

NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES & CIVILIZATION (NELC)

NELC 010 Archaeology & Technology

Spring 2018: This seminar explores how humans apply and modify technologies in contexts as diverse as everyday life, major politico-economic undertakings, or scholarly research. We investigate this through a comparison of technologies of the past with technologies of the present used to study the past. We will dig into the details of topics like building pyramids and tombs, the function of ancient astronomical devices, pre-telegraph long-distance communication, tools for cutting and carving stone, and kilns for firing pottery. Archaeologists study these issues by examining the material remains of past societies: the cut-marks on stone blocks, extant tomb structures, the debris of manufacturing activities, and much more. Today's technologies enable the detailed scientific examination of the evidence, improving our understanding of the past. Thus, in parallel with our investigation of past technologies, we will also study the history of the application of present technologies to research on the archaeological record. We will dig into topics like the first uses of computers and databases, the development of statistical methods, early digital 3d modeling of objects and architecture, the adoption of geophysical prospection and geographic information systems, and the emerging uses of machine learning. In some cases, we can even compare old and new technologies directly, such as with land measurement and surveying techniques. Throughout the class we will engage in readings and discussions on the theory of humans and technology, to gain a better understanding of how processes such as innovation function in all time periods.

Taught by: Cobb, Peter

Also Offered As: ANTH 010, ARTH 010, CLST 010

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 031 History of the Middle East Since 1800

A survey of the modern Middle East with special emphasis on the experiences of ordinary men and women as articulated in biographies, novels, and regional case studies. Issues covered include the collapse of empires and the rise of a new state system following WWI, and the roots and consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iranian revolution and the U.S.-Iraq War. Themes include: the colonial encounter with Europe and the emergence of nationalist movements, the relationship between state and society, economic development and international relations, and religion and cultural identity.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet/Trouitt-Powell

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: HIST 081

Activity: Lecture

0.0 Course Units

NELC 034 Israel in the Middle East

This introductory level course will offer an in-depth look at Israeli history and society, and how it relates to the Middle East through varying lenses. We will consider such topics as the rise of Jewish, Palestinian, and Arab nationalisms in the context of changing imperial control over Palestine/Israel (from Ottoman to British), and the emergence of the Middle East in its current borders; Conflict and conflict-resolution in Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East; Israel's Palestinian minority, Jewish immigrants to Israel from the Middle East, food and music culture in Israel, and their connection to the Middle East; or the place of the Middle East in Israeli literature and film. We will use cutting edge research from several disciplines, as well as literature, film, audio, and photographic evidence. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of Israeli history and society, and will be widely familiar with the different narratives, viewpoints, and complexities concerning Israel and its position in the Middle East. Prior knowledge of Israeli or Middle Eastern history is not required.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: JWST 041

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 036 The Middle East through Many Lenses

This freshman seminar introduces the contemporary Middle East by drawing upon cutting-edge studies written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. These include history, political science, and anthropology, as well as studies of mass media, sexuality, religion, urban life, and the environment. We will spend the first few weeks of the semester surveying major trends in modern Middle Eastern history. We will spend subsequent weeks intensively discussing assigned readings along with documentary films that we will watch in class. The semester will leave students with both a foundation in Middle Eastern studies and a sense of current directions in the field.

Taught by: Sharkey H

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: CIMS 036

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 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 Hittites, 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: ANCH 046, RELS 014

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 051 Jews and Judaism in Antiquity

A broad introduction to the history of Jewish civilization from its Biblical beginnings to the Middle Ages, with the main focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Dohrmann

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: HIST 139, JWST 156, NELC 451, RELS 120

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 052 Medieval and Early Modern Jewry

Follow the journey of one global diaspora over a millennium of cultural, intellectual, social, and religious change. From the rise of Islam in the seventh century to the separation of church and state in the seventeenth, Jewish people were intimate parts of, and at the same time utterly othered by, the many societies in which they lived. This basic duality is at the heart of this course, exploring how Jewish religion and culture evolved in relationship with Muslim and Christian majorities. Students will develop an understanding of the rich dynamism of premodern Judaism and Jewish life, with an emphasis on global diversity and internal differentiation as well as change over time. We will look for threads of continuity and moments of transformation, decode illustrative texts, images, and documents (in English), and ask how the Judaism that faced modernity had been shaped by a staggering array of different cultural circumstances after antiquity. The course includes attention to anti-Jewish phenomena like expulsion and blood libel, but also at coexistence and creative cultural synthesis, avoiding any simplistic narrative and asking about their legacy in the present day. It will look at the Jewish past from the inside, including less familiar dimensions including philosophy, magic, messianism, and family life.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Oravetz Albert

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: HIST 140, JWST 157, RELS 121

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 053 Jews in the Modern World

This course offers an intensive survey of the major currents in Jewish culture and society from the late middle ages to the present. Focusing upon the different societies in which Jews have lived, the course explores Jewish responses to the political, socio-economic, and cultural challenges of modernity. Topics to be covered include the political emancipation of Jews, the creation of new religious movements within Judaism, Jewish socialism, Zionism, the Holocaust, and the emergence of new Jewish communities in Israel and the United States. No prior background in Jewish history is expected.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Ruderman

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: HIST 141, JWST 158, RELS 122

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 054 Music in Troubled Places

In this class, we go beyond the headlines to discuss the history and cultures of peoples who have had to endure terrible suffering, particularly through ethnic conflict and civil war. We will focus on a curious phenomenon: populations typically defined as separate from one another (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) often have a history of shared or related cultural practices, of which music is a prime example. We will survey a number of current and recent conflict zones and use music as a way to deepen our understanding of the identities and relationships between the peoples involved including through a consideration of my own fieldwork in Sri Lanka. Querying the very definitions of music, trouble, and place, the course then broadens out to consider how musicians have been affected by and/or responded to important global problems like slavery, sexual violence, climate change and other ecological disasters, like Hurricane Katrina. Regions to be considered in our lectures and/or readings include: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria (including Kurdish musics), Israel-Palestine, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Myanmar/Burma, Uganda, Sierra Leone, North and South Korea, the Marshall Islands, Cambodia, Mexico, and the United States.

Taught by: Sykes

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ANTH 053, MUSC 053

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 061 Literary Legacy of Ancient Egypt

This course surveys the literature of Ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom through the Greco-Roman period, focusing upon theme, structure, and style, as well as historical and social context. A wide range of literary genres are treated, including epics; tales, such as the 'world's oldest fairy tale;' poetry, including love poems, songs, and hymns; religious texts, including the 'Cannibal Hymn'; magical spells; biographies; didactic literature; drama; royal and other monumental inscriptions; and letters, including personal letters, model letters, and letters to the dead. Issues such as literacy, oral tradition, and the question poetry vs. prose are also discussed. No prior knowledge of Egyptian is required.

Taught by: Houser Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 463

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 062 Land of the Pharaohs

This course provides an introduction to the society, culture and history of ancient Egypt. The objective of the course is to provide an understanding of the characteristics of the civilization of ancient Egypt and how that ancient society succeeded as one of the most successful and long-lived civilizations in world history.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Wegner

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: AFRC 062

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 064 The World of Cleopatra

The figure of Cleopatra is familiar from modern stories, legends, and film. Was this famous woman a brazen seductress or a brilliant political mind? How many of these presentations are historically accurate? This class will examine the Ptolemaic period in Egypt (305-30 BCE), the time period during which Cleopatra lived, in an attempt to separate myth from reality. The Ptolemaic period is filled with political and personal intrigue. It was also a time of dynamic multiculturalism. Arguably one of the most violent and fascinating eras in ancient Egyptian history, the Ptolemaic period is largely unknown and often misunderstood. This course will examine the history, art, religion and literature of Egypt's Ptolemaic period which culminated in the reign of Cleopatra VII.

Taught by: Houser Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 664

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 068 Art and Architecture in Ancient Egypt

This course will be an introduction to the art, architecture and minor arts that were produced during the three thousand years of ancient Egyptian history. This material will be presented in its cultural and historical contexts through illustrated lectures and will include visits to the collection of the University Museum.

Taught by: Silverman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 618, ANCH 068, ARTH 218, ARTH 618, NELC 668

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 088 From Oil Fields to Soccer Fields: The Middle East in the 20th Century

How did the Middle East become modern? This seemingly simple question requires a complex appraisal of civic society. Life changed in spectacular ways for the denizens of the Middle East in the span of a century. Oil – once considered a scarce natural commodity – was discovered and exported in substantial quantities that altered the economic landscape of the region and the world. Movie theaters, sewage systems, and public housing projects changed the urban backdrop of Middle Eastern cities and towns. Soccer, swimming, and volleyball became some of the new-fangled sports embraced by Middle Eastern communities. This course will traverse these fascinating and fraught cultural transformations of the Middle East in the twentieth century. Although inclusive of the military battles and conflicts that have affected the region, this class will move beyond the clichés of war to show the range of issues and ideas with which intellectuals and communities grappled. The cultural politics and economic value of oil as well as the formation of a vibrant literary life will be among the topics covered. By considering illustrative cultural moments that shed light on the political history of the period, this course will develop a nuanced framework to approach the history of the U.S. involvement in the region, the Iran-Iraq war, the Arab/Israeli conflict, and the current crises in the Persian Gulf.

Taught by: Kashani-Sabet

Also Offered As: HIST 088

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 101 Introduction to the Ancient Near East

The great pyramids and mysterious mummies of Egypt, the fabled Tower of Babel, and the laws of the Babylonian king Hammurabi are some of the things that might come to mind when you think of the ancient Near East. Yet these are only a very few of the many fascinating – and at times perplexing – aspects of the civilizations that flourished there c. 3300-300 BCE. This is where writing first developed, where people thought that the gods wrote down what would happen in the future on the lungs and livers of sacrificed sheep, and where people knew how to determine the length of hypotenuse a thousand years before the Greek Pythagoras was born. During this course, we will learn more about these other matters and discover their place in the cultures and civilizations of that area. This is an interdisciplinary survey of the history, society and culture of the ancient Near East, in particular Egypt and Mesopotamia, utilizing extensive readings from ancient texts in translation (including the Epic of Gilgamesh, 'one of the great masterpieces of world literature'), but also making use of archaeological and art historical materials. The goal of the course is to gain an appreciation of the various societies of the time, to understand some of their great achievements, to become acquainted with some of the fascinating individuals of the time (such as Hatshepsut, 'the women pharaoh', and Akhenaten, 'the heretic king'), and to appreciate the rich heritage that they have left us.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Frame

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: ANCH 025, HIST 024

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 102 Introduction to the Middle East

This is the second half of the Near East sequence. This course surveys Islamic civilization from circa 600 (the rise of Islam) to the start of the modern era and concentrates on political, social, and cultural trends. Although the emphasis will be on Middle Eastern societies, we will occasionally consider developments in other parts of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and Spain, where Islamic civilization was or has been influential. Our goal is to understand the shared features that have distinguished Islamic civilization as well as the varieties of experience that have endowed it with so much diversity.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Cobb, Sharkey

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: HIST 023

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Fulfills Cross-Cultural Analysis

NELC 103 Origin and Culture of Cities

The UN estimates that 2.9 of the world's 6.1 billion people live in cities and that this percentage is rapidly increasing in many parts of the world. This course examines urban life and urban problems by providing anthropological perspectives on this distinctive form of human association and land use. First we will examine the 'origin' of cities, focusing on several of the places where cities first developed, including Mesopotamia and the Valley of Mexico. We will then investigate the internal structure of non-industrial cities by looking at case studies from around the world and from connections between the cities of the past and the city in which we live and work today.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Zettler

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: ANTH 121, URBS 121

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 106 Pastoral Nomadism in the Past and Present

Pastoral nomadism is a 'third way' of human subsistence separate from farming and foraging. It is a sustainable human adaptation to grassland and arid environments practiced through particular technologies and domesticated animals. This course begins by examining the human ecology and social organization that emerge from mobile ways of life, drawing on modern, ethnographic, and archaeological examples of pastoral nomadic groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. Academic readings and ethnographic films will form the basis of discussions about several larger themes, including: the origins of pastoral nomadism and horse riding; the development of dairy-based foods and human adaptations allowing the digestion of lactose; the historical relationship between mobile groups of pastoralists and territorial states; popular perceptions of nomads in various forms of historical and modern media; and the influence of ideas about nomads on modern senses of heritage and nationalism in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Taught by: Hammer

Also Offered As: AAMW 606, ANTH 108, NELC 606

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 111 Water in the Middle East Throughout History

Water scarcity is one of most important problems facing much of the Middle East and North Africa today. These are arid regions, but human and natural systems have interacted to determine relative water scarcity and abundance at different times and places. This course examines the distribution of water resources throughout the Middle East and the archaeology and anthropology of water exploitation and management over the last 9000 years, looking at continuities and changes through time. Students will learn to make basic digital maps representing Middle Eastern hydro-geography and arguments about modern and historic water resources in the region. The class will cooperatively play an 'irrigation management game' designed to familiarize personnel involved in the operation of irrigation schemes with the logistical and social issues involved in water management. We will engage with a variety of media, including academic readings, popular journalism, films, satellite imagery, and digital maps, in our quest to explore whether or not the past can inform present efforts to better manage modern water resources. The course is structured in units focused on each of the major hydro-environmental zones of the Middle East: the river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Levant, the internal basins of western Central Asia and the Levant, the deserts of Arabia and North Africa, highland zones in Yemen and Iran, and coastal marsh areas along the Persian Gulf. We will examine irrigation systems, water supply systems, and ways of life surrounding water sources known from ethnographic studies, history, and archaeological excavations. These data will allow us to engage with debates in Middle Eastern anthropology, including those concerning the relationship between water and political power, the environment in which the world's earliest cities arose, and the relevance of 'lessons of the past' for present and potential future water crises and 'water wars.' In our final weeks, we will discuss archaeology and historical anthropology's contribution to conceptions of water 'sustainability' and examine attempts to revive traditional/ancient technologies and attitudes about water.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Taught by: Hammer

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: ANTH 110

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 118 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.

Taught by: Entezari

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: CIMS 118, COML 120, GSWS 118, NELC 618

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 130 Introduction to the Qur'an

The goal of this course is to provide students with a general introduction to the holy scripture of the religion of Islam, the Qur'an. In particular, students will become familiar with various aspects of Qur'anic content and style, the significance of the Qur'an in Islamic tradition and religious practice, scholarly debates about the history of its text, and contemporary interpretations of it. Through close readings of a wide range of passages and short research assignments, students will gain first-hand knowledge of the Qur'an's treatment of prophecy, law, the Biblical tradition, and many other topics. No previous background in Islamic studies or Arabic language is required for this course.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered fall; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: RELS 140

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 133 Penn/Philadelphia/and the Middle East

This seminar explores the historic engagement of the University of Pennsylvania and its faculty, students, and graduates in the Near and Middle East. It does so while drawing on archives, rare books and manuscripts, and artifacts that are now preserved in the University Archives, the Penn Museum, and the Penn Libraries. Together we will consider how, beginning in the late nineteenth century, Penn scholars engaged in archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur (in what is now Iraq) and Memphis (in Egypt) and how some of these efforts influenced the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums. We will examine how Penn's curriculum changed over time to accommodate Semitics, including the study of languages and biblical traditions, in light of or in spite of historic tensions at the university between secular and religious learning. We will assess how Penn responded to changing American popular attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, including during the Cold War and post-2001 (post-9/11) eras. Finally, we will trace the stories or biographies of some individual objects in Penn collections in order to appreciate the university's roles in collecting, preserving, analyzing, and disseminating knowledge about the region's deep cultural heritage. Ultimately, by investigating and writing.

Taught by: Sharkey,H

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 134 Getting Crusaded

What did it feel like to get crusaded? In this course, we will examine the roughly two-century period from the call of the First Crusade in 1095 to the final expulsion of Latin Crusaders from the Middle East in 1291. Our examination will be primarily from the perspective of the invaded, rather than the invaders, as is usually done. How did the Muslims, Jews, and Eastern Christians of the medieval Middle East respond to the presence of Frankish invaders from Europe?

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Cobb

Course offered fall; even-numbered years

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 136 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to Islam as a religion as it exists in societies of the past as well as the present. It explores the many ways in which Muslims have interpreted and put into practice the prophetic message of Muhammad through historical and social analyses of varying theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical and literary writings, as well as through visual art and music. The aim of the course is to develop a framework for explaining the sources and symbols through which specific experiences and understandings have been signified as Islamic, both by Muslims and by other peoples with whom they have come into contact, with particular emphasis given to issues of gender, religious violence and changes in beliefs and behaviors which have special relevance for contemporary society.

Taught by: Elias

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: RELS 143, SAST 139

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 137 Arab/Israeli Conflict in Literature and Film

This course will explore the origins, the history and, most importantly, the literary and cinematic art of the struggle that has endured for a century over the region that some call the Holy Land, some call Eretz Israel and others call Palestine. We will also consider religious motivations and interpretations that have inspired many involved in this conflict as well as the political consequences of world wars that contributed so greatly to the reconfiguration of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and after the revelations of the Holocaust in Western Europe. While we will rely on a textbook for historical grounding, the most significant material we will use to learn this history will be films, novels, and short stories. Can the arts lead us to a different understanding of the lives lived through what seems like unending crisis?

Taught by: Troutt-Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: CIMS 166, HIST 166

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 145 Near Eastern Topics

Course topics will vary

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Sometimes offered as a Benjamin Franklin Seminar.

NELC 148 Warriors, Concubines & Converts: the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East & Europe

For almost six hundred years, the Ottomans ruled most of the Balkans and the Middle East. From their bases in Anatolia, Ottoman armies advanced into the Balkans, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, constantly challenging the borders of neighboring European and Islamic empires. By the end of the seventeenth century, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, Baghdad, Sarajevo, Budapest, and nearly Vienna came under Ottoman rule. As the empire expanded into Europe and the Middle East, the balance of imperial power shifted from warriors to converts, concubines, and intellectuals. This course examines the expansion of the Ottoman sultanate from a local principality into a sprawling empire with a sophisticated bureaucracy; it also investigates the social, cultural, and intellectual developments that accompanied the long arc of the empire's rise and fall. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and discuss major currents of change in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. The student will have a better understanding of the roles of power, ideology, diplomacy, and gender in the construction of empire and a refined appreciation for diverse techniques of historical analysis.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Aguirre-Mandujano

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: HIST 148

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 150 Introduction to the Bible (The 'Old Testament')

An introduction to the major themes and ideas of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), with attention to the contributions of archaeology and modern Biblical scholarship, including Biblical criticism and the response to it in Judaism and Christianity. All readings are in English.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: JWST 150, NELC 450, RELS 150

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 153 How to Read the Bible

The aim of this course is to explore what the Bible means, and why it means such different things to different people. Why do people find different kinds of meaning in the Bible. Who is right in the struggle over its meaning, and how does one go about deciphering that meaning in the first place? Focusing on the book of Genesis, this seminar seeks to help students answer these questions by introducing some of the many ways in which the Bible has been read over the ages. Exploring its meaning as understood by ancient Jews and Christians, modern secular scholars, contemporary fiction writers, feminist activists, philosophers and other kinds of interpreter.

Taught by: WEITZMAN

Also Offered As: JWST 131, RELS 130

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 154 Women in Jewish Literature

'Jewish woman, who knows your life? In darkness you have come, in darkness do you go.' J. L. Gordon (1890). This course will bring into the light the long tradition of women as readers, writers, and subjects in Jewish literature. All texts will be in translation from Yiddish and Hebrew, or in English. Through a variety of genres -- devotional literature, memoir, fiction, and poetry -- we will study women's roles and selves, the relations of women and men, and the interaction between Jewish texts and women's lives. The legacy of women in Yiddish devotional literature will serve as background for our reading of modern Jewish fiction and poetry from the past century. The course is divided into five segments. The first presents a case study of the Matriarchs Rachel and Leah, as they are portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, in rabbinic commentary, in pre-modern prayers, and in modern poems. We then examine a modern novel that recasts the story of Dinah, Leah's daughter. Next we turn to the seventeenth century Glikl of Hamel, the first Jewish woman memoirist. The third segment focuses on devotional literature for and by women. In the fourth segment, we read modern women poets in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English. The course concludes with a fifth segment on fiction written by women in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English. All readings and lectures in English.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Hellerstein

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: GRMN 262, GSWS 162, JWST 268

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 155 Archaeology & The Bible

Archaeology and the Bible is a chronological survey of the long span of human occupation in the Land of the Bible, known by the names of the modern nation-states and political entities that occupy the area, as well as various short hands such as Levant and Syria-Palestine, from ca. 10,000 BCE, when humans first began to farm and herd animals through the time of the Divided Monarchy of Israel and Judah. While archaeology has moved beyond a primary concern with illuminating the Bible, NELC 155 will investigate the broader import of archaeological discoveries for our understanding of ancient Israel and its neighbors.

Taught by: Zettler

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ANTH 124

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 156 Great Books of Judaism (Fall 2018: Lifecycle in the Talmud)

The Babylonian Talmud, known simply as the Bavli, is the foundational legal and ethical document of rabbinic Judaism. It is one of the best read works of world literature, and it is the most widely disseminated and revered rabbinic work. It not only contains legal discussions and rulings but rather it also presents the worldview of the rabbis. This course will analyze and contextualize the perspectives of the Talmud towards the important phases of life. We will examine in-depth several Talmudic passages relating to the various stages of the human lifecycle: birth and naming of the child; circumcision; bar/bat mitzva and adulthood; earning a livelihood and choosing a career; marriage and divorce; procreation and raising children; death, burial, mourning and the belief in the resurrection of the dead among others. We will evaluate these teachings in light of other traditions and in their broader late antiquity and contemporary contexts. All texts will be read in their English translation but originals will also be provided.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 057, JWST 151, NELC 456, RELS 027

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 158 Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages in Translation

Course explores the cultural history of Jews in the lands of Islam from the time of Mohammed through the late 17th century (end of Ottoman expansion into Europe) --in Iraq, the Middle East, al-Andalus and the Ottoman Empire. Primary source documents (in English translation) illuminate minority-majority relations, internal Jewish tensions (e.g., Qaraism), and developments in scriptural exegesis, rabbinic law, philosophy, poetry, polemics, mysticism and liturgy. Graduate students have additional readings and meetings. Spring 2015

Taught by: Fishman

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 257, JWST 153, NELC 458

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 159 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation:**Autobiography**

This course examines cinematic and literary portrayals of childhood. While Israeli works constitute more than half of the course's material, European film and fiction play comparative roles. Many of the works are placed, and therefore discussed, against a backdrop of national or historical conflicts. Nonetheless, private traumas (such as madness, abuse, or loss) or an adult's longing for an idealized time are often the central foci of the stories. These issues and the nature of individual and collective memory will be discussed from a psychological point of view. Additionally, the course analyzes how film, poetry and prose use their respective languages to reconstruct the image of childhood; it discusses the authors and directors struggle to penetrate the psyche of a child and to retrieve fragments of past events.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: CIMS 159, COML 282, JWST 154

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 160 The Making of Scripture: From Revelation to Canon

The Bible as we know it is the product of a lengthy process of development, elaboration, contest, and debate. Rather than a foregone conclusion, the process by which the texts and traditions within the bible, and the status ascribed to them, was turbulent and uncertain. This course examines that process, examining the Bible, traditions and communities from the Second Temple Period - such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and Community - that rewrote, reconsidered, revised, or rejected now well-recognized figures and stories, and constructed distinct ideas of what was considered scripture and how it should be approached. Even as the bible began to resemble the corpus as we now know it, interpretive strategies rendered it entirely different, such as Hellenistic Allegorizers, working from the platonic tradition, rabbinic readers who had an entirely different set of hermeneutics, early Christians, who offered different strategies for reading the 'Old' and 'New' Testaments alongside one another (and employing categories like 'Old' and 'New,' themselves constituting a new attitude and relationship to and between these texts), and lastly early Muslim readers, who embraced many of the stories in the Bible, altered others, and debated the status of these corpuses under Islam.

Taught by: Gross

Also Offered As: JWST 160, RELS 165

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 166 The Religion of Ancient Egypt

Weekly lectures (some of which will be illustrated) and a field trip to the University Museum's Egyptian Section. The multifaceted approach to the subject matter covers such topics as funerary literature and religion, cults, magic religious art and architecture, and the religion of daily life.

Taught by: Silverman/Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 468, RELS 114

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 168 Women in Ancient Egypt

This class will examine the many roles played by women in ancient Egypt. From goddesses and queens, to wives and mothers, women were a visible presence in ancient Egypt. We will study the lives of famous ancient Egyptian women such as Hatshepsut, Nefertiti and Cleopatra. More independent than many of their contemporaries in neighboring areas, Egyptian women enjoyed greater freedoms in matters of economy and law. By examining the evidence left to us in the literature (including literary texts and non-literary texts such as legal documents, administrative texts and letters), the art, and the archaeological record, we will come away with a better understanding of the position of women in this ancient culture.

Taught by: Houser Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 568

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 180 Narrative Across Cultures

The purpose of this course is to present a variety of narrative genres and to discuss and illustrate the modes whereby they can be analyzed. We will be looking at shorter types of narrative: short stories, novellas, and fables, and also some extracts from longer works such as autobiographies. While some works will come from the Anglo-American tradition, a larger number will be selected from European and non-Western cultural traditions and from earlier time-periods. The course will thus offer ample opportunity for the exploration of the translation of cultural values in a comparative perspective.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Loomba

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 125, ENGL 103, SAST 124, THAR 105

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 182 Ancient Civilizations of the World

This course explores the archaeology (material culture) of early complex societies or civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean. According to the traditional paradigm, civilization first emerged during the fourth millennium BCE in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In the Mediterranean, state-level societies first appeared in Crete and mainland Greece in the early second millennium BCE. This course investigates how and why these civilizations developed, as well as their appearance and structure in the early historic (or literate) phases of their existence. A comparative perspective will illustrate what these early civilizations have in common and the ways in which they are unique. This course will consist largely of lectures which will outline classic archaeological and anthropological theories on state formation, before turning to examine the available archaeological (and textual) data on emerging complexity in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean. This course does not presuppose any knowledge of archaeology or ancient languages; the instructor will provide any background necessary. Because this is a course on material culture, some of the class periods will be spent at the Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. These will consist of a guided tour of a relevant gallery, as well as a hands-on object-based lab with archaeological materials selected by the instructor. This course meets the General Education Curriculums Cross Cultural Analysis foundational approach, whose aim is to help students understand and interpret the cultures of peoples (even long-dead peoples) with histories different from their own; it also fulfills the History and Tradition Sector breadth requirement.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Burge

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: ANTH 139, URBS 139

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 186 Jewish Mysticism

Survey of expressions of Jewish mysticism from Hebrew Scripture through the 21st century. Topics include rabbinic concerns about mystical speculation, the ascent through the celestial chambers - heikhalot-, the Book of Creation, the relationship of Jewish philosophy and mysticism, techniques of letter permutation, schematization of the Divine Body, the prominence of gender and sexuality in kabalistic thought, the relationship of kabbalah to the practice of the commandments, Zohar, Lurianic kabbalah, Hasidism, New-Age Jewish spirituality and the resurgence of Jewish mysticism in the 20th century. All readings will be in English translation.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Fishman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: JWST 126, RELS 126

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 187 The Material Past in a Digital World

The material remains of the human past -objects and spaces- provide tangible evidence of past people's lives. Today's information technologies improve our ability to document, study, and present these materials. But what does it mean to deal with material evidence in a virtual context? In this class, students will learn basic digital methods for studying the past while working with objects, including those in the collections of the Penn Museum. This class will teach relational database design and 3D object modeling. As we learn about acquiring and managing data, we will gain valuable experience in the evaluation and use of digital tools. The digital humanities are a platform both for learning the basic digital literacy students need to succeed in today's world and for discussing the human consequences of these new technologies and data. We will discuss information technology's impact on the study and presentation of the past, including topics such as public participation in archaeological projects, educational technologies in museum galleries, and the issues raised by digitizing and disseminating historic texts and objects. Finally, we will touch on technology's role in the preservation of the past in today's turbulent world. No prior technical experience is required, but we hope students will share an enthusiasm for the past.

Also Offered As: ANTH 127, ARTH 127, CLST 127, HIST 127

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 201 Modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation

The Middle East boasts a rich tapestry of cultures that have developed a vibrant body of modern literature that is often overlooked in media coverage of the region. While each of the modern literary traditions that will be surveyed in this introductory course—Arabic, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish—will be analyzed with an appreciation of the cultural context unique to each body of literature, this course will also attempt to bridge these diverse traditions by analyzing common themes—such as modernity, social values, the individual and national identity—as reflected in the genres of poetry, the novel and the short story. This course is in seminar format to encourage lively discussion and is team-taught by four professors whose expertise in modern Middle Eastern literature serves to create a deeper understanding and aesthetic appreciation of each literary tradition. In addition to honing students' literary analysis skills, the course will enable students to become more adept at discussing the social and political forces that are reflected in Middle Eastern literature, explore important themes and actively engage in reading new Middle Eastern works on their own in translation. All readings are in English.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Allen/Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: COML 212

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: Fulfills Cross-Cultural Analysis

NELC 216 Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition

This course introduces some of the major genres and themes of the millennium-old Persian poetic tradition from ancient to modern Iran. Epic and romance, love and mysticism, wine and drunkenness, wisdom and madness, body and mind, sin and temptation are some of the key themes that will be explored through a close reading of poems in this course. The course suits undergraduate students of all disciplines, as it requires no prior knowledge of or familiarity with the Persian language or the canon of Persian literature. All teaching materials are available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: COML 215, GSWS 214, HIST 226, NELC 516

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture—such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration—through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaeili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: CIMS 218, GSWS 218, NELC 518, RELS 219

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 222 Art of Ancient Iran

This course offers a survey of ancient Iranian art and culture from the painted pottery cultures of the Neolithic era to the monuments of the Persian Empire. Particular emphasis is placed on the Early Bronze Age.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 622, ARTH 222, ARTH 622, NELC 622

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 224 Art of Mesopotamia

The class presents a survey of the art and archaeology of Mesopotamia beginning with the appearance of the first cities and ending with the fall of the Assyrian Empire in the seventh century BCE. It presents the major artistic monuments of Mesopotamian culture, embedding them in their historical context. Focus is placed in particular on the interactions with surrounding cultures of Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf and Anatolia in order to decenter the discourse from a strictly Mesopotamian perspective. The format is lecture; assignments involve reading response papers; there are in class midterm and final exams.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 624, ARTH 224, ARTH 624, NELC 624

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 231 Modern Arabic Literature

This course is a study of modern Arabic literary forms in the context of the major political and social changes which shaped Arab history in the first half of the twentieth century. The aim of the course is to introduce students to key samples of modern Arabic literature which trace major social and political developments in Arab society. Each time the class will be offered with a focus on one of the literary genres which emerged or flourished in the twentieth century: the free verse poem, the prose-poem, drama, the novel, and the short story. We will study each of these emergent genres against the socio-political backdrop which informed it. All readings will be in English translations. The class will also draw attention to the politics of translation as a reading and representational lens.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Fakhreddine

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: COML 246, NELC 631

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 235 Food in the Islamic Middle East: History, Memory, Identity

In the tenth century, a scholar named Ibn Sayyar al-Warraaq produced an Arabic manuscript called *Kitab al-Tabikh* (The Book of Cooking). This volume, which compiled and discussed the recipes of eighth- and ninth-century Islamic rulers (caliphs) and their courts in Iraq, represents the oldest known surviving cookbook of the Arab-Islamic world. Many more such cookbooks followed; in their day they represented an important literary genre among cultured elites. As one food historian recently noted, there are more cookbooks in Arabic from before 1400 than in the rest of the world's languages put together. Ibn Sayyar's cookbook can help us to think about the historical and cultural dynamics of food. In this class, we will focus on the Middle East across the sweep of the Islamic era, into the modern period, and until the present day, although many of the readings will consider the study of food in other places (including the contemporary United States) for comparative insights. The class will use the historical study of food and foodways as a lens for examining subjects that relate to a wide array of fields and interests. These subjects include economics, agricultural and environmental studies, anthropology, literature, religion, and public health. With regard to the modern era, the course will pay close attention to the consequences of food for shaping memories and identities including religious, ethnic, national, and gender-based identities particularly among people who have dispersed or otherwise migrated. It will also focus considerably on the politics of food, that is, on the place of food in power relations. Among the questions we will debate are these: How does food reflect, shape, or inform history? By approaching the study of Middle Eastern cultures through food, what new or different things can we see? What is the field of food studies, and what can it offer to scholars? What is food writing as a literary form, and what methodological and conceptual challenges face those who undertake it?

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 238 Introduction to Islamic Law

This course will introduce students to classical Islamic law, the all-embracing sacred law of Islam. Among the world's various legal systems, Islamic law may be the most widely misunderstood and even misrepresented; certainly, misconceptions about it abound. Islamic law is, however, the amazing product of a rich, fascinating and diverse cultural and intellectual tradition. Most of the readings in this course will be taken from primary sources in translation. Areas covered will include criminal law, family law, law in the Quran, gender and sexuality, the modern application of Islamic law, Islamic government and other selected topics.

Taught by: Lowry

Course offered fall; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: RELS 248

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 239 Migration and the Middle East

This reading- and discussion-intensive seminar examines the phenomenon of migration into, out of, within, and across the Middle East and North Africa. We will focus on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, and will emphasize the cultural (rather than economic) consequences of migration. Along the way we will trace connections between the Middle East and other regions— notably the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Western Europe. Readings are interdisciplinary and include works of history, anthropology, sociology, medical research, literature, political science, geography, and human rights advocacy. As students develop final projects on topics of their choice, we will spend time throughout the semester discussing tactics for research and writing.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ASAM 239, NELC 539, SAST 269

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 241 Iraq: Ancient Cities and Empires

Iraq: Ancient Cities and Empires is a chronological survey of the ancient civilization that existed in the drainage basin of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers from the early settled village farming communities of the 7th millennium BCE to the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar II ruled Babylon and much of the Middle East. Though organized period by period, NELC 241 explores various social, political, economic, and ideological topics, exposing students to various strands of evidence, including settlement survey data, excavated architectural remains, artifacts, and documentary sources, as well as an eclectic mix of theoretical perspectives. The course aims to provide students with a strong foundation for the further study of the ancient and pre-modern Middle East.

Taught by: Zettler

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ANTH 236, ANTH 636, NELC 641, URBS 236

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 244 Reading Ancient Mesopotamia

An introduction to the literature of Ancient Mesopotamia. The literature of ancient Mesopotamia flourished thousands of years ago in a culture all of its own, yet the survival of hundreds of thousands of written records challenges us to read it and make sense of it without simply approximating it to the realm of our own understanding. How can we learn to do this? Situating our understanding of how we read and how we understand culture within an interdisciplinary range of literary-critical and analytic approaches, we will approach this question by immersing ourselves in the myths, tales and mentalities that made Mesopotamian literature meaningful. To give us a measure of our progress we will bracket the semester by reading *Gilgamesh* which is never less than a great story, but which will take on new layers of meaning as the semester develops and we learn to read the text in more and more Mesopotamian ways. As we journey through these mysterious realms we will reflect not only Mesopotamia and its immortal literature but on what it means to read and understand any cultures other than our own.

Taught by: Tinney

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: NELC 544

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 249 Myth in Society

In this course we will explore the mythologies of selected peoples in the Ancient Near East, Africa, Asia, and Native North and South America and examine how the gods function in the life and belief of each society. The study of mythological texts will be accompanied, as much as possible, by illustrative slides that will show the images of these deities in art and ritual.

Taught by: Ben-Amos

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: COML 357, FOLK 229

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 250 The Bible in Translation

This course introduces students to one specific Book of the Hebrew Bible. 'The Bible in Translation' involves an in-depth reading of a biblical source against the background of contemporary scholarship. Depending on the book under discussion, this may also involve a contextual reading with other biblical books and the textual sources of the ancient Near East. Although no prerequisites are required, this class is a perfect follow-up course to 'Intro to the Bible.'

Taught by: Cranz

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 380, JWST 255, NELC 550, RELS 224

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 252 Themes Jewish Tradition: Iberian Conversos: Jew-Christian?

Course topics will vary; they have included The Binding of Isaac, Responses to Catastrophes in Jewish History, Holy Men & Women (Ben-Amos); Rewriting the Bible (Dohrmann); Performing Judaism (Fishman); Jewish Political Thought (Fishman); Jewish Esotericism (Lorberbaum) Democratic culture assumes the democracy of knowledge - the accessibility of knowledge and its transparency. Should this always be the case? What of harmful knowledge? When are secrets necessary? In traditional Jewish thought, approaching the divine has often assumed an aura of danger. Theological knowledge was thought of as restricted. This seminar will explore the 'open' and 'closed' in theological knowledge, as presented in central texts of the rabbinic tradition: the Mishnah, Maimonides and the Kabbalah. Primary sources will be available in both Hebrew and English.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Ben-Amos/ Dohrmann/Fishman

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: FOLK 252, JWST 100, NELC 552, RELS 129

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 254 Jewish Humor

In modern American popular culture Jewish humor is considered by Jews and non-Jews as a recognizable and distinct form of humor. Focusing upon folk-humor, in this course we will examine the history of this perception, and study different manifestation of Jewish humor as a particular case study of ethnic in general. Specific topics for analysis will be: humor in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish humor in Europe and in America, JAP and JAM jokes, Jewish tricksters and pranksters, Jewish humor in the Holocaust and Jewish humor in Israel. The term paper will be collecting project of Jewish jokes.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Ben-Amos

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: COML 259, FOLK 296, JWST 102

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 258 Jewish Folklore

The Jews are among the few nations and ethnic groups whose oral tradition occurs in literary and religious texts dating back more than two thousand years. This tradition changed and diversified over the years in terms of the migrations of Jews into different countries and the historical, social, and cultural changes that these countries underwent. The course attempts to capture the historical and ethnic diversity of Jewish Folklore in a variety of oral literary forms.

Taught by: Ben-Amos

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 283, FOLK 280, JWST 260

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 259 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 266, JWST 259, NELC 559

Prerequisite: HEBR 054

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 260 Middle Eastern Jews in Israel

This undergraduate seminar offers an in-depth look at the history of Middle Eastern and North African Jews, focusing in particular on their place in Israeli society and culture. It will begin with a historical background on the Jewish communities in Ottoman Palestine, and in the larger Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Morocco. We will then proceed to consider the engagement of these Jewish communities with Zionism, and with other conflicting forces, such as European colonialism, Arab nationalism, and Cosmopolitanism. We will learn about Jewish immigration from the region to Palestine/Israel in the period between 1880 to 1948, and about their exodus/expulsion post-1948. We will then explore in depth their settlement in Israel: governmental policies towards Jewish immigrants from the Islamic World, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s; their integration in Israeli society; identity politics in Israel (or: the 'invention' of 'Mizrahim'); Mizrahi political action; Mizrahi music, film, literature, and food culture; and Mizrahi attitudes towards Arabs, both within and outside Israel. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and cultural history of Middle Eastern Jews in Israel, and the issues facing third-generation Mizrahim in Israel today. Students will also be introduced to basic methods of inquiry in history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Students will engage with a mix of scholarly research, readings in original documents, film, literature, music, and some material and visual artifacts.

Taught by: Alon Tam

Also Offered As: JWST 270

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 261 Ancient Iranian Empires

Iran - as a landmass and a political entity - was central to the ancient world in a variety of ways. Ancient Iranian Empires were of central importance to - and centrally located in - the ancient world. It was the successor kingdom to the Assyrians and Babylonians; the power against which Greece and Rome defined themselves; and the crucible in which various communities and models of rule developed. This course offers a survey of the history of the ancient Persianate world, focusing in particular on the political and imperial entities that rose to power, the cultural, political, mercantile, and other contacts they shared with their neighbors to the East and West, and the communities and religious groups that arose and flourished within their lands. Ancient Iranian empires rivaled the Greek and Roman Empires to their West, and the central and eastern Asian Empires to their east, and the ongoing history of diplomacy, cultural contact, and war between these regions was formative to each and to the ancient world as a whole. Iran was home to and similarly formative for a variety of religions, including Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam, and a central question Ancient Iranian political powers sought to address was how to negotiate and address the variety of populations under their control. The course will conclude by studying how, rather than a simplistic story of decline, the strategies, policies, institutions, and memory of the Iranian Empires continued to shape early Islam, medieval imagination, and modern political regimes.

Taught by: Gross

Also Offered As: ANCH 261, NELC 561, RELS 261

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 266 History of Ancient Egypt

Review and discussion of the principal aspects of ancient Egyptian history, 3000-500 BC.

Taught by: Wegner

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: NELC 666

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 275 History and Society of Early Mesopotamia

The fourth millennium BCE saw the rise of cities and the birth of writing in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). This class traces the history of Mesopotamia from about 3000 BCE to about 1600 BCE (the end of the Old Babylonian Period), examining political history and changes in social organization as well as developments in religion, literature and art.

Taught by: Tinney

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: NELC 575

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 281 Topics In Anthropology and the Modern World

This course relates anthropological models and methods to current problems in the Modern World. The overall objective is to show how the research findings and analytical concepts of anthropology may be used to illuminate and explain events as they have unfolded in the recent news and in the course of the semester. Each edition of the course will focus on a particular country or region that has been in the news.

Taught by: Spooner

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: ANTH 100, ANTH 654, NELC 681, SAST 161

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 285 Introduction to Visual Culture of the Islamic World

A one-semester survey of Islamic art and architecture which examines visual culture as it functions within the larger sphere of Islamic culture in general. Particular attention will be given to relationships between visual culture and literature, using specific case studies, sites or objects which may be related to various branches of Islamic literature, including historical, didactic, philosophical writings, poetry and religious texts. All primary sources are available in English translation.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 635, ARTH 235, ARTH 635, NELC 685, VLST 235

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 290 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature

Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and 'queerness' in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature. Prerequisite: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 275, COML 574, GSWS 275, GSWS 575, NELC 574

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

NELC 306 Gunpowder, Art and Diplomacy: Islamic Empires in the Early Modern World

In the sixteenth century, the political landscape of the Middle East, Central Asia, and India changed with the expansion and consolidation of new Islamic empires. Gunpowder had transformed the modes of warfare. Diplomacy followed new rules and forms of legitimation. The widespread use of Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages across the region allowed for an interconnected world of scholars, merchants, and diplomats. And each imperial court, those of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals, found innovative and original forms of expression in art and literature. The expansion of these Islamic empires, each of them military giants and behemoths of bureaucracy, marked a new phase in world history. The course is divided in four sections. The first section introduces the student to major debates about the so-called gunpowder empires of the Islamic world as well as to comparative approaches to study them. The second section focuses on the transformations of modes of warfare and military organization. The third section considers the cultural history and artistic production of the imperial courts of the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The fourth and final section investigates the social histories of these empires, their subjects, and the configuration of a world both connected and divided by commerce, expansion, and diplomacy.

Taught by: Mandujano

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: HIST 306

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 320 Digital Exploration of the Past: Archives, Databases, Maps, and Museums

This course exposes students to digital methods for investigating past environments and societies, including digitization of analog records, the construction and querying of databases, and the creation of digital maps. The ultimate goal of the course will be to carry out a final project that benefits the Penn Museum and the public. In fall 2018, our exploration of digital methods will center around the archaeological site of Ur (Tell el-Muqayyar), located in southern Iraq. Ur was one of the earliest cities in the world, and, thanks to campaigns partly funded by Penn in the 1920s and 1930s, is one of the best-excavated sites in southern Mesopotamia. Here at Penn, we have unparalleled access to archival documentation and artifacts from the site. We will draw upon this access to contribute to an on-going digital humanities project in the Penn Museum (the public 'Ur Online' database). In the process, students will re-assess data that has the potential to change anthropological ideas about issues such as the environmental setting of the earliest cities and archaeological ideas about demographic and urban structure within the city of Ur itself. There are no prerequisites, but students must bring an interest in Mesopotamian archaeology and/or the origins of urbanism and be motivated to carry out individual and group research guided by the instructor & classmates.

Taught by: Hammer

Also Offered As: AAMW 619, NELC 620

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 323 Origins of Art / Origins of Writing

Each of the earliest systems of writing had intimate and enduring ties to pictorial traditions. This seminar addresses the fundamental relationship between texts and visual imagery in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, and Maya traditions. The class will take a comparative approach to examine the parallel development of scripts and images, extending from their earliest beginnings to their on-going lives as mature systems. As the individual scripts became more capable of representing speech, the subject matter, composition, and function of images changed, and one goal of this class is to identify these processes. Emphasis will be put on seeing text and image as collaborative and interactive constructions, in which parts of a single message can be encoded and presented in different ways. The class will make extensive use of the collections and the curatorial expertise of the Penn Museum.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ANTH 323, ARTH 323

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 325 Who Owns the Past? Archaeology and Politics in the Middle East

This course explores the role of cultural heritage and archaeological discoveries in the politics of the Middle East from the nineteenth century to the recent aftermath of the Arab Spring. We will explore how modern Middle East populations relate to their pasts and how archaeology and cultural heritage have been employed to support particular political and social agendas, including colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, and the construction of ethnic-religious identities. Although it was first introduced to the Middle East as a colonial enterprise by European powers, archaeology became a pivotal tool for local populations of the Middle East to construct new histories and identities during the post-World War I period of intensive nation-building after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. To understand this process, we will first look at the nineteenth-century establishment of archaeology by institutions like the Penn Museum. Then we will move on to individual case studies in Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Israel/Palestine, Iran, and the republics of former Soviet Transcaucasia to look at the role of archaeology and cultural heritage in the formation of these countries as modern nation-states with a shared identity among citizens. We will conclude with an examination of the recent impact of the Islamic State on material heritage in Syria and Iraq, the changing attitudes of Middle Eastern countries toward foreign museums, and the role of UNESCO in defining Middle Eastern sites of world heritage. The course will also include field trips to the Penn Museum.

For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector

Taught by: Hammer

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: ANTH 325

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 330 The University, the Museum, and the Middle East

This seminar explores how two kinds of institutions - the research university and the museum - developed in the United States as American scholars and philanthropists and the U.S. government engaged with the wider world. We will take the involvement of the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum in the Middle East as a test case for this history, while focusing on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. We will approach questions in transnational intellectual, cultural, and political history through the lens of Penn's Middle Eastern engagements. For example, how did the university and its museum contribute to the construction of the Middle East as a zone of U.S. diplomatic intervention? How have American scholarly traditions shaped academic fields of inquiry including 'Semitics' (a term used a century ago to suggest the study of biblical languages and traditions), 'Oriental Studies' (a now-passe and politically loaded term suggesting connections to American traditions of Orientalist thought), 'Islamic Studies', and 'Egyptology'? How did Penn's archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur in the late nineteenth century influence the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums? How did Penn's broader expeditions in the twentieth century, to Egypt, Iran, and elsewhere, shape nationalist imaginations in the United States and in Middle Eastern countries, while also informing international antiquities policies? Finally, how have institutions like Penn and the Penn Museum responded to changing American popular attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, during the Cold War and post-2001 ('post-9/11') eras, and most recently, amid civil strife in Syria and Iraq? This seminar offers students an opportunity to consult Penn's phenomenal collections of Middle East-related materials as they pursue end-of-semester research. These collections include artifacts (museum objects), archival records (such as documents, drawings, and photographs), and rare books and manuscripts from the Penn Museum and Penn Libraries. Prerequisite: Middle Eastern history survey

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: NELC 530

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 331 Women Making History: The Penn Museum and the Centennial 2020

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which declared that the right of citizens to vote 'shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex'. To mark this centennial - to both celebrate it and critically assess its impact on American society - we will investigate the history of women at the Penn Museum as archaeologists, ethnographers, epigraphers, philanthropists, and more. At the same time, we will examine material in the Penn Museum that women collected, donated, or studied. Our goal will be to produce original research that may contribute to future exhibits and publications as well as to broader public forums. Sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, our seminar will focus heavily on western Asia, southeastern Europe, and North Africa - all zones that scholars have variously associated with the Near East or Middle East, and where the Penn Museum has been active since its foundation in 1887. To situate the Penn Museum and its collections within a global and comparative frame, we will also study select women who made major scholarly contributions to other parts of the world such as the Americas and Oceania. Among the figures we will study are Sarah Yorke Stevenson (Egypt), Katharine Woolley (Mesopotamia/Iraq), Harriet Boyd Hawes (Ottoman Crete and Greece), Florence Shotridge (Alaska), Zelia Nuttall (Mexico and Russia), and Tatiana Proskouriakoff (Guatemala). We will venture into many different kinds of history. In regional terms, our scope will be transnational and international: we will cover the United States and the Middle East in the wider world. In thematic and methodological terms, we will approach our subject through biography, oral history, and microhistory; material history and museum studies; cultural and intellectual history; women's and gender studies; and the history of academic disciplines, especially archaeology and anthropology. Some background in Middle Eastern history; or Anthropology; or Women's History; or Museum Studies recommended.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: ANTH 351, ANTH 531, GSWS 331, GSWS 533, NELC 531

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 332 North Africa: History, Culture, Society

This interdisciplinary seminar aims to introduce students to the countries of North Africa, with a focus on the Maghreb and Libya (1830-present). It does so while examining the region's close economic and cultural connections to sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Readings will include histories, political analyses, anthropological studies, and novels, and will cover a wide range of topics such as colonial and postcolonial experiences, developments in Islamic thought and practice, and labor migration. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Prerequisite: A university-level survey course in Middle Eastern, African, or Mediterranean history.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AFRC 332, AFRC 632, HIST 370, NELC 632

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 333 Urban Life in the Middle East and North Africa

With rapid urbanization, most people in the Middle East and North Africa are living now in cities and towns, rather than in rural areas. This seminar introduces the complex realities of living in the major cities of the region, in terms of globalization, social class, politics, gender and sexuality, culture, religion, communal identities, communal networks, and more. Through intensive engagement with the various readings and films, both documentaries and feature films, we will explore how those realities and processes shape the urban space, or express themselves in it. In addition, we will explore the basic premises of such disciplines as anthropology, cultural studies, history, or sociology, and learn how they can help us research and understand the realities of urban life in the modern and contemporary Middle East and North Africa. We will use Cairo, Egypt, as our main case study, while looking at a range of other cities, such as Istanbul, Turkey, and Marrakesh, Morocco, for further insights.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: URBS 333

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 334 Africa and the Mid-East

Taught by: Troutt Powell

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: AFRC 372, HIST 371

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 335 Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives

A reading- and discussion-intensive seminar that addresses several recurring questions with regard to the Middle East and North Africa. How have Islam, Judaism, and Christianity influenced each other in these regions historically? How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims fared as religious minorities? To what extent have communal relations been characterized by harmony and cooperation, or by strife and discord, and how have these relations changed in different contexts over time? To what extent and under what circumstances have members of these communities converted, intermarried, formed business alliances, and adopted or developed similar customs? How has the emergence of the modern nation-state system affected communal relations as well as the legal or social status of religious minorities in particular countries? How important has religion been as one variable in social identity (along with sect, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and to what extent has religious identity figured into regional conflicts and wars? The focus of the class will be on the modern period (c. 1800-present) although we will read about some relevant trends in the early and middle Islamic periods as well. Students will also pursue individually tailored research to produce final papers. Prior background in Islamic studies and Middle Eastern history is required. Middle Eastern history is required. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: HIST 479, JWST 335, NELC 535, RELS 311

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 336 Nationalism and Communal Identity in the Middle East

This seminar views the phenomenon of nationalism as it affected the modern Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Together we will consider the diverse components of nationalism, including religion, language, territorial loyalty, and ethnicity, and test the thesis that nations are 'imagined communities' built on 'invented traditions.' At the same time, we will examine other forms of communal identity that transcend national borders or flourish on more localized scales. This class approaches nationalism and communal identity as complex products of cultural, political, and social forces, and places Middle Eastern experiences within a global context. Students must take a survey of modern Middle Eastern history or politics before enrolling in this class. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: NELC 536

Prerequisite: NELC 102

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 337 Jewish Magic: Defense Against the Dark Arts

The Hebrew Bible legislates against magic and witchcraft. But Jewish literature is replete with demons, witches, spells and incantations. This course will examine the phenomenon of Jewish magic in the longue duree. We will explore a wide array of sources describing ancient Jewish magical practices, and attempt to reconstruct the various aspects of ancient Jewish magic. We will start with demonology and exorcism in biblical and Second Temple literature. Then we will examine rabbinic attitudes towards magic and sorcery and rabbinic magical recipes. We then turn to material artifacts: late antique Jewish amulets and magic bowls. Finally we will survey the large corpus of magical texts from the Cairo Geniza and Hebrew manuscripts of magic from the middle ages. During the course we will consider broader questions such as the relationships between magic and religion, the identity of the Jewish magicians and their clients, relationship between Jewish and contemporary non-Jewish magic, and the role of women in magical practice.

Taught by: Gross

Also Offered As: JWST 337

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 342 Egypt in Four Revolutions

This seminar offers an in-depth look at the political and social history of revolution and protest in modern Egypt. We will examine four such seminal events, through different lenses: The Urabi Revolution (1879-1882), The 1919 Revolution, The 1952 Revolution, and The 2011 Revolution. We will discuss their political, social, and economic causes and effects; popular participation and the use of public space; the roles of the army, women, youth, and social organizations in those events; their ideological and international aspects; their colonial and post-colonial contexts; and more. We will use cutting edge research from several disciplines, as well as literature, film, music, photography, and social media as sources. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and political history of modern Egypt, as well as of current scholarly discussions about the nature of revolution and protest.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: NELC 642

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 346 GIS for the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences

This course introduces students to theory and methodology of the geospatial humanities and social sciences, understood broadly as the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and spatial analysis techniques to the study of social and cultural patterns in the past and present. By engaging with spatial theory, spatial analysis case studies, and technical methodologies, students will develop an understanding of the questions driving, and tools available for, humanistic and social science research projects that explore change over space and time. We will use ESRI's ArcGIS software to visualize, analyze, and integrate historical, anthropological, and environmental data. Techniques will be introduced through the discussion of case studies and through demonstration of software skills. During supervised laboratory sessions, the various techniques and analyses covered will be applied to sample data and also to data from a region/topic chosen by the student.

Taught by: Hammer

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: AAMW 646, ANTH 346, NELC 646

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 359 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern 'descendants,' autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: COML 359, JWST 359, JWST 659, NELC 659

Prerequisite: HEBR 059

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 362 Intro to Digital Archaeology

Digital methodologies are now an integral part of archaeological practice and archaeologists are now expected to possess basic computing skills and be familiar with a range of data collection, analysis and visualization techniques. This course will use case studies and applied learning opportunities centered on a course project to explore a broad array of digital approaches in archaeology. The technological underpinnings, professional procedures, and influences on archaeological practice and theory will be discussed for each method covered in the course. Applied learning opportunities in digital data collection methods will include aerial and satellite image analysis, global navigation satellite system (GNSS) survey, 3D scanning methods, close-range photogrammetry, and near-surface geophysical prospection. Students will also have opportunities for practical experience in digital database design and management, geographic information science (GIS) and 3D visualization. Students will communicate the results of the course project in a digital story that will be presented at the end of the term. Prior archaeological classwork and/or experience preferred.

Taught by: Herrmann

Also Offered As: AAMW 562, ANTH 362, ANTH 562, CLST 362, CLST 562

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 383 The Religious Other

Course explores attitudes toward monotheists of other faiths, and claims made about these 'religious Others' in real and imagined encounters between Jews, Christians and Muslims from antiquity to the present. Strategies of 'othering' will be analyzed through an exploration of claims about the Other's body, habits and beliefs, as found in works of scripture, law, theology, polemics, art, literature and reportage. Attention will be paid to myths about the other, inter-group violence, converts, cases of cross-cultural influence, notions of toleration, and perceptions of Others in contemporary life. Primary sources will be provided in English.

Taught by: Fishman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: JWST 213

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 385 Eastern Christianities

The history of Christianity is often told from the perspective of its spread westward from Israel to Rome. Yet, in the first millennium, there were more Christians living in the East, in places as far away as Persia, Yemen, India, China, and Mongolia, than in the West. Spread across the Asian continent, these Christians were actively involved in local and imperial politics, composed theological literature, and were deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of their host societies. This course traces the spread of Christianity eastward, paying particular attention to its regional developments, its negotiations with local political powers, and its contact with other religions, including Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Islam. Readings will cover a broad range of sources, including selections from classical Syriac literature, Mesopotamian magic bowls, the so-called 'Jesus Sutras,' and the Quran.

Taught by: Durmaz

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: RELS 235, SAST 245

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 395 Senior Conference

Directed study for seniors.

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Independent Study

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 399 Independent Study

Supervised reading and research

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Independent Study

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 419 Mining Archaeology

In ancient times, materials such as stone and metals were used to produce artifacts including pigments, jewelry, tools, and weapons. This course is designed to introduce students to research on the early exploitation of mineral resources. Which techniques were used to access and process raw materials in antiquity? Which archaeological methods can be used to investigate these features and artifacts? The course will provide worldwide examples through time, ranging from Stone Age flint mining, Iron Age rock salt mining to Medieval silver mining. Ethnographic studies and hands-on activities will contribute to our understanding of mining in archaeology, and artifacts from the Museum's collections will undergo scientific analysis in the Center for the Analysis of Archaeological Materials. Prerequisite: Desired but not mandatory: ANTH 221/521 Material World in Archaeological Science

Taught by: Jansen

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: ANTH 419, CLST 419

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 422 Intermediate Urdu Part II

This continuing second-year course allows students to continue improving their Urdu proficiency while also gaining a broad foundational understanding of Urdu society and culture throughout South Asia.

The course provides students the tools needed to handle a variety of authentic written and spoken Urdu sources including film, music, media reports, folk tales, and simple literature. Students will also continue to increase their speaking and writing proficiency to be able to discuss a broad range of concrete, real-world topics. The course is designed for students with one year of previous Urdu or Hindi study or the equivalent proficiency.

For BA Students: Last Language Course

Taught by: Pien

Also Offered As: URDU 422

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 434 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory

This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.

Taught by: Fakhreddine

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 353, COML 505

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 437 Islamic Intellectual Tradition

This comprehensive survey of the traditions of rational thought in classical Islamic culture is distinguished by its attempt to contextualize and localize the history of what is best described as philosophy in Islam, including not only the Islamic products of the Hellenistic mode of thought but also religious and linguistic sciences whose methodology is philosophical. The course examines the influence of these different disciplines upon each other, and the process of the Islamic 'aspecting' of the Greek intellectual legacy. The readings thus include not only the works of Hellenized philosophers (falasifa) of Islam, but also those of theologians (mutakallimun), legists (fiqh scholars), and grammarians (nahw/lugha scholars). No prerequisites. Additional advanced-level assignments can be given for graduate credit.

Taught by: Lowry

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 450 Introduction to the Bible (The 'Old Testament')

An introduction to the major themes and ideas of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), with attention to the contributions of archaeology and modern Biblical scholarship, including Biblical criticism and the response to it in Judaism and Christianity. All readings are in English.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: JWST 150, NELC 150, RELS 150

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 451 Jews and Judaism in Antiquity

A broad introduction to the history of Jewish civilization from its Biblical beginnings to the Middle Ages, with the main focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Taught by: Dohrmann

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: HIST 139, JWST 156, NELC 051, RELS 120

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 454 Spirit and Law

While accepting 'the yoke of the commandments', Jewish thinkers from antiquity onward have perennially sought to make the teachings of revelation more meaningful in their own lives. Additional impetus for this quest has come from overtly polemical challenges to the law, such as those leveled by Paul, medieval Aristotelians, Spinoza and Kant. This course explores both the critiques of Jewish Law, and Jewish reflections on the Law's meaning and purpose, by examining a range of primary sources within their intellectual and historical contexts. Texts (in English translation) include selections from Midrash, Talmud, medieval Jewish philosophy and biblical exegesis, kabbalah, Hasidic homilies, Jewish responses to the Enlightenment, and contemporary attempts to re-value and invent Jewish rituals.

Taught by: Fishman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: JWST 320, JWST 520, RELS 520

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 456 Great Books of Judaism (Fall 2018: Lifecycle in the Talmud)

The Babylonian Talmud, known simply as the Bavli, is the foundational legal and ethical document of rabbinic Judaism. It is one of the best read works of world literature, and it is the most widely disseminated and revered rabbinic work. It not only contains legal discussions and rulings but rather it also presents the worldview of the rabbis. This course will analyze and contextualize the perspectives of the Talmud towards the important phases of life. We will examine in-depth several Talmudic passages relating to the various stages of the human lifecycle: birth and naming of the child; circumcision; bar/bat mitzva and adulthood; earning a livelihood and choosing a career; marriage and divorce; procreation and raising children; death, burial, mourning and the belief in the resurrection of the dead among others. We will evaluate these teachings in light of other traditions and in their broader late antiquity and contemporary contexts. All texts will be read in their English translation but originals will also be provided.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 057, JWST 151, NELC 156, RELS 027

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 458 Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages in Translation

Course explores the cultural history of Jews in the lands of Islam from the time of Mohammed through the late 17th century (end of Ottoman expansion into Europe) –in Iraq, the Middle East, al-Andalus and the Ottoman Empire. Primary source documents (in English translation) illuminate minority-majority relations, internal Jewish tensions (e.g., Qaraism), and developments in scriptural exegesis, rabbinic law, philosophy, poetry, polemics, mysticism and liturgy. Graduate students have additional readings and meetings. Spring 2015

Taught by: Fishman

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 257, JWST 153, NELC 158

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 459 Prose Narrative

Historical, literary, comparative, and ethnographic methods contribute to study of prose narratives which were told in oral societies in antiquity and in modern times and were documented in literary societies for different purposes. Oral storytellers, both professional and amateurs, performed them in private and public spaces. Their recording from antiquity to modern times became an integral element of modern life in general and in education and arts in particular. The storytellers, their performances in oral and literary cultures, their genres, and their symbolic meanings are the subjects of the course, together with the analytical methods that help mapping their distribution worldwide.

Taught by: Ben-Amos

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: FOLK 459

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 463 Literary Legacy of Ancient Egypt

This course surveys the literature of Ancient Egypt from the Old Kingdom through the Graeco-Roman period, focusing upon theme, structure, and style, as well as historical and social context. A wide range of literary genres are treated, including epics; tales, such as the 'world's oldest fairy tale;' poetry, including love poems, songs, and hymns; religious texts, including the 'Cannibal Hymn'; magical spells; biographies; didactic literature; drama; royal and other monumental inscriptions; and letters, including personal letters, model letters, and letters to the dead. Issues such as literacy, oral tradition, and the question poetry vs. prose are also discussed. No prior knowledge of Egyptian is required.

Taught by: Silverman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 061

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 467 History of Egypt -New Kingdom

Covers principal aspects of ancient Egyptian culture (environment, urbanism, religion, technology, etc.) with special focus on archaeological data; includes study of University Museum artifacts. Follows NELC 266/466 - History of Egypt taught in the fall semester.

Taught by: Wegner

Course not offered every year

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 468 The Religion of Ancient Egypt

Weekly lectures (some of which will be illustrated) and a field trip to the University Museum's Egyptian Section. The multifaceted approach to the subject matter covers such topics as funerary literature and religion, cults, magic religious art and architecture, and the religion of daily life.

Taught by: Silverman/Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 166, RELS 114

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 469 The Archaeology of Nubia

The course will examine the archaeology of Ancient Nubia from Pre-history through the Bronze and Iron Ages, ca. 5000 BCE to 300 AD. The course will focus on the various Nubian cultures of the Middle Nile, and social and cultural development, along with a detailed examination of the major archaeological sites and central issues of Nubian archaeology.

Taught by: Wegner

Course not offered every year

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 489 Medieval Islamic Art & Architecture

An introduction to the major architectural monuments and trends, as well as to the best-known objects of the medieval (seventh-to fourteenth-century) Islamic world. Attention is paid to such themes as the continuity of late antique themes, architecture as symbol of community and power, the importance of textiles and primacy of writing. Suitable for students of literature, history, anthropology as well as art history.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 435, ARTH 435

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 501 Curatorial Seminar

Curatorial seminars expose students to the complexity of studying and working with objects in the context of public display. With the guidance of faculty and museum professionals, students learn what it means to curate an exhibition, create catalogues and gallery text, and/or develop programming for exhibitions of art and visual/material culture. Students in this curatorial seminar will participate in planning the exhibition of Japanese illustrated books from the Tress collection to be held in the Kislak Center in spring 2021. Japanese illustrated books are celebrated for their high technical and aesthetic achievements and the collection spans all genres and formats over more than three hundred years. In this course, students will be thinking through how we can tell the story of the illustrated book in Japan in the space of the exhibition. We will think through how these materials related to their broad and largely literate audiences, and we'll pay close attention to artists, genres, technologies, and subjects. Students will conduct research, prepare didactic labels, write entries for the catalogue, and develop the website and symposium as part of their curatorial practice. There will be extensive hands-on engagement with examples from the Kislak collections as well as practical training in papermaking, materials, and binding. By permission only.

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 509, ARTH 501

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 518 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture - such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration - through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Taught by: Esmaeili

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: CIMS 218, NELC 218

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 523 Narrative in Ancient Art

Art history, and its cousins in religious, social, political and literary studies, have long been fascinated with the question of narrative: how do images engage time, tell stories? These are fundamental questions for ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian and Mediterranean art history and archaeology, whose rich corpus of narrative images is rarely considered in the context of 'Western' art. Relations between words and things, texts and images, were as fundamental to the ancient cultures we examine as they are to modern studies. As we weigh classic modern descriptions of narrative and narratology, we will bring to bear recent debates about how (ancient) images, things, monuments, and designed spaces engage with time, space, and event, and interact with cultural memory. We will ask 'who is the story for, and why?' for public and private narratives ranging from political histories to mythological encounters. Our case studies will be drawn from the instructors' expertise in Mesopotamian visual culture, and in the visual cultures of the larger Mediterranean world from early Greek antiquity to the Hellenistic, Roman, and Late Antique periods. One central and comparative question, for instance, is the nature of recording history in pictures and texts in the imperial projects of Assyria, Achaemenid Persia, the Hellenistic kingdoms, and Rome.

Taught by: Kuttner/Pittman

Also Offered As: AAMW 523, ARTH 523, CLST 523

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 530 The University, the Museum, and the Middle East

This seminar explores how two kinds of institutions - the research university and the museum - developed in the United States as American scholars and philanthropists and the U.S. government engaged with the wider world. We will take the involvement of the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum in the Middle East as a test case for this history, while focusing on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. We will approach questions in transnational intellectual, cultural, and political history through the lens of Penn's Middle Eastern engagements. For example, how did the university and its museum contribute to the construction of the Middle East as a zone of U.S. diplomatic intervention? How have American scholarly traditions shaped academic fields of inquiry including 'Semitics' (a term used a century ago to suggest the study of biblical languages and traditions), 'Oriental Studies' (a now-passe and politically loaded term suggesting connections to American traditions of Orientalist thought), 'Islamic Studies', and 'Egyptology'? How did Penn's archaeological expeditions to celebrated sites like Ur in the late nineteenth century influence the late Ottoman Empire's policies towards antiquities and museums? How did Penn's broader expeditions in the twentieth century, to Egypt, Iran, and elsewhere, shape nationalist imaginations in the United States and in Middle Eastern countries, while also informing international antiquities policies? Finally, how have institutions like Penn and the Penn Museum responded to changing American popular attitudes and U.S. foreign policy concerns relative to the Middle East, during the Cold War and post-2001 ('post-9/11') eras, and most recently, amid civil strife in Syria and Iraq? This seminar offers students an opportunity to consult Penn's phenomenal collections of Middle East-related materials as they pursue end-of-semester research. These collections include artifacts (museum objects), archival records (such as documents, drawings, and photographs), and rare books and manuscripts from the Penn Museum and Penn Libraries.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: NELC 330

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 531 Women Making History: The Penn Museum and the Centennial 2020

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which declared that the right of citizens to vote 'shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex'. To mark this centennial - to both celebrate it and critically assess its impact on American society - we will investigate the history of women at the Penn Museum as archaeologists, ethnographers, epigraphers, philanthropists, and more. At the same time, we will examine material in the Penn Museum that women collected, donated, or studied. Our goal will be to produce original research that may contribute to future exhibits and publications as well as to broader public forums. Sponsored by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, our seminar will focus heavily on western Asia, southeastern Europe, and North Africa - all zones that scholars have variously associated with the Near East or Middle East, and where the Penn Museum has been active since its foundation in 1887. To situate the Penn Museum and its collections within a global and comparative frame, we will also study select women who made major scholarly contributions to other parts of the world such as the Americas and Oceania. Among the figures we will study are Sarah Yorke Stevenson (Egypt), Katharine Woolley (Mesopotamia/Iraq), Harriet Boyd Hawes (Ottoman Crete and Greece), Florence Shotridge (Alaska), Zelia Nuttall (Mexico and Russia), and Tatiana Proskouriakoff (Guatemala). We will venture into many different kinds of history. In regional terms, our scope will be transnational and international: we will cover the United States and the Middle East in the wider world. In thematic and methodological terms, we will approach our subject through biography, oral history, and microhistory; material history and museum studies; cultural and intellectual history; women's and gender studies; and the history of academic disciplines, especially archaeology and anthropology. Some background in Middle Eastern history; or Anthropology; or Women's History; or Museum Studies recommended.

Taught by: Sharkey

Also Offered As: ANTH 351, ANTH 531, GSWS 331, GSWS 533, NELC 331

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 535 Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives

This class is a reading- and discussion-intensive seminar that addresses several recurring questions with regard to the Middle East and North Africa. How have Islam, Judaism, and Christianity influenced each other in these regions historically? How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims fared as religious minorities? To what extent have communal relations been characterized by harmony and cooperation, or by strife and discord, and how have these relations changed in different contexts over time?

To what extent and under what circumstances have members of these communities converted, intermarried, formed business alliances, and adopted or developed similar customs? How has the emergence of the modern nation-state system affected communal relations as well as the legal or social status of religious minorities in particular countries? How important has religion been as one variable in social identity (along with sect, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and to what extent has religious identity figured into regional conflicts and wars? The focus of the class will be on the modern period (c. 1800-present) although we will read about some relevant trends in the early and middle Islamic periods as well. Students will also pursue individually tailored research to produce final papers. Prior background in Islamic studies useful.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: HIST 479, JWST 335, NELC 335, RELS 311

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 536 Nationalism and Communal Identity in the Middle East

This seminar views the phenomenon of nationalism as it affected the modern Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Together we will consider the diverse components of nationalism, including religion, language, territorial loyalty, and ethnicity, and test the thesis that nations are 'imagined communities' built on 'invented traditions.' At the same time, we will examine other forms of communal identity that transcend national borders or flourish on more localized scales. This class approaches nationalism and communal identity as complex products of cultural, political, and social forces, and places Middle Eastern experiences within a global context.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: NELC 336

Prerequisite: NELC 102

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 544 Reading Ancient Mesopotamia

An introduction to the literature of Ancient Mesopotamia.

Taught by: Tinney

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: NELC 244

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 550 The Bible in Translation

This course introduces undergraduates and graduate students to one specific Book of the Hebrew Bible. 'The Bible in Translation' involves an in-depth reading of a biblical source against the background of contemporary scholarship. Depending on the book under discussion, this may also involve a contextual reading with other biblical books and the textual sources of the ancient Near East. Although no prerequisites are required, NELC 250 is a perfect follow-up course for NELC 150 'Intro to the Bible.'

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: COML 380, JWST 255, NELC 250, RELS 224

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: May be repeated for credit.

NELC 552 Themes Jewish Tradition: Iberian Conversos: Jew-Christian?

Course topics will vary; they have included: Holy Men & Women (Ben-Amos); Rewriting the Bible (Dohrmann); Jewish Political Thought & Action (Fishman) When did the Bible become the Bible? What was the nature of canon and authority in early Israel and Judaism, and how did biblical communities think about their sacred texts? How and what did the Bible mean to ancient readers? The answers to these questions are varied and surprising. This course looks at early biblical and Jewish texts that both write and re-write the tradition's own central texts. We will think widely and creatively about ancient textuality, orality, interpretation, composition, and authority. Drawing on literary theory, the course will examine the ways that biblical and post-biblical literature from the Second Temple to the rabbinic period (with some forays into contemporary literature) manifest complex ideas about power, meaning, and religiousity in early Judaism.

Taught by: Ben-Amos/Dohrmann/Fishman

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: FOLK 252, JWST 100, NELC 252, RELS 129

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 557 Seminar in Rabbinic Literature

Most of the foundational writings of rabbinic Judaism corpora of Midrash, Mishna, and the two Talmuds were in existence by the end of the sixth century CE. Yet, for several centuries thereafter, there is little evidence attesting to the lived nature of rabbinic culture and society. Course will focus on writings by Jews and about Jews, produced between the 7th and 10th centuries, complemented by secondary sources. Texts will include selections from archaeological inscriptions; Midrash; liturgical poetry; Targum; Masora; geonic responsa, writings by Muslims and by Church Fathers. While students must be able to read Hebrew, much class time will be devoted to the improvement of reading and comprehension skills. Undergraduates should seek permission of the instructor. Prerequisite: Proficiency in Hebrew and/or Greek recommended. Undergraduates need permission to enroll. May be repeated for credit.

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: HEBR 557, JWST 553

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: May be repeated for credit

NELC 559 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented

The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 266, JWST 259, NELC 259

Prerequisite: HEBR 054

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 561 Ancient Iranian Empires

Iran - as a landmass and a political entity - was central to the ancient world in a variety of ways. Ancient Iranian Empires were of central importance to - and centrally located in - the ancient world. It was the successor kingdom to the Assyrians and Babylonians; the power against which Greece and Rome defined themselves; and the crucible in which various communities and models of rule developed. This course offers a survey of the history of the ancient Persianate world, focusing in particular on the political and imperial entities that rose to power, the cultural, political, mercantile, and other contacts they shared with their neighbors to the East and West, and the communities and religious groups that arose and flourished within their lands. Ancient Iranian empires rivaled the Greek and Roman Empires to their West, and the central and eastern Asian Empires to their east, and the ongoing history of diplomacy, cultural contact, and war between these regions was formative to each and to the ancient world as a whole. Iran was home to and similarly formative for a variety of religions, including Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam, and a central question Ancient Iranian political powers sought to address was how to negotiate and address the variety of populations under their control. The course will conclude by studying how, rather than a simplistic story of decline, the strategies, policies, institutions, and memory of the Iranian Empires continued to shape early Islam, medieval imagination, and modern political regimes.

Taught by: Gross

Also Offered As: ANCH 261, NELC 261, RELS 261

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 562 Intro to Digital Archaeology

Digital methods allow archaeologists to approach research questions about the human past with increasing accuracies on larger datasets and at multiple scales. This class introduces students to the three main steps of digital archaeology: data management, analysis, and sharing. Data management involves the design, creation, and curation of digital objects that capture the archaeological process and evidence. Students will gain deep familiarity in working with the main types of digital archaeological data: structured data (relational databases), 3d models/spatial data, and raster images. The class will provide abundant hands-on experience with the latest equipment and software for working with many different kinds of data. We will learn about data analysis techniques through a close examination of a variety of case studies in the literature that demonstrate how other archaeologists have applied digital methods to their archaeological questions. Finally, we will discuss the importance of sharing data through open access data publication and we will apply our skills with structured data to existing online archaeological datasets. The goal of this class is to prepare students to make methodological decisions during future research endeavors, both in the field and in the archaeological lab. Prerequisite: Prior archaeological classwork and/or experience preferred.

Taught by: Peter Cobb

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 567 Seminar on Egyptian Archaeology and History

Specific topics will vary from year to year.

Taught by: Wegner

Course not offered every year

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 568 Women in Ancient Egypt

This class will examine the many roles played by women in ancient Egypt. From goddesses and queens, to wives and mothers, women were a visible presence in ancient Egypt. We will study the lives of famous ancient Egyptian women such as Hatshepsut, Nefertiti and Cleopatra. More independent than many of their contemporaries in neighboring areas, Egyptian women enjoyed greater freedoms in matters of economy and law. By examining the evidence left to us in the literature (including literary texts and non-literary texts such as legal documents, administrative texts and letters), the art, and the archaeological record, we will come away with a better understanding of the position of women in this ancient culture.

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: NELC 168

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 572 Geophysical Prospection for Archaeology

Near-surface geophysical prospection methods are now widely used in archaeology as they allow archaeologists to rapidly map broad areas, minimize or avoid destructive excavation, and perceive physical dimensions of archaeological features that are outside of the range of human perception. This course will cover the theory of geophysical sensors commonly used in archaeological investigations and the methods for collecting, processing, and interpreting geophysical data from archaeological contexts. We will review the physical properties of common archaeological and paleoenvironmental targets, the processes that led to their deposition and formation, and how human activity is reflected in anomalies recorded through geophysical survey through lectures, readings, and discussion. Students will gain experience collecting data in the field with various sensors at archaeological sites in the region. A large proportion of the course will be computer-based as students work with data from geophysical sensors, focusing on the fundamentals of data processing, data fusion, and interpretation. Some familiarity with GIS is recommended.

Taught by: Herrmann

Course offered spring; even-numbered years

Also Offered As: AAMW 572, ANTH 572, CLST 572

Activity: Laboratory

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 574 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality, and the Erotic in Persian Literature

Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and queerness in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: COML 275, COML 574, GSWS 275, GSWS 575, NELC 290

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

NELC 575 History and Society of Early Mesopotamia

The fourth millennium BCE saw the rise of cities and the birth of writing in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). This class traces the history of Mesopotamia from about 3000 BCE to about 1600 BCE (the end of the Old Babylonian Period), examining political history and changes in social organization as well as developments in religion, literature and art.

Taught by: Tinney

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: NELC 275

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 585 Archaeobotany Seminar

In this course we will approach the relationship between plants and people from archaeological and anthropological perspectives in order to investigate diverse plant consumption, use, and management strategies. Topics will include: archaeological formation processes, archaeobotanical sampling and recovery, lab sorting and identification, quantification methods, and archaeobotany as a means of preserving cultural heritage. Students will learn both field procedures and laboratory methods of archaeobotany through a series of hands-on activities and lab-based experiments. The final research project will involve an original in-depth analysis and interpretation of archaeobotanical specimens. By the end of the course, students will feel comfortable reading and evaluating archaeobotanical literature and will have a solid understanding of how archaeobotanists interpret human activities of the past.

Taught by: Chantel White

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 539, ANTH 533, CLST 543

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 606 Pastoral Nomadism in the Past and Present

Pastoral nomadism is a 'third way' of human subsistence separate from farming and foraging. It is a sustainable human adaptation to grassland and arid environments practiced through particular technologies and domesticated animals. This course begins by examining the human ecology and social organization that emerge from mobile ways of life, drawing on modern, ethnographic, and archaeological examples of pastoral nomadic groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. Academic readings and ethnographic films will form the basis of discussions about several larger themes, including: the origins of pastoral nomadism and horse riding; the development of dairy-based foods and human adaptations allowing the digestion of lactose; the historical relationship between mobile groups of pastoralists and territorial states; popular perceptions of nomads in various forms of historical and modern media; and the influence of ideas about nomads on modern senses of heritage and nationalism in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Taught by: Hammer

Also Offered As: AAMW 606, ANTH 108, NELC 106

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 618 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion

This seminar explores Iranian culture, art, history and politics through film in the contemporary era. We will examine a variety of works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of post-revolutionary Iran. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the function of cinema in present day Iranian society. Films to be discussed will be by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Bahman Ghobadi, among others.

One-term course offered either term

Also Offered As: CIMS 118, COML 120, GSWS 118, NELC 118

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 620 Digital Exploration of the Past: Archives, Databases, Maps, and Museums

This course exposes students to digital methods for investigating past environments and societies, including digitization of analog records, the construction and querying of databases, and the creation of digital maps.

The ultimate goal of the course will be to carry out a final project that benefits the Penn Museum and the public. In fall 2018, our exploration of digital methods will center around the archaeological site of Ur (Tell el-Muqayyar), located in southern Iraq. Ur was one of the earliest cities in the world, and, thanks to campaigns partly funded by Penn in the 1920s and 1930s, is one of the best-excavated sites in southern Mesopotamia.

Here at Penn, we have unparalleled access to archival documentation and artifacts from the site. We will draw upon this access to contribute to an on-going digital humanities project in the Penn Museum (the public 'Ur Online' database). In the process, students will re-assess data that has the potential to change anthropological ideas about issues such as the environmental setting of the earliest cities and archaeological ideas about demographic and urban structure within the city of Ur itself. There are no prerequisites, but students must bring an interest in Mesopotamian archaeology and/or the origins of urbanism and be motivated to carry out individual and group research guided by the instructor & classmates.

Taught by: Hammer

Also Offered As: AAMW 619, NELC 320

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 622 Art of Ancient Iran

This course offers a survey of ancient Iranian art and culture from the painted pottery cultures of the Neolithic era to the monuments of the Persian Empire. Particular emphasis is placed on the Early Bronze Age.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 622, ARTH 222, ARTH 622, NELC 222

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 624 Art of Mesopotamia

The class presents a survey of the art and archaeology of Mesopotamia beginning with the appearance of the first cities and ending with the fall of the Assyrian Empire in the seventh century BCE. It presents the major artistic monuments of Mesopotamian culture, embedding them in their historical context. Focus is placed in particular on the interactions with surrounding cultures of Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf and Anatolia in order to decenter the discourse from a strictly Mesopotamian perspective. The format is lecture; assignments involve reading response papers; there are in class midterm and final exams.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 624, ARTH 224, ARTH 624, NELC 224

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 632 North Africa: History, Culture, Society

This interdisciplinary seminar aims to introduce students to the countries of North Africa, with a focus on the Maghreb and Libya (1830-present).

It does so while examining the region's close economic and cultural connections to sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

Readings will include histories, political analyses, anthropological studies, and novels, and will cover a wide range of topics such as colonial and postcolonial experiences, developments in Islamic thought and practice, and labor migration. This class is intended for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Taught by: Sharkey

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AFRC 332, AFRC 632, HIST 370, NELC 332

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 633 Seminar in Selected Topics in Arabic Literature

This is the graduate seminar course in which a variety of aspects of Arabic literature studies are covered at the advanced graduate level.

Students in this course are expected to be able to read large amounts of literature in Arabic on a weekly basis and to be able to discuss them critically during the class itself. Topics are chosen to reflect student interest. Recent topics have included: 1001 NIGHTS; the short story; the novel; MAQAMAT; classical ADAB prose; the drama; the novella; modern Arabic poetry.

Taught by: Allen

Course usually offered in spring term

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 638 Approaches to Islamic Law

This course aims to introduce students to the study of Islamic law, the all-embracing sacred law of Islam. In this course we will attempt to consider many different facets of the historical, doctrinal, institutional and social complexity of Islamic law. In addition, the various approaches that have been taken to the study of these aspects of Islamic law will be analyzed. The focus will be mostly, though not exclusively, on classical Islamic law. Specific topics covered include the beginnings of legal thought in Islam, various areas of Islamic positive law (substantive law), public and private legal institutions, Islamic legal theory, and issues in the contemporary development and application of Islamic law. Prerequisite: Some background knowledge about Islam is an asset.

Some background knowledge about Islam is an asset.

Taught by: Lowry

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: LAW 737, RELS 648

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 641 Iraq: Ancient Cities and Empires

This course consists of an analytical survey of civilization in the ancient Mesopotamia from prehistoric periods to the middle centuries of the first millennium B.C. A strong focus is placed on Mesopotamia (Iraq, eastern Syria) proper, but it occasionally covers its adjacent regions, including Anatolia (Turkey), north-central Syria, and the Levantine coast. As we chronologically examine the origin and development of civilization in the region, various social, political, economic, and ideological topics will be explored, including subsistence, cosmology, writing, trade, technology, war, private life, burial custom, and empire. Based on both archaeological and historical evidence, these topics will be examined from archaeological, anthropological, historical and art historical perspectives. Students will be exposed to a variety of theoretical approaches and types of relevant evidence, including settlement survey data, excavated architectural remains and artifacts, and written documents. The course aims to provide students with a strong foundation for further study in Near Eastern civilization.

Taught by: Zettler

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: ANTH 236, ANTH 636, NELC 241, URBS 236

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 642 Egypt in Four Revolutions

This seminar offers an in-depth look at the political and social history of revolution and protest in modern Egypt. We will examine four such seminal events, through different lenses: The Urabi Revolution (1879-1882), The 1919 Revolution, The 1952 Revolution, and The 2011 Revolution. We will discuss their political, social, and economic causes and effects; popular participation and the use of public space; the roles of the army, women, youth, and social organizations in those events; their ideological and international aspects; their colonial and post-colonial contexts; and more. We will use cutting edge research from several disciplines, as well as literature, film, music, photography, and social media as sources. Students will leave the class with a firm grasp of the social and political history of modern Egypt, as well as of current scholarly discussions about the nature of revolution and protest.

Taught by: Tam

Also Offered As: NELC 342

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 645 Archaeological Fieldwork in Southern Iraq

After several decades of closure to foreign researchers, the heartland of the world's earliest cities (southern Iraq) has reopened for archaeological expeditions. This course is a seminar for graduate students who will conduct fieldwork in Spring 2019 at two major Mesopotamian cities, Ur (Tell al-Muqayyar) and Lagash (Tell al-Hiba), as part of Penn-led teams. Leading up to fieldwork, we will conduct a critical review of past investigations at these and other contemporary Mesopotamian sites of the fifth-second millennium BC. We will discuss how recent work in northern Mesopotamia (Syria, SE Turkey, Kurdistan), Anatolia, and South Caucasia provides new archaeological approaches to be applied, new questions to be answered, and new models to be tested in southern Iraq. In the field, students will work alongside the instructor and other archaeological project staff to learn and hone excavation and survey techniques. During and following fieldwork, each student will conduct an independent project on material excavated and surveyed in the field at Ur and/or Lagash. This project should align with the student's interests and will further the research program of the archaeological teams at Ur and Lagash.

Taught by: Hammer

Course offered spring; odd-numbered years

Also Offered As: AAMW 647

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 646 GIS for the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences

This course introduces students to theory and methodology of the geospatial humanities and social sciences, understood broadly as the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and spatial analysis techniques to the study of social and cultural patterns in the past and present. By engaging with spatial theory, spatial analysis case studies, and technical methodologies, students will develop an understanding of the questions driving, and tools available for, humanistic and social science research projects that explore change over space and time. We will use ESRI's ArcGIS software to visualize, analyze, and integrate historical, anthropological, and environmental data. Techniques will be introduced through the discussion of case studies and through demonstration of software skills. During supervised laboratory sessions, the various techniques and analyses covered will be applied to sample data and also to data from a region/topic chosen by the student.

Taught by: Hammer

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: AAMW 646, ANTH 346, NELC 346

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 659 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature

This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern 'descendents,' autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

Taught by: Gold

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: COML 359, JWST 359, JWST 659, NELC 359

Prerequisite: HEBR 059

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 664 The World of Cleopatra

The figure of Cleopatra is familiar from modern stories, legends, and film. Was this famous woman a brazen seductress or a brilliant political mind? How many of these presentations are historically accurate? This class will examine the Ptolemaic period in Egypt (305-30 BCE), the time period during which Cleopatra lived, in an attempt to separate myth from reality. The Ptolemaic period is filled with political and personal intrigue. It was also a time of dynamic multiculturalism. Arguably one of the most violent and fascinating eras in ancient Egyptian history, the Ptolemaic period is largely unknown and often misunderstood. This course will examine the history, art, religion and literature of Egypt's Ptolemaic period which culminated in the reign of Cleopatra VII.

Taught by: Houser Wegner

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: NELC 064

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 666 History of Ancient Egypt

Review and discussion of the principal aspects of ancient Egyptian history, 3000-500 BC.

Taught by: Wegner

Course usually offered in fall term

Also Offered As: NELC 266

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 668 Art and Architecture in Ancient Egypt

This course will be an introduction to the art, architecture and minor arts that were produced during the three thousand years of ancient Egyptian history. This material will be presented in its cultural and historical contexts through illustrated lectures and will include visits to the collection of the University Museum.

Taught by: Silverman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 618, ANCH 068, ARTH 218, ARTH 618, NELC 068

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 672 Key Concepts in Modern Persian Poetry

This graduate seminar which is tailored for graduate students with higher intermediate and advanced command of Persian language focuses on a variety of recurrent concepts in Modern Persian poetry. The seminar will run as a workshop and students are expected to embark on a project in which they explore large amounts of literary materials in Persian. Students must feel confident to read and discuss large amounts of literature in Persian on a weekly basis. Concepts such as exile, home, belonging, body, borders, nationalism and selfhood will be explored.

Taught by: Shams

Course usually offered in spring term

Prerequisites: PERS 015, PERS 016

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 681 Topics In Anthropology and the Modern World

This course relates anthropological models and methods to current problems in the Modern World. The overall objective is to show how the research findings and analytical concepts of anthropology may be used to illuminate and explain events as they have unfolded in the recent news and in the course of the semester. Each edition of the course will focus on a particular country or region that has been in the news.

Taught by: Spooner

Course usually offered in spring term

Also Offered As: ANTH 100, ANTH 654, NELC 281, SAST 161

Activity: Lecture

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 731 Topics in Islamic Archaeology

Topic varies. Fall 2019's seminar will address the problems of studying architecture in the Islamic world. Considered will be issues of architectural design, regional and trans-regional constructional traditions, structural know-how and innovation, patronage and use. The examples discussed will be mainly religious and social service complexes. Attention will be paid to the manner of transmission of architectural design knowledge and constructional skill.

Taught by: Holod

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 738, ARTH 738

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 740 Topics in the Art of the Ancient Near East

Topic varies. Fall 2019: During the short period of the Neo Sumerian Empire at the end of the third millennium BCE, Mesopotamian concepts of kingship were crystallized through images, buildings, and textual creations. This seminar will examine this central institution from many points of view that invite cross historical and cross-cultural consideration.

Taught by: Pittman

Course not offered every year

Also Offered As: AAMW 723, ARTH 723

Activity: Seminar

1.0 Course Unit

NELC 999 Independent Study

Directed research or candidacy exam and proposal preparation.

One-term course offered either term

Activity: Independent Study

1.0 Course Unit