time with me in person or by email to make up an assignment. The number of in-class writings as listed in the Gradebook may be subject to modification without increasing the weight of each one.

3. Quizzes (2013, 30% total; 4013, 25% total). Please complete all of the quizzes assigned on the Revel platform by the deadlines listed in the syllabus. You have three attempts for each quiz.

4. Shared Writing (2013 and 4013, 5% total). Please complete the Shared Writing short answer assignments on the Revel platform by the deadlines indicated in the syllabus.

5. Blog Posts (2013, 10% total; 4013, 5% total). At the end of each chapter, as indicated in the syllabus, post an image related to the ancient cultures in that chapter on your D2L blog. Your post should be at least 250 words long. Identify the image with a description and date range, say what museum it is from, explain why you chose it, compare/contrast it with one of the images in the textbook, and briefly describe its function in the relevant cultural context. Cite any sources you use in your post. Then comment on at least one other student's blog. Images must come from one of the following museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum, the Louvre, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the National Museums of Berlin, or the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.

6. Final Essay Exam (2013, 15%; 4013, 10%). The final exam will be comprehensive, and will be graded using the rubric for test essays on D2L.

7. Research-Based Presentation (4013, 10%). Upper-level students must choose a topic for a 10-15 minute presentation. The topic should complement the textbook, not repeat what it says. You will be expected to consult at least three scholarly sources, and give me an outline of the presentation and a bibliography in MLA or APA style on the day of your presentation. English majors must use MLA. See the presentation rubric on D2L for guidance. You should look through the textbook and submit a topic proposal to me by **Sept. 4**, and we will set an appropriate date for your presentation.

8. Research Paper (4013, Draft, 5%; Final Paper, 10%). Upper-level students will write a 5-6 page research paper on a topic of their choice, but not on the same topic as their presentation. The paper must be in MLA or APA format, including in-text citations. English majors must use MLA. If you use a cover sheet, it will not count toward the minimum length. The Works Cited page also does not count. You should watch the video on D2L on writing a research paper. See the rubric on D2L for guidance. Please submit a brief paper proposal by **Nov. 20** and a draft with a bibliography of at least three scholarly sources by **Dec. 2**. You will get credit for submitting the draft with the bibliography, and I will give you feedback. The final version is due on **Dec. 11**.

Note that the D2L Gradebook is set up for the 2000-level of this course. I will record presentation and paper grades separately, and you must contact me if you wish to know what your grade is and get my feedback. I will calculate 4000-level final grades individually at the end of the semester.

9. Attendance. You must attend class to help you master and contextualize the material. You are permitted two unexcused absences. Absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, military official, or coach. However, if you believe you have a good reason for missing class but are unable to get a written excuse, please let me know, and if your excuse is valid, I will excuse you.

Your final grade will be lowered by one point for each unexcused absence in excess of the two permitted unexcused absences. In addition, three “lates” will add up to one unexcused absence unless you provide me with a valid reason for lateness.

Any student with more than six absences for any reason may be dropped from the course.

Course Policies

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize on any assignments or papers, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook, you will get a zero on the assignment. Other forms of academic dishonesty include, for instance, cheating on in-class writings or tests, copying, forging doctor’s notes, and lying to the professor.

AI Use: Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for future courses and a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty, the penalty for which is a zero on the assignment. However, you will be permitted to use AI in an ethical manner, specifically:

- You may use Grammarly and/or other spelling and grammar checkers, including those on Google Docs, but you may not use them to “rewrite” your paper or change the “tone” (that is, to “make it sound more academic,” etc.);
- You may use AI to generate ideas. For example, you may put your topic into ChatGPT and ask for some ideas, and you may ask it follow-up questions.
- You may use AI to explain grammar and generate personalized grammar exercises.

Be aware, however, of the following drawbacks of AI:

- AI is often inaccurate. Check everything you find through AI with other sources;

- AI tends to “hallucinate” sources—that is, it is known to come up with sources that do not actually exist;
- AI tends to confirm what you already believe (“confirmation bias”);
- Grammarly may give you suggestions that actually change the meaning of what you wrote, so always check it carefully;
- Similarly, do not simply accept everything Grammarly suggests. You will not learn anything that way. Go over each suggested change and make sure you understand it and agree with it before you accept it;
- AI is NOT private. Do not put any personal information into AI chats.

If you have used AI in an ethical manner in any assignment, write at the end of the assignment how you have used it (e.g., “I used Grammarly to check spelling and grammar.”). As applicable, state what AI tool and version you used (e.g., ChatGPT 3.5), the prompt you used, and the date the content was generated. MLA does have a way to cite AI which you may use, but it is somewhat complex. You are encouraged to use it for your research paper, but it is not required.

Note that there is no uniform policy on AI use at MSU. Make sure that you understand the policy for each course you are taking.

Cellphones: You may not use your cellphone in class except to consult the texts we are discussing, or to google a question we cannot answer.

Food: In accordance with the building policy, you may bring only bottled water to class.

Computers: You may not use a computer in class except to consult the text, or for another justifiable reason. If this is the case, please inform me beforehand.

Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I may mark you late or absent without warning.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Email Communication: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through D2L email. You should set up D2L so that D2L emails are delivered to your email account. You are responsible for checking your email or D2L daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

Other Important Information

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, exams, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can't make my office hours, we can make an appointment.

Tutoring Support: Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Please see their schedule for more information about times and offerings.

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

Research and Creative Activity Opportunities at MSU: Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a program that provides opportunities for undergraduates to engage in high-quality research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students in a cooperative research process. Information and resources are available from [The Office of Undergraduate Research](#).

Student Handbook: For additional information, see [Student Handbook](#) .

Course Schedule

Aug. 26 Introduction

Chapter 1: The Rise of Culture: From Forest to Farm

28 The Beginnings of Culture in the Paleolithic Era, The Rise of Agriculture and Community in the Neolithic Era

Reading: 3-20, 27

Chapter 2: The Ancient Near East: Power and Social Order

Sept. 2 The Cultures of Mesopotamia: Sumerian Ur

Reading: 31-38

Chapter 1 Quizzes Due

Primary Text: Enheduanna, "The Exaltation of Inanna"

4 Akkad, Babylon, The Assyrian Empire

Reading: 39-46

4013 Presentation Proposal Due

Primary Text: The Law Code of Hammurabi

9 Mesopotamian Literature

Reading: 46-51, 65

Primary Text: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

11 The Hebrews, The Late Empires

Reading: 52-67

Primary Text: The Hebrew Bible

Chapter 3: The Stability of Ancient Egypt: Flood and Sun

16 The Nile and Its Culture

Reading: 69-74

Chapter 2 Quizzes Due

Blog Post: Mesopotamian Cultures

18 The Old Kingdom

Reading: 74-83, 99

Primary Text: *The Teachings of Khety*

23 The Middle Kingdom, The New Kingdom, The Late Period

Reading: 83-97

Primary Texts: *Akhenaten's *Hymn to the Sun* (in full on D2L), *Egyptian Love Poetry (on D2L)

Chapter 4: The Aegean World and the Rise of Greece: Trade, War, and Victory

25 The Cultures of the Aegean

Reading: 101-10

Chapter 3 Quizzes Due

Blog Post and Shared Writing: Egypt

30 The Homeric Epics, *The Iliad*

Reading: 110-14, 134-35

Primary Text: *The Iliad*

Oct. 2 *The Odyssey*

Reading: 114-16, 136-39

Primary Text: *The Odyssey*

7 The Greek Polis, The Rise of Athenian Democracy

Reading: 116-32

Primary Texts: Sappho, lyric poetry

Chapter 5: Golden Age Athens and the Hellenistic World

9 The Good Life and the Politics of Athens, Perikles and the School of Hellas

Reading: 141-53

Chapter 4 Quizzes Due

Blog Post and Shared Writing: Aegean Cultures

Primary Text: *Perikles's *Funeral Speech* (in full on D2L)

14 Philosophy and the Polis, Plato

Reading: 153-57, 174-77

Primary Texts: Plato, excerpts

16 The Theatre of the People

Reading: 157-61

Primary Text: *Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (in full on D2L)

21 The Hellenistic World

Reading: 162-64

23 Aristotle, Pergamon, Alexandria

Reading: 165-72, 178-79

Primary Text: Aristotle's *Poetics*

Chapter 6: Rome: Urban Life and Imperial Majesty

28 Origins of Roman Culture, Republican Rome

Reading: 181-91, 219

Chapter 5 Quizzes Due

Blog Post and Shared Writing: Golden Age Athens and the Hellenistic World

Primary Texts: Catullus, lyric poetry

30 Imperial Rome

Reading: 191-95

Primary Text: Juvenal

Nov. 4 Literary Rome: Virgil

Reading: 195-96, 219-21

Primary Text: *The Aeneid*

6 Literary Rome: Horace and Ovid, Augustus and the City of Marble

Reading: 196-206, 221

Primary Texts: Horace, Ode 2; *Ovid, *Pygmalion* (in full on D2L)

11 The Pantheon, Pompeii, The Late Roman Empire

Reading: 206-17

Primary Texts: *Marcus Aurelius and *Suetonius (excerpts on D2L)

Chapter 8: The Flowering of Christianity: Faith and the Power of Belief in the Early First Millennium

13 Developments in Judaic Culture, The Rise of Christianity

Reading: 255-62

Chapter 6 Quizzes Due

Blog Post and Shared Writing: Rome

Primary Text: *The Bible (additional excerpts on D2L)

18 Christian Rome

Reading: 262-72

20 Augustine and Early Christian Philosophy

Reading: 272-74, 293-95

4013 Paper Proposal Due

Primary Texts: Augustine, Ambrose

24 Last Day for 'W'

27 Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 2 The Byzantine Empire and Its Church

Reading: 274-84

Blog Post and Shared Writing: The Rise of Christianity

4013 Paper Draft Due

4 The Later Byzantine Empire

Chapter 8 Quizzes Due

Reading: 285-89

11 Final Exam, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

4013 Paper Due, 10:30 a.m.