



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

History and Culture of the Ancient Near East

Course Code	L_ABAOHW202
Credits	6
Period	P1
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	dr. S. Thavapalan
Examiner	dr. S. Thavapalan
Teaching Staff	dr. S. Thavapalan
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

Course Objective

This course aims to:

- introduce students to the material and non-material heritage of the ancient Near East using methodologies developed in archaeology and Assyriology
- survey the major periods of Mesopotamian history by examining artifacts that have survived in the material record, key episodes and interpretive models proposed by modern scholars
- teach students how to make well-grounded arguments based on the interpretation of ancient texts and artifacts
- encourage students to reflect critically on how historians reconstruct the ancient past by using diverse types of evidence

Course Content

Ancient Mesopotamia was the birthplace of some of the most important developments in human history. The first cities and empires, the earliest writings, the origins of mathematics, chemistry and astronomy: many of the ideas and worldviews that have shaped western civilization have their roots in the ancient Near East, and more particularly, in Mesopotamia. This course explores the cultures of present-day Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran from the Neolithic (ca. 10,000 BCE) to the end of the Achaemenid period (ca. 330 BCE). Students will learn about the rich history of this region through its literature, its art and its architecture. Topics to be covered include: early complex societies, state formation and political organization, religion, ethnicity, trade, diplomacy and warfare, family life, the position of women in society and crafts.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Lectures, given twice a week. If the course is given online, some classes may be provided as pre-recorded lectures. Attendance is mandatory.

Method of Assessment

Written exam.

Students following the Ancient Near East track and who have already taken Elementary Akkadian 1 and 2, will complete a selection of short translation exercises (30% of grade) in addition to the final exam (70% of grade).

The resit regulations regarding the assignments are specified in the study manual.

Literature

Course textbook: van de Mieroop, Marc. 2016. A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BC (3rd ed.). Chichester UK; Malden MA.

Additional literature and study material will be provided via Canvas.

Additional Information Target Audience

Target audience:

- BA2 students of Ancient Studies with specialisation Ancient History;
- BA2 students of Ancient Studies with specialisation Ancient Near Eastern Studies;
- Other interested students can take the course as an elective.