Central Asia, which has in the past tended to be regarded as a frontier region of the worlds of the Mediterranean, Near East, India and the Eurasian steppe, is increasingly coming to be studied as a cultural and political entity in its own right. In the period from the latter half of the first millennium BC to the early centuries of the common era it was an especially dynamic zone of cultural interaction. Politically, the territories of modern Afghanistan and the former-Soviet Central Asian Republics (and in particular Bactria, the basin of the upper river Oxus), became part of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, were then conquered by Alexander the Great, and subsequently became the centre of two powerful local states: under dynasties of Greek-named kings, descended from Alexander’s military settlers, and then the Kushan Empire, founded by the descendants of later immigrants from the north. There is a rich archaeological and historical record available from this period, much of which has only relatively recently become accessible to scholars.

*This schedule is provisional! Further details will be given in class.*

All readings will be posted on the course Wiki as PDFs, and anything in a language other than English will be accompanied by a translation.

**September**

**Topic 1: Historical Overview and the Sources.**

*Wednesday 7th*

First class: no reading

*Friday 9th*

For an overview of the historical periods covered in this course, you should aim to read these chapters within the first week or so:


*Monday 12th*
Both of these articles consist mostly of pictures...


**Topic 2: Alexander the Great**

*Wednesday 14th*
*Friday 16th*
Holt (1999), *Alexander the Great and Bactria: Chapter 3 and Chapter 4*.

*Monday 19th*
Optional readings (background for film excerpts to be shown in class):


Kipling, Rudyard. (1888) *The Man Who Would Be King*.

**Topic 3: War in Afghanistan**

*Wednesday 21st*

*Friday 23rd*

*Monday 26th*

**Topic 4: Numismatics**

*Wednesday 28th*
*Friday 30th*

**October**

*Monday 3rd*
No reading: in-class work with coin catalogues.
**Topic 5: The Third Century BC**

*Wednesday 5th*

*Friday 7th*
Historical sources: Polybios 11.34, Justin 41.4 (collected in Appendix to Holt 1999 *Thundering Zeus*, above).

*Monday 10th*
Fall Weekend Holiday. No classes.

*Wednesday 12th*
Inscriptions 1: The Greek Asokan Edicts, texts collected and translated in the appendix to Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* – see below.

**Topic 6: Ai Khanoum**

*Friday 14th*

*Monday 17th*

*Wednesday 19th*
No set reading (recommended to read ahead for future classes).

**Topic 7: Survey Archaeology in Central Asia**

*Friday 21st*

*Monday 24th*
Wednesday 26th
No set reading.

**Topic 8: Administrative Continuity in Achaemenid, Hellenistic and Kushan Bactria**

Friday 28th

Monday 31st

November

**Wednesday 2nd**

**Topic 9: Kanishka the Great and the Kushans**

Friday 4th

Monday 7th
Wednesday 9th
Sims-Williams, N. and J. Cribb (1996) "A New Bactrian Inscription of Kanishka the Great," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 4, 75-142. [Skip philological commentary (bulk of article) and confine reading to inscription translation and historical remarks.]

**Topic 10: Greeks, Indians, Hellenised Indians and Indo-Greeks**

Friday 11th
Monday 14th

Wednesday 16th

**Topic 11: Gandhara and Graeco-Buddhist Art**

This topic will be taught mostly using catalogue images, and museum visits if possible (to be confirmed).

*Friday 18th*

*Monday 21st*

*Wednesday 23rd*
Thanksgiving recess. No classes.

*Friday 25th*
Thanksgiving recess. No classes.

**Topic 12: Archaeology, War, Politics and Cultural Heritage, c. 1922-2011**

*Monday 28th*

*Wednesday 30th*

*December*

*Friday 2nd*
The following are museum/exhibition catalogues (relevant pieces/captions will be gone through in class, but participants may peruse in advance if they wish):


Wednesday 7th
Friday 9th
Monday 12th
General discussion, review, and presentations.