ANCIENT HISTORY (ANCH)

ANCH 025 Ancient Middle Eastern History and Civilization
A cultural history of Middle Eastern civilization from the invention of writing to the rise of Islam.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: HIST 024, NELC 101
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 026 Ancient Greece
The Greeks enjoy a special place in the construction of western culture and identity, and yet many of us have only the vaguest notion of what their culture was like. A few Greek myths at bedtime when we are kids, maybe a Greek tragedy like Sophokles’ Oidipous when we are at school: these are often the only contact we have with the world of the ancient Mediterranean. The story of the Greeks, however, deserves a wider audience, because so much of what we esteem in our own culture derives from them: democracy, epic poetry, lyric poetry, tragedy, history writing, philosophy, aesthetic taste, all of these and many other features of cultural life enter the West from Greece. The oracle of Apollo at Delphi had inscribed over the temple, “Know Thyself.” For us, that also means knowing the Greeks. We will cover the period from the Late Bronze Age, c. 1500 BC, down to the time of Alexander the Great, concentrating on the two hundred year interval from 600-400 BC.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: McInerney
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CLST 026, HIST 026
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 027 Ancient Rome
The Roman Empire was one of the few great world states-one that unified a large area around the Mediterranean Sea—an area never subsequently united as part of a single state. Whereas the great achievements of the Greeks were in the realm of ideas and concepts (democracy, philosophy, art, literature, drama) those of the Romans tended to be in the pragmatic spheres of ruling and controlling subject peoples and integrating them under the aegis of an imperial state. Conquest, warfare, administration, and law making were the great successes of the Roman state. We will look at this process from its inception and trace the formation of Rome’s Mediterranean empire over the last three centuries BC; we shall then consider the social, economic and political consequences of this great achievement, especially the great political transition from the Republic (rule by the Senate) to the Principate (rule by emperors). We shall also consider limitations to Roman power and various types of challenges, military, cultural, and religious, to the hegemony of the Roman state. Finally, we shall try to understand the process of the development of a distinctive Roman culture from the emergence new forms of literature, like satire, to the gladiatorial arena as typical elements that contributed to a Roman social order.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Cam Grey
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CLST 027, HIST 027
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 046 Myths and Religions of the Ancient World
This course will survey the religions of the ancient Middle East, situating each in its historical and socio-cultural context and focusing on the key issues of concern to humanity: creation, birth, the place of humans in the order of the universe, death, and destruction. The course will cover not only the better-known cultures from the area, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, but also some lesser-known traditions, such as those of the Hurrians, or of the ancient Mediterranean town of Ugarit. Religion will not be viewed merely as a separate, sealed-off element of the ancient societies, but rather as an element in various cultural contexts, for example, the relationship between religion and magic and the role of religion in politics will be recurring topics in the survey. Background readings for the lectures will be drawn not only from the modern scholarly literature, but also from the words of the ancients themselves in the form of their myths, rituals, and liturgies.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Frame
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: NELC 046, RELS 014
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 129 Decline & Fall Roman Emp
Also Offered As: CLST 129
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 136 The Ancient Economy
This class presents an introduction to economies before economics, a study of economic activity in the Greco-Roman world. Ancient Greece and Rome have been called some of the first "global" economies - they engaged in long-distance trade, introduced the first coinage systems, and built and manufactured at large scales. At the same time, they remained agrarian societies, with majority peasant populations, high levels of inequality and social systems that often placed social capital ahead of profit. Using textual sources, archaeology and techniques from the natural and social sciences, this class will not only look at basic elements of economic activity in the ancient world - demographics, trade, monetization, industry - but also ask critical questions about how - or if - modern economic methods can be applied to the distant past. No previous knowledge of the ancient world or economics is necessary.
Taught by: Bowes
Also Offered As: CLST 136
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
ANCH 146 Ancient Mediterranean Empires
What constituted an empire in antiquity and how was imperialism legitimized? Which measures were used to maintain and organize imperial power? How did foreign rule affect the daily life of people all over the Mediterranean? In this course we will discuss and compare ancient empires from Achaemenid Persia to Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic kingdoms of his successors to the emergence of Rome as one of the most successful and influential empires in world history. Topics that will be discussed include ancient ideas and concepts of imperial rule, patterns of political, economic and cultural power and their interrelations as well as imperial crises and local resistance. All texts will be discussed in translation. There are no prerequisites.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Wilker
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CLST 146
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 202 Cleopatra
Cleopatra VII (70/69 30 BCE) is one of the most famous women in world history. She has been remembered, admired, and reproached as a power-hungry Hellenistic queen, as the last pharaoh of Egypt, as a self-confident female ruler, and as the vicious seductress of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Her supposedly extravagant lifestyle, her political schemes, but also her integrity in choosing suicide over submission have inspired poets, artists, and historians from her own time to our modern world. In this seminar, we will take a closer look at some of the common perceptions and stereotypes that have shaped the image of Cleopatra for more than 2000 years. The main focus, however, will be on the historical queen, her biography, and the political and cultural contexts of her life. We will use ancient literary texts, papyri, inscriptions, coins, and archaeological evidence to analyze Cleopatra’s rise to power, how she presented herself to her subjects, and how she was perceived by others, as well as her role in the tumultuous events that led to the end of the Hellenistic period and the rise of imperial Rome under the rule of Augustus. No prerequisites, but some background in Hellenistic and/or Roman history will be helpful.
Taught by: Julia Wilker
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 202
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 275 The Roman Underbelly
Conventional histories of Rome tend to focus on the actions of the named individuals who wrote the texts that have come down to us, or are the subjects of those texts. But these individuals constituted only the tiniest fraction of the population of the Roman world. In this course, we will explore the lived experience of the other 95%: peasants and the poor; prostitutes, pimps, and criminals; bandits and pirates; magicians and soothsayers. Drawing on the scattered and problematic textual sources, archaeological evidence and comparative perspectives from better-documented contexts, we will examine the various roles that these individuals played in Roman society, the collection of often discordant or dissonant attitudes of their wealthier and more powerful contemporaries, and the challenges and opportunities that attend the social history of marginality in the ancient world. No prior knowledge of Roman History is required, although it would be useful to have taken ANCH 027, the introductory survey course. Texts will be discussed in translation.
Taught by: Cam Grey
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 301 Lies My Ancient History Teacher Told Me
The neat, comforting narratives that we construct of the histories of ancient Greece and Rome cover up a collection of controversies and debates that continue to rage in contemporary scholarship. Can we use the Homeric epics as sources of early Greek history? Who was responsible for the Peloponnesian War? How can we best explain Rome’s acquisition of empire? How new was the political revolution of Augustus? What were the main reasons for the rise of Christianity? In this course, we explore these and other controversies, focusing on both modern scholarship and the ancient sources. All texts will be discussed in translation. No prior knowledge of Ancient History is required, although it would be useful to have taken ANCH 026 and/or ANCH 027.
Taught by: Grey
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 300
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 303 Power and Peril: The Paradox of Monarchy among Ancient Greeks, Romans, and Jews
We imagine ancient Greece and Rome as the cradles of democracy and republicanism, early Judea as a pious theocracy, but monarchy was the most common and prevalent form of government in antiquity (and the premodern world in general). In this class, we will take a special look at kinship among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans to assess and discuss similarities, differences, and mutual influences. In all these cultures, the king was a polarizing figure in reality and in conception. On the one hand, some revered the monarch as ideal leader, and monarchy provided the language with which to describe and even imagine the very gods. On the other, monarchs were widely reviled in both theory and practice, from the Greek tyrants to biblical Saul. The Emperor Augustus loudly denied his own affinity to the office of king, even as he ruled alone and was revered as a god. In other words, kings stood both for the ideal and the worst form of government. This class confronts the paradox of monarchical rule and will, through the lens of the king, explore ideas of god, government, human frailty, and utopianism.
Taught by: Wilker and Dohrmann
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 338, JWST 303, RELS 303
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
ANCH 305  Jewish Diaspora in the Roman Empire
Under the Roman Empire, Jewish communities developed and flourished especially in the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Northern Africa, and Italy proper. In many of these cities, the Jews formed a considerable part of the population; they influenced the cultural, social, and political communal life and developed an identity that was distinctively different from that in Judea. In this seminar, we will trace Jewish life in the Diaspora under Roman rule. How did Jews and non-Jews interact? What was the legal status of Jewish communities under the Roman Empire? What caused conflicts and how were they solved? What can the history of Jewish Diaspora communities tell us about minorities in the Roman Empire in general? We will use literary texts, inscriptions, papyri, and archaeological material to answer these questions and many more.
Taught by: Julia Wilker
Also Offered As: JWST 305
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 311  Disasters in the Ancient World
Natural disasters occupy a powerful place in our imagination. Stories of floods, plagues, earthquakes and storms excite and horrify us, and communities mobilize their resources quickly in response to these events. In the ancient Mediterranean world, natural disasters could take on potent meaning, indicating the anger or disfavor of the gods, acting as warnings against certain courses of action, or confirmations of individuals' fears or suspicions about the world in which they lived. In this course, we explore the evidence for some disasters in the ancient Mediterranean world, the ways in which contemporaries reacted to those disasters and interpreted their causes. This project is, of necessity, multidisciplinary, involving textual, archaeological, geological, and comparative materials and drawing on methodologies from history, political and archaeological science, and the emerging field of disaster studies. In the process, we will gain an appreciation of the social structures of communities in the period, the thought-world in which they operated, and the challenges and opportunities that attend a project of this sort. No prior knowledge of Ancient History is required, although it would be useful to have taken an introductory survey course. Texts will be discussed in translation.
Taught by: McInerney
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 323  Greek World After Alexander the Great
This class is designed as a detailed investigation of the world created by Alexander the Great. We will cover the three hundred year period known as the Hellenistic Age from the career of Alexander the Great (354-323 BC) until the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium (31 BC). This was a period during which the world of the Greeks underwent extraordinary and far-reaching changes, as Greek culture was established as far afield as northwestern India, central Asia and Egypt. In the same period kingdoms controlled by Alexander's Successors used Greek culture to define their rule, establishing a Greek culture of the elite in regions which previously had been dominated by the Persians. As Greek and non-Greek worlds collided, a new interpretation of Greek culture emerged, giving rise, among other things, to universities and professional schools, state subsidized health care, triumphalist architecture, the heroization of the noble savage, coinage with royal portraits, the deification of men and a multitude of other social, artistic and political forms familiar to us. It was an age of radical change, dislocation, as Greek populations colonized regions previously unknown to them.
Taught by: Wilker
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
ANCH 363 Foreigners in Rome
According to the stories the Romans told about the origins of their city, Rome began as a community of immigrants. As a growing metropolis and, eventually, the center of an empire, the city remained a magnet for people from other parts of the Empire and beyond. Foreigners came to the city as merchants and travelers, they settled here seeking a different and better life, pursuing a career, or escaping hardships in their home communities. Others were brought to Rome against their will, as prisoners or slaves. In this seminar, we will explore the different communities of foreigners and immigrants that shaped Rome. How and why did they move to the city? How did they experience their new home? How did they adapt to life in Rome and how, in turn, did they influence what we define as "Roman" today? Finally, what can the legal, social, political, and social status of immigrants tell us about Roman society in general? To answer these questions (and more), we will look at a wide array of primary sources, including literary texts, inscriptions, and material culture.
Taught by: Wilker
Also Offered As: CLST 364
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 384 The Hellenistic and Roman Near East
In this course we will study the history of the Hellenistic and Roman period from a Near Eastern perspective. From the conquests of Alexander the Great to the end of Roman rule in late antiquity, this region was the scene of conflicts, but also of peaceful and fruitful interactions between Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Jews, Syrians, Arabs and many other societies. What was the impact of Greek and Roman rule and how did the peoples of the region react to these fundamental changes? On the other hand, how did they influence the culture and worldview of their conquerors? We will use historical texts, documents and archaeological evidence to discuss these political, cultural and religious encounters that made the Near East to a key region of Greco-Roman history. All texts will be discussed in translation. No prerequisites, although it would be useful to have some background in Hellenistic and/or Roman history.
Taught by: Julia Wilker
Also Offered As: NELC 384
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 398 Honors Thesis
This course is taken in the spring of the senior year by students admitted to the honors thesis program for the Ancient History major. For policies see the Classical Studies department website.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 399 Independent Study
This course is taken by students doing independent work with a faculty advisor, such as students approved to work on a senior research paper in pursuit of honors in the major.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 499 Independent Study
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 506 MLA Proseminar: Ancient Economies
This class presents an introduction to economies before economics, a study of economic activity in the Greco-Roman world. Ancient Greece and Rome have been called some of the first "global" economies - they engaged in long-distance trade, introduced the first coinage systems, and built and manufactured at large scales. At the same time, they remained agrarian societies, with majority peasant populations, high levels of inequality and social systems that often placed social capital ahead of profit. Using textual sources, archaeology and techniques from the natural and social sciences, this class will not only look at basic elements of economic activity in the ancient world - demographics, trade, monetization, industry - but also ask critical questions about how - or if - modern economic methods can be applied to the distant past. No previous knowledge of the ancient world or economics is necessary.
Taught by: Bowes
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 535 Problems in Greek: Archaic and Classical
This seminar is designed to introduce students to the major issues and problems in the early history of Ancient Greece, from approximately 776 BC until the reign of Alexander the Great nearly four hundred and fifty years later. A number of these issues have been the subject of academic investigation for decades: the historicity of Homeric society, the origins of democracy, the reforms of Kleisthenes, the population of Athens, for example. The investigation of many of these problems, however, has received fresh impetus from newer approaches: demographic studies of the Aegean islands, the dating of 5th century inscriptions, the study of Solons poetry have all yielded new insights and transformed our understanding of Greek culture and history. In this seminar we will explore many older questions from newer perspectives, with attention to such recent topics as gender, ethnicity and subaltern studies. The result is a view of Greece that is both more familiar and yet equally more alien.
Taught by: Mclnerney
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AAMW 534
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: GRADUATES ONLY
ANCH 545 Spatial Analysis of the Past
Humans continuously move through, interact with, and modify their spaces, leaving a palimpsest of human activity all around us. The ability for digital methods to deal with larger datasets, at higher accuracies, and at multiple scales, lends itself particularly well to the study of diachronic human-space interaction. In this class, we will examine space at a range of scales from landscapes, to urban settings, to archaeological contexts and architecture. We digitally represent space using a variety of 3d and 2d data types, from models of land surfaces and buildings, to multispectral satellite imagery and urban plans. We will first gain experience creating, gathering, and manipulating spatial datasets in preparation for analysis. We will next practice a variety of analytical techniques on these data and examine case studies that have used spatial methods to draw important archaeological and historical conclusions. Tools covered in this class will include geographical information systems (GIS), global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), raster image processing, photogrammetry, and 3d spatial modeling softwares. Finally, we will gain experience with the visualization of our data and results, and the presentation of those results through open online publication.

Taught by: Peter Cobb
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AAMW 545, CLST 545
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Archaeological fieldwork experience and basic digital skills preferred. Undergraduates can register with permission of the instructor.

ANCH 604 Provincial Perspectives
Most of the primary sources available to us are commonly taken to reflect the ideology, concepts, and realities of Roman imperial rule through the lenses of the central power. However, a number of sources provide insights into how provincials and imperial subjects perceived the empire and their own status within its political, cultural, and social frameworks. In this seminar, we will focus on how ethnic, religious, cultural, and regional identities were developed, maintained, adapted, and interpreted within and in reaction to the empire in concept and reality. Historiographical and auto-ethnographic works, orations, philosophical, and religious texts reflect different attitudes towards the imperial center, ranging from open hostility and frustrated acceptance to praise and identification. Texts to be discussed include canonical works (Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Second Sophistic) as well as lesser-known texts and authors. Special emphasis will be laid on scholarly approaches, including concepts of identity, hybridization and cultural change, the dynamics of imperial integration, and the (de-)construction of modern narratives of Romanization.

Taught by: Wilker
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 607 Gloss & Commentary
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 611 Greek Epigraphy
An introduction to the principles and practices of Greek Epigraphy. Study of selected Greek inscriptions.

Taught by: McInerney
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AAMW 611, CLST 611, GREK 611
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 616 Ancient Economies
Scholars have long debated the nature of the ancient economy, the terms in which it can best be approached, and the decision-making processes that underpinned economic behavior in antiquity. In particular, controversy has surrounded the extent to which the economies of Greco-Roman antiquity can be modeled using contemporary tools of analysis. In recent scholarship, many of the tenets laid down by Moses Finley in his The Ancient Economy have been re-evaluated, with the result that the field is currently in a state of intellectual ferment. It is the purpose of this course to explore the terms in which contemporary debates over ancient economic systems are formulated, with reference to a variety of societies and periods, from the palace economies of the Mycenaean period to the system of taxation introduced in the early fourth century by the emperor Diocletian and his colleagues in the Tetrarchy.

Taught by: Grey
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AAMW 503, CLST 616
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 702 Greek Sanctuaries
Sanctuaries remain an important focal point for the study of Greek religion. Both as sites for worship, dedication, oracular activity and other cult activity and as sites for the mediation of elite and state competition sanctuaries are, along with the polis, the most essential structuring institutions of Greek life. This seminar takes a selection of larger and smaller extra-urban sanctuaries and examines their growth, articulation and function.

Taught by: McInerney
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AAMW 702, CLST 702
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

ANCH 999 Independent Study
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit