MWF 12:00-12:50 (The so-called E-hour) Salomon Center Room 203
Instructor: Ömür Harmansah (Visiting Assistant Professor)
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12 am. (Or by appointment)
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Course website where the up-to-date syllabus can be downloaded:
http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/Harmansah/teach.html

Course Description
This course offers an analytical survey of the social and cultural history of the Near East, tracing the variety of cultural developments in the region from prehistory to the end of the Iron age (ca. 300 BC). Both archaeological evidence and textual sources are examined as relevant. The material culture and social practices of Mesopotamian societies constitute the main focus of the course. Archaeological landscapes, urban and rural sites, excavated architectural remains and artifacts are critically investigated based on archaeological, anthropological and art-historical work carried out in the region. Relevant ancient texts (mostly in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Luwian in translation) are studied as part of the material culture. Geographically the course will cover Mesopotamia proper, Syria, Anatolia and the Levantine coast (mostly staying within the boundaries of modern-day Iraq, Syria, and Turkey).

In order to study the material evidence from antiquity critically, scholars frequently involve interpretive theories in their work. Throughout the semester, along with the detailed reading of various bodies of archaeological evidence, we will investigate a variety of theoretical approaches and concepts used within the field of Near Eastern archaeology. The main goal of the course is to develop a critically self-conscious understanding of ancient societies and their material culture, with the help of particular interpretative theories from an interdisciplinary perspective. Every week, classroom discussions will incorporate some theoretical approach in exploring different bodies of material evidence.

Practicalities
Meeting schedule, reserves, WebCT etc.

- Mondays and Wednesday sessions will be reserved primarily for lectures, while the Friday meetings will be used for discussion of weekly selected topics (there might be exceptions to such overarching plan - such changes will be announced on the wiki and by e-mail).
- The students are required to do the weekly readings listed below in the weekly schedule. The readings will be assigned both from the four survey books ordered at Brown Bookstore as
well as various articles and chapters, placed on reserve at the Rock.

- The readings on reserve are frequently digital and can be downloaded through OCRA Brown Library’s Online Course Reserves Access webpage (http://dl.lib.brown.edu/reserves/). The course password is anzu.

- A wiki is created for this course and we will use this site interactively for out-of-class discussions, posting of announcements, assignments, and the like. Every student registered or auditing this course will have access to editing this page. Yes, you can freely edit the site, post your own work, make comments to your colleagues' and professor's postings. Our extensive use of this site will be mostly running forums on the Friday discussions. You will be asked to post all your written assignments on the wiki (but you also have the option of not doing so, and using the traditional format of submitting hard copies to Ömür). Please familiarize yourself with the wiki, and make sure to check the site regularly, at least before each class meeting. Here is the wiki-site: http://metamedia.stanford.edu/projects/mesopotamianarchaeology/45

- A WebCT site has also been created for this course and may be used occasionally during the semester for the posting of images and the like. You can access WebCT by logging in at: https://mycourses.brown.edu/webct/logonDisplay.dowebct

- You will be writing a lot of papers in this course, and Brown offers academic writing support for all members of the Brown Community, in case you would like to discuss your drafts with colleagues: http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center/

Books available at Brown Bookstore You are strongly recommended (but not required) to buy the following books now available at the bookstore, especially if you are planning to pursue archaeology, ancient history, Near Eastern studies, ancient art in the future as a major/minor. Remember that there are also copies of these books on reserve at the Rock.


Course Requirements Each student is expected to do the weekly readings thoroughly, participate in conference discussions and take extensive notes during class lectures and discussions. It is strongly recommended that you keep a good, intimate record of all discussions in writing (and if you wish, share it with others on the wiki). It is a hard task to form sustainable memories. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to make brief presentations of selected articles or topics in class, pose relevant discussion questions to the class and write response papers afterwards based on the ensuing discussions. There will be two take-home exams (a midterm and a final), and a final research project (explained in detail below). Don’t expect any in-class exams or quizzes.
Grading will be based on class participation (25%), presentations and response papers (10%), two 3-4 page take-home exams (midterm 15% + final 15%) and the final paper project (35%). Due dates are listed in the syllabus.

**Research Project**

Students will choose a research topic in collaboration with the instructor and turn it into a project. The project should involve an analytical and critical discussion of a theoretical approach and its application to an archaeological case study. The main aim in the research project is the bridge the apparent gap between theoretical discussions in archaeology and the material evidence. The submissions will include a 1 page proposal, a 3-4 page draft and a 8-10 page final paper.

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**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1: Sept. 6-8**

**Introduction**

**Wed:** Introduction: scope of the course, methods, overview.

**Fri:** Discussion: What/where is Mesopotamia, Near East, Middle East?

Problems in (and the politics of) defining a region.

**Readings:**

**Week 2: Sept. 11-15**

**Archaeological landscapes of the Near East**

**Mon:** Landscapes of the Ancient Near East: towards a cultural geography.

**Readings:**

**Wed:** Climate, environment and long-term history in the Near East.

**Readings:**

**Fri:** Discussion: Archaeology as a modern discipline and Mesopotamian archaeology.

**Readings:**

**Week 3: Sept. 18-22**

**Prehistory: the Neolithic in the Near East**

**Mon:** From hunter-gatherers to agriculturalists: early settled communities- Göbekli Tepe, Nevali Cori, Ain Ghazal. Agricultural revolution.

**Readings:**

Wed: Çatalhöyük: a major Neolithic settlement in central Anatolia.

Readings:

Fri: Discussion: New approaches to archaeological fieldwork and the Hodder’s reflexive method.

Readings:


Week 4: Sept. 25-29 Uruk period: urbanization and social complexity


Readings:

Wed: Ceremonial centers, urbanization and state formation in Southern Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium: the case of Uruk. Ther invention of cuneiform writing.

Readings:

Fri: Discussion: Mesopotamian settlement: cities as cult centers, urbanism, urbanization.

Uruk and the cult of Inanna.

Readings:


Week 5: Oct. 2-6 Early Dynastic period in the Diyala River basin and at Nippur

Mon: Early Dynastic period (Early Bronze Age) in the Diyala River Basin. The sites of Khafajah and Tell Asmar.

Readings:
**Wed:** Nippur: a major supra-regional ceremonial center in Mesopotamian history.
Introduction to early Mesopotamian religion.

**Readings:**

**Fri:**  
**Discussion:** Royal Tombs of Ur: burial practices and material culture.
Ancient Text: Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta

**Readings:**

**Week 6: Oct. 9-13.** Material practices and kingship in the Third Millennium BC

**Mon:**  
[Research project proposals due]

**Readings:**

**Wed:**  
[Midterm takehome exam questions handed out]

**Readings:**

**Fri:**  

**Optional Readings:**

**Week 7: Oct. 16-20** Akkad and Sumer: narratives of royal ideology.

**Mon:**  

**Readings:** Van de Mieroop 2004: “Political centralization in the late Third Millennium,” 59-79.

**Wed:** Third Dynasty at Ur: the Nanna temple complex.
Readings:

Fri: Discussion: Commemorative monuments and ideologies of kingship in Early Mesopotamia.
Readings:

Week 8: Oct. 23-27 Middle Bronze Age in Upper Mesopotamia: new cities, new practices
Mon: Middle Bronze Age in Syria: new architectural practices. Sites of Ebla and Aleppo.
Readings:
Wed: Babylonian and Assyrian kingdoms: Ashur and Mari: nomads and the city.
Readings:
Fri: Discussion: Terracotta figurines of the Old Babylonian period-issues of gender, sexuality, materiality and the body.
Readings:
Out-of-class viewing and discussion at the Joukowsky Institute: Grass: a nation’s battle for life. (directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack) A 1925 documentary that follows the journey of the Bakhtiari, a nomadic tribe in Iran, as they herd their livestock up snow-covered mountain passes to get to the grazing lands on the other side of the mountains. Date and place TBA

Week 9: Oct. 30- Nov. 3 Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Late Bronze Age: cultic performances and interregional trade.
Mon: Hittite kingdom in Anatolia: Hattusha and the rock-cut sanctuary at Yazilikaya.
Kingship, ritual and ceremonial space.
Readings:


Wed: Hittites and the Late Bronze Age collapse: an archaeological/historical problem.

Readings:

Fri: Discussion: Eastern Mediterranean, cross-cultural exchange and cultural hybridity.

Readings:


Week 10: Nov. 6-10 The Early Iron Age in Northern Mesopotamia: production of space

Readings:

Readings:

Fri: Discussion: Production of space: The practice of founding new cities: royal ideology, urban planning and architectural practices.
Text: Banquet Stele from Kalhu
Readings:

Week 11: Nov. 13-17 The Assyrian Empire: imperial ideology and architectural practices

Mon: Geography and empire: representation: Assyrian rock reliefs, Balawat gates.
Readings:
**Wed:** Sargon’s Khorsabad and Sennacherib’s Nineveh: palace programs.

**Readings:**

**Fri:** Discussion: Symbolism and materials. Stone building technologies in the Iron age Near East. Questions of technology, architectonic aesthetics and “facture”.

**Readings:**


**Week 12: Nov. 20**

**Mon:** Urartian kingdom in Eastern Anatolia: political landscapes.

**Readings:**

**Wed-Fri:** Thanksgiving recess-no class.

**Week 13: Nov. 27-Dec. 1**

**Mon:** The Neo-Babylonian kingdom: urban space and memory

Babylon: archaeology of the city.

**Readings:**

**Wed:** Paradeisos: Royal gardens in the Ancient Near East.

**Readings:**

**Fri:** [Final paper drafts due]

**Discussion:** Memory and the concept of the past in ancient Mesopotamia

**Readings:**
Week 14: Dec. 4-6

Persian empire/Archaeology and the politics of cultural heritage

Mon: The Persian Empire.

Readings:

Wed: Final discussion: Mesopotamian archaeology and the politics of cultural heritage.

Readings:

Dec 11, Monday, 5 pm: Final papers due. Take-home final questions handed out.
Dec 18 Monday, 5 pm: Take-home finals due.