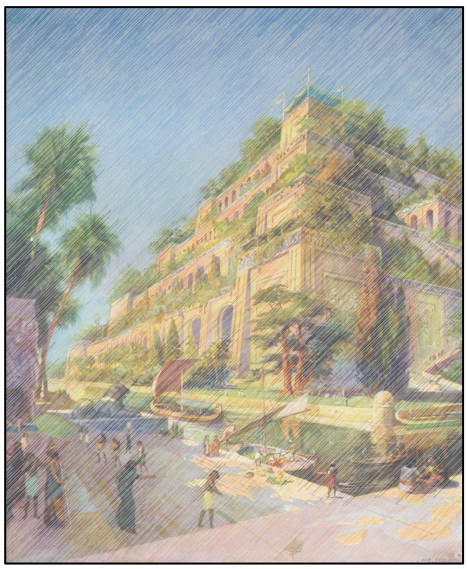
COURSE SYLLABUS – SOCIETIES OF THE WORLD

ANCIENT LIVES



Catalog Number: ANE 103, Class# 15630
Meeting times: Tu., Th. 11.30-1 pm (sections TBD)
Classroom: Science Center E
Instructor: Gojko Barjamovic
Performance Instructor: Brenna Nicely
Head TF: Ari Schriber
Course TFs: Lidia Gocheva, Laura Taronas
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Cultural beliefs about the past—the origin of the universe and of mankind—are more than just interpretations of what came before. These beliefs actively shape society's present and future, as ultimate origin is directly tied in the mind to present purpose. The past not only gives form to, but also serves to justify, the present reality.

(Student assignment, Ancient Lives class of 2014)

1. Description

What are the essential elements of human society? Have our fundamental conditions developed, and how? Can we use themes from ancient history to think about contemporary society and culture? These questions are the focus of this 'Societies of the World' (SW) course for the Harvard College Program in General Education. 'Ancient Lives' explores the earliest human civilizations in the region of Mesopotamia and the Levant c. 3500-300 BCE – the territory now covered by the nations of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

Few elements in the way we live and organize ourselves today are to be taken for granted. There are – and have always been – a wealth of ways in which humans live. But biologically we are the same as our ancestors of 5500 years ago, at the dawn of history. Any likeness or difference between 'us and them' is therefore likely to be a product of history and culture.

'Ancient Lives' builds upon this realization to inspire a critical way of thinking about society in the broadest possible scope. Areas explored during the course are selected for their relevance across the range of contemporary life – they include freedom, music, public health, food, jurisprudence, trade, the visual arts, science, gender and sexuality, religion and political power. You will learn about how societies and individuals have dealt with change on multiple levels, from large-scale societal revolutions to personal transformation.

Having taken this course, you will have gained a fundamental understanding and appreciation of human life in the broadest scope, as well as of your own life as a part of history. You will be able to critically assess contemporary discourses on the study of 'the other' in past and present, engage with core concepts of human society, such as justice, beauty, value and belief, be familiar with examples of classical social theory and thinkers through concrete cases in which their work has been applied to or shaped by the study of the past, and acquire skills in presenting scholarly work to a general audience.

2. Why is 'Ancient Lives' in the Gen Ed program?

Ancient Lives trains you how to identify and think about the cultural and social foundations that tie us to and constrain us in time. Through the study of the ancient past you will be confronted with changing personal and societal views on religion, race, colonialism, violence, art, happiness and wealth. You will learn how fundamental elements of contemporary life can at once be universal/primordial and culture-specific. You will deepen your understanding and appreciation of human life, and understand in what ways your existence is part of deep history. You are taught to draw broad connections between yourself, cultural phenomena, the present and the past. You will retain a deeper sense of what it means to be human by identifying the baselines of existence and recognizing what is secondary and cultural. You will be prepared to think about and relate to human culture and society on every scale and at any time.

3. Course Structure

'Ancient Lives' is structured around a set of themes and questions rather than a particular literature, chronological period, or political development. The goal is not to teach the history of the ancient Near East, but to teach you how think about and deal with key aspects of human culture and historical development over a long span of time.

Students engage with course material through lectures, section, a logbook, and a main course assignment that combines traditional classroom meetings with hands-on and kinesthetic learning. The first week takes you from the known present to the unknown past by way of art, belief-systems and technologies familiar to us all. The last week ends with a class on how the deep past is appropriated by current political and religious actors to pursue their goals. In between are twelve weeks, each dedicated to a specific subject where ancient life is studied in detail and meaningfully linked to current existence.

Class meets twice a week for a 90-minute lecture, and there is a weekly 60-minute section led by a Teaching Fellow. Lectures and section are based on multimedia presentations and include interactive and sensory engagement with course topics through archaeological artifacts, ancient texts in translation, recordings of reconstructed language and music, sampling of ancient food, screened films, 3D-reconstructions, and museum visits.

Each week has a set of readings (typically articles or book chapters and a few ancient texts in translation) that we expect you to prepare before the Tuesday meeting. This first lecture usually presents the weekly subject, its theoretical framework, and its main content. The second lecture focuses on application and case studies. Section teaches you how to apply theories and readings presented during the week, and provides you with the tools needed to complete your course assignments.

You keep an online logbook for the duration of the course. Every Tuesday before class you submit a short entry (200-300 words) that reflects on the contents of the weekly readings and relates them to the three core questions of the course: What are the essential elements of human society? Have our fundamental conditions developed, and how? Can we use themes from ancient history to think about contemporary society and culture? The log is a place for you to iteratively collect your thoughts and a chance to step back and connect the elements that you are learning. For us it is an opportunity to see how you are keeping up with the readings and a way to keep an eye on your learning. Logbook entries are not graded, but your TF will intervene if your log suggests that you are not successfully engaging with course lectures and readings. Poignant comparisons with our own culture and times come up piecemeal in lectures and section; the log allows you to collect and expand upon these for easy reference for the final exam, which will offer a series of broad comparative questions for you to choose between. The logbook will help you during 'cold calls' at the end of the Thursday lecture when students are randomly selected (using an actual online randomizer) to offer reflections on the theme of the week. It will also help you prepare for the final exam, which will include the possibility to address one or more of the questions discussed during 'cold calls'.

The main term assignment is focused on developing your ability to connect with the past and communicate the fundamentals of our own situation. You are asked to consume, share and produce knowledge in a free and hands-on fashion. For the main course assignment you can sign up for: (a) a museum casting project, (b) a lab experiment, (c) creating a platform to broadcast, report and document course content, or (d) a stage production. All four assignments require you to explore and communicate your work to a broad audience.

The final exam is a take-home 48-hour and maximum 2000-word essay that tests your command of the course material broadly and your ability to synthesize it.

4. Coursework and Assignments

Attendance, participation and reflection: 20% of your grade is dependent upon active engagement in class, section and reflection. All three are key loci of student deliberation, discussion, and critical engagement with the course material. Attendance, punctuality and careful preparation are the three basic requirements for effective learning. Each person's frequency and quality of contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the participation score. You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties: (a) offering a different and unique, but relevant, perspective; (b) contributing to moving the discussion and analysis forward; (c) building on other comments; (d) exceeding the 'I feel' argument to include evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs and thus demonstrate reflective thinking. Reflections are an opportunity for you to see how your own learning is progressing through various parts of the course – lectures, sections, logbook, and main term assignment. There will be avenues throughout the course for you to share reflections with the class. Each student also produces either a final 3-5 minute individual video reflection of the main term assignment or a 15-25 minute group video reflection (groups not to exceed six persons). We encourage you to work with the Bok Center TF to record the final reflections at the Bok Center.

Logbook: The weekly reflections are not individually graded. If your TF is satisfied that you are successfully engaging with course questions, lectures and readings then the 20% of your grade that comes from your logbook will automatically be a full grade (A). You will of course be informed in advance by your TF if your performance on the logbook is slipping in time to rectify the situation.

Main Assignment: You choose one of the four main course assignments offered as part of Ancient Lives by the end of Week 1. Students on assignments A, B and C (see below) present a draft outline of their project by Week 4 and receive feedback from their TFs by Week 6. Students on assignments A and B submit their final work by Week 11. Students on assignment C compile the work of groups A and B and present it before Thanksgiving of Week 12; they add material from assignment D during Week 13. Group D follow the schedule laid out below. All students present their work to each other during the final class of Week 13. Assignments A-B-C are graded on content (50%), format (25%), and clarity (25%). Assignment D is graded based equally on attendance/participation and research/course connections for a full grade (A). The main assignment counts 30% towards the total grade.

Assignment A (museum **casting**): Twelve students work with Curator Adam Aja of the Harvard Semitic Museum in casting copies of ancient Assyrian art for public display. Students sign up for weekly meetings in the museum totaling 20 hours during the semester. Individually or collaboratively, students on the casting assignment choose one of the objects that the team works on to provide a write-up of its architectural, artistic and historical context. You may discuss what the object shows, what message it conveys and to whom, how it relates to the location it was placed in originally, or use the object as departure for a thematic discussion e.g. about swimming, what breeds of horses existed, why are fear and cruelty such prominent features of the palace reliefs, etc. The assignment should quote primary sources and may incorporate maps, images and a timeline as appropriate to the subject. Each student devotes 5 hours during the semester to prepare the write-up (ca. 800 words per student).

Assignment B (lab **experiment**): Nine students work with Dr. Pia Sörensen of SEAS to design a group lab project that addresses a problem related to techniques of fermentation in Ancient Mesopotamia through the applied sciences. This assignment presents an opportunity to explore and assess how two different disciplines within the liberal arts curriculum can be combined to enhance learning in both. Using ancient Babylonian beer recipes, lab work is set up to help understand the brewing processes that the texts describe and assess the physical qualities of the final product. Lab work must be joined with historical, cultural and art historical research on ancient beer, and the two datasets combined into a final report. An expected 25 hours should be reserved during the semester for project design, library research, work in the laboratory, and final group write-up.

Assignment C (presentation **platform**): Three to seven students produce and update the course homepage to serve as a platform for all course students to present their work (assignments A to D). The purpose of the project is to design the page in such a way that an outside audience can retrieve information easily and in a both an intuitive and appealing fashion. The platform must accommodate written text, as well as sound and (moving and still) images. The assignment includes reporting on or documenting activities of the class, the main term assignments, and the evening events. Students will interview their fellow colleagues and post reports, including pictures and video. A final write-up of ca. 800 words is to be posted on the website about the didactic and aesthetic choices made by the group as part of their project design, addressing how you went about reporting what was happening in the class, whom you chose to interview, and what editorial decisions you made throughout the process. The total time devoted to design, coding (if you choose to create your own website), and uploading of course materials is expected to take 25 hours during the semester.

Assignment D (stage **production**): The group stages a production based on the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh under the guidance of Education and Community Programs Manager and A.R.T. Dramaturg, Brenna Nicely. Early in Week 3 students are assigned to a group of 8-10 students, based on a brief survey. Each group is responsible for creating a 10-15 minute performance interpretation of a portion of the epic. Within each group, each student will be responsible for one or more elements of the production – including but not limited to: script writing, acting, directing, production management, music and sound, costume design, set design, multimedia design, marketing and promotions, etc. The primary meeting place for this assignment will be Arts @ 29 Garden. At this location, all students are required to attend an assignment info session and workshop during the end of Week 3, a dress rehearsal on Monday 11/28 or 11/29, and the final performances on Wednesday 11/30 and Thursday 12/1. Each group will spend an average of two hours per week working with their groups, including three meetings with the instructor throughout the semester. Each group drafts a project proposal for the final performance, and each student uploads four short reflection videos throughout the semester plus one final reflection video at the end of the semester. Students receive written or video feedback from the instructor on all assignments. An expected total of 25 hours will be spent on the assignment.

The mandatory Evening Event for all students of Ancient Lives on 9/28 provides an opportunity to meet and talk to the world's leading authority on Gilgamesh, prof. Andrew George of SOAS, London. Following an afternoon conversation, students attend his evening lecture and a Mesopotamian-themed reception in the Semitic Museum. Attending the two performances is part of class, mandatory, and recorded for all students of Ancient Lives.

5. Course Grading

Course grading is based on attendance and participation, the short weekly write-ups in the logbook, the main assignment, and the final exam. The grade is dependent upon active engagement in section and reflections (which are mandatory and recorded), reflecting the fact that both are key loci of student deliberation, discussion and direct engagement with the course material.

Attendance, participation and reflections	20%
Weekly Logbook	20%
Main Assignment (web-presentation, casting, exhibit or experiment)	30%
Final Exam	30%

6. Collaboration Statement

The exploration of the past and our relationship to it thrives on dialogue. We encourage you to discuss themes and readings outside the classroom as well as within it. And teamwork for the main assignments is allowed (and often even required). But in the logbook, and for the final exam, the research and writing should be all your own. We have zero tolerance of cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without citation. Cite all sources consulted to, including material from the Internet, whether or not assigned, and whether or not quoted directly. Remember that experienced teachers usually recognize passages that were written by colleagues. Students who copy assignments or parts of assignments, allow assignments to be copied, or who cheat on the final exam, will be referred to the Honor Council. Take time to familiarize yourself with the Harvard Honor Code. Students found responsible for a violation of the rules on academic honesty will fail the course. Many students have questions as to what constitutes 'too much' outside help on assignments; the answer is that you are always allowed to talk about your readings and assignments with other people, discuss your points, seek clarifications, and test arguments. This is an important part of the academic process. You are encouraged to consult with colleagues on the choice of assignment topics, and you may also share library resources. You are not allowed to let other people write for you, copy passages from other people's work, or source without citation, or get help from someone whom you do not quote or acknowledge. You are urged to take great care in distinguishing your own ideas from information and analysis derived from printed and electronic sources, and you hold final responsibility for knowing proper forms of citation. If you are unsure about your particular situation, it is better to ask us for clarification before you turn in an assignment.

7. Course Policies

Attendance: You are required to come to every class and every section. Attendance is mandatory and recorded. Deadlines: Complete your assignment tasks on time. Extensions can be given for family emergencies and medical reasons only. The main assignments follow a tight schedule, and delays will have adverse effects on the schedule for other students. Conduct: Bear in mind you are a member of a learning community, and are expected to behave as a professional person. Be on time for class and section, do not leave while class is in progress (for other than emergencies), and be respectful of others' viewpoints even if you disagree. The use of electronic devices: Computers/tablets/phones are **not allowed** during lecture. Please note that you won't be alone in the lecture hall and that electronic devices easily distract people around you. The ban on electronics is based on trust. Texting or surfing on smartphones will result in a negative impact on others and yourself. Use paper to take notes and structure arguments instead of mindlessly typing out the lecture. Use of electronic devices is **permitted** during section and a tablet or phone with a camera is **required** for the section of Week 10. Commitment: If you opt to take this class, we expect from you a serious and sustained commitment to it. At the same time, you should expect an equal commitment from us. Our task is to help make you better at reading and thinking about the past and present and your role in it. That means, among other things, that we offer you prompt and constructive feedback on your work, create a stimulating and welcoming environment in the classroom, and make it easy for you to draw on our help outside of class. You may think of this as a contract: we strive to make 'Ancient Lives' inspiring, relevant and stimulating; your part is to show up well-prepared and well-reflected.

8. Study Tips

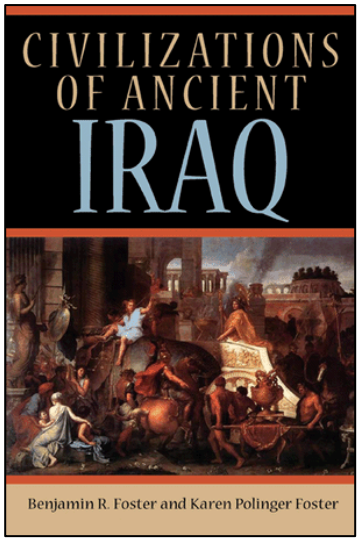
Readings are assigned for each week. Prepare them for the Tuesday class. Highlight or make marginal notes for important words or concepts. This will help you to fix ideas and actively learn the material. Write down questions about things you do not understand. Bring these questions to section and ask them. Reading actively, taking notes, and asking questions is the best way to learn the material. Start early. Do not leave all readings until Monday night. Discuss topics from the readings with other people. Use sections productively. Ask thoughtful questions about things that you do not understand. This will make it easier to isolate what is giving you trouble and enhance learning. We will make every effort to help you learn the course material, and you should take full advantage of the resources that are made available to help you. You are always encouraged to come and talk to us – not only when you are having trouble, but also when things are going well.

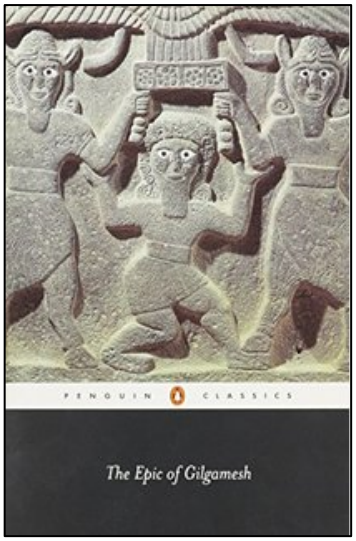
9. Books to buy, and other reading materials

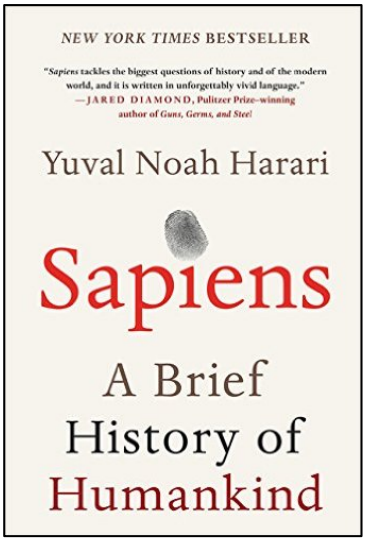
You need to get hold of three books. All three will be available at the COOP and you will need all three already in the first week of class. All remaining course readings and texts are available on the course site. First is Benjamin R. Foster and Karen Polinger Foster *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq*. Princeton: University Press. 2009. This will give you the essential chronological and geographical background for this class. Second is Andrew George *The Epic of Gilgamesh. The Babylonian Epic Poems and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin Books. 2003. Please note that the book comes in different covers and two editions. Regardless of the cover, the second edition has a new bit of text from the poem that was discovered in 1998 – the opening lines of the Epic, in fact. The third book is Yuval Noah Harari *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US ed. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. We will read this book during the semester as a departure for discussions. The book has many brilliant insights and many problems. Read it critically. We teach to the problem.

10. Academic Accommodations

Students in need of academic adjustments or accommodations due to a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the course instructor by the end of the Week 1 (i.e. September 11th). Failure to do so may result in our inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty may contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.







11. Class Outline (twenty-five lectures, two evening events, nine sections)

Week 0: Past in the Present

Goals: to look at why and how we study the past; introduce examples of contemporary political and social institutions, technologies, sciences, and belief systems that come to us from ancient Mesopotamia; show how cultural beliefs about our past actively shape our present and future; explore the study of the ancient past and the political and social environment in which it formed: colonialism, imperialism, religious criticism and the rise of the modern sciences in the late 19th century.

Lecture 1 (Sep. 1): Six degrees of Hammurabi

Readings: None during Shopping Week, but you may want to read: Bottéro, Jean. Ch. 3 'In Defense of a Useless Science.' In *Mesopotamia. Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1992. Pp. 15-25.

Week 1: Setting the Scene

Goals: to provide an introduction to the region and the material engaged by the course, including its chronological and geographical background. To introduce categories of source material, evaluate their nature, and discuss how they affect the way in which we interpret the past. To explore the rise of ancient society, and set the scene in terms of how the first complex societies, urban communities and states arose.

Lecture 2 (Sep. 6): An Outline of Things
Lecture 3 (Sep. 8): Birth of Complexity

Readings:
Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 1-4.
Foster, B. R. and K. P. Foster. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2009. Chapters 1-4.

Week 2: Writing and Control

Goals: to explore the invention and use of writing. How and under what conditions did it develop, and what changes did the new technology of communication lead to? What were the languages and scripts used in the region? Are our own writing systems related to the Mesopotamian ones? How is writing linked to state control and individual freedom?

Lecture 4 (Sep. 13): Sounds, language and the invention of writing
Lecture 5 (Sep. 15): Control and liberation: the role of writing

Readings:
Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'What They Wrote on Clay.' In K. Schousboe and M. T. Larsen (eds.) *Literacy and Society.* Copenhagen: Centre for Research in the Humanities, 1989. Pp. 121-148.
Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'Introduction: Literacy and Social Complexity.' In J. Gledhill, B. Bender and M. T. Larsen (eds.) *State and Society: the Emergence and Development of Social Hierarchy and Political Centralization*. London: Unwin Hyman. 1988. Pp. 173-191.
Foster, B. R. and K. P. Foster. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2009. Chapters 5-8.

Texts: The Epic of Lord Enmerkar and the Prince of Aratta.

(First section: Introduction to section policies, course readings and assignments. Exercises with map and timeline)

Week 3: Power to the State

Goals: to investigate the rise and role of the state. What social dynamics led people to move together into cities, and what effects did this have? What is the relation between the urban revolution and state formation, the dynamics of kinship groups and imperialism? How did the state create and legitimize its power, and who took part in the decision-making, and shared power in the early states?

Lecture 6 (Sep. 20): First states: cities, tribes and empires
Lecture 7 (Sep. 22): The rise of governance: elders, assemblies, kings

Readings:

Yoffee, Norman. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 1-21.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'The Mesopotamian Empires.' In Peter F. Bang and Walter Scheidel (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancient State in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. Pp. 120-160.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 5-8.

Texts: Excerpt from the Annals of Sennacherib. Statutes of the Old Assyrian colony at Kanesh.

(Second section: Introduction to the Semitic Museum)

Week 4: Landscape and Movement

Goals: to outline relations between nature and culture. What factors were determining for the development of the early states? What ways of subsistence were available, and how did this affect social and political organization? How did people see the world, and how was it physically linked?

Lecture 8 (Sep. 27): Cities, villages and nomads
Evening Event #1 (Sep. 28): The Epic of Gilgamesh
Lecture 9 (Sep. 29): Transport and travel in the ancient world

Readings:

Mieroop, Marc Van De. *The Ancient Mesopotamian City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1997. Pp. 42-62.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The Middle Bronze Age.' In J. Aruz, K. Benzel and J. M. Evans (eds.) *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* New Haven: Yale University Press. 2008. Pp. 13-17.

Finkel, Irving. *The Ark Before Noah. Decoding the Story of the Flood*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 2014. Pp. 261-297.

Texts: The Sumerian Farmer's Almanac. The Story of Wen-Amun.

(No section this week due to evening event)

EVENING EVENT #1: Reading the Epic of Gilgamesh

Goals: to explore the best-known epic of early world literature: its composition, the archaeology of its recovery, and the message it bears. To explore its universal themes of friendship, love, authority, honor, and our own mortality.

The event takes place on Wednesday, September 28th between 4:00 and 8:00 pm in the NW B103. We meet the world's leading expert in the Epic of Gilgamesh, Prof. Andrew George of the School of African and Oriental Studies in London for a two-hour conversation on the Epic and its many facets. After a break, the hall opens for a public lecture on Gilgamesh that we all attend. Reception follows.

Reading:

Andrew George. *The Epic of Gilgamesh. The Babylonian Epic Poems and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin Books. 2003.

Week 5: Fetish of Things

Goals: to understand how we interpret economy in ancient societies. How was wealth perceived and created? What regulated production and consumption? Are population growth, agricultural surplus and trade related? What were the means of exchange, and how are they different from ours? What mechanisms for credit, insurance and exchange existed? How was communal and institutional ownership managed? How were trade and private ownership regulated? Why did economies, states and even entire civilizations collapse?

Lecture 10 (Oct. 4): Understanding economies
Lecture 11 (Oct. 6): Wealth, markets and collapse

Readings:

Steinkeller, Piotr. 'Labor in the Early States: A Historical Overview'. In P. Steinkeller and M. Hudson (eds.) *Labor in the Ancient World*. Dresden: ISLET. 2015. Pp. 1-35.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Interlocking Commercial Networks and the Infrastructure of Trade in Western Asia during the Bronze Age' In K. Kristiansen, T. Lindkvist and J. Myrdal (eds.) *Trade and Civilization in the Pre-Modern World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In press. (36 pp.).

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 9-11.

Texts: Assyrian, Babylonian and Ugaritic business letters. Excerpts of Pharaoh's correspondence from Tell el-Amarna.

(Third section: Discussion on changing views on value)

Week 6: Authority and the Foreign

Goals: to explore royal power, its legitimization and limits. To examine the practice of warfare and diplomacy. What were the functions of the king and the royal court? How did they claim, manifest and broadcast power? What was the relation between state ideology and foreign policy? How were foreign relations managed, and what practices and venues were developed for states to interact? What was warfare before the nation states? What role did deportations, social and political refugees play?

Lecture 12 (Oct. 11): Royal power and court culture
Lecture 13 (Oct. 13): Diplomacy and warfare in the ancient world

Readings:

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Pride, Pomp and Circumstance: Palace, Court and Household in Assyria 879 – 612 BCE.' In J. Duindam, T. Artan and M. Kunt (eds.) *Royal courts in dynastic states and empires – a global perspective*. Leiden: Brill. 2011: 27-61.

Barjamovic, Gojko. 'Propaganda and Practice in Assyrian and Persian Imperial Culture.' In P. Fibiger Bang and D. Kołodziejczyk (eds.) *Universal Empire: A comparative approach to imperial culture and representation in Eurasian history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012: 43-59.

Cohen, Raymond and Raymond Westbrook. 'Conclusions: The Beginnings of International Relations.' In R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*. Baltimore: JHU Press. 2000. Pp. 225-236.

Texts: The Prince's Mirror. Banquet Stele of Assurnasirpal. The Stele of the Vultures.

(Fourth section: Making the past come alive – visit to the Giza 3D-project)

Week 7: Ancient Bodies

Goals: to look at developing understandings of the human body, health and gender. How were our basic bodily functions described? How were illnesses treated? How was the mind explained? What was the function of magic? What was the role and understanding of gender? How was sex and homosexuality looked upon? How were children looked upon and raised?

Lecture 14 (Oct. 18): Health and psychology before the muses
Lecture 15 (Oct. 20): Fifty shades of clay – gender, sexuality and companionship

Readings:

Scurlock, JoAnn. 'Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine.' In D. C. Snell (ed.) *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. 2005. Pp. 302-315.

Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. (Rev. ed.) 1977. Pp. 198-206.

Foster, Benjamin R. 'The Person in Mesopotamian Thought.' In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 117-139.

Texts: Selection of letters written by Old Assyrian women.

(Fifth section: Perceptions of Body and Gender – Ancient and Modern)

Week 8: Life, the Universe and Everything

Goals: to study how belief-systems develop and what purpose they serve. How was the universe and our place in it explained? What was the role of temple institutions? How was religion practiced? How was the meaning of life, a 'good life', and success defined? What happens when religion fails to produce meaning? Did competing paradigms, doubt and opposition exist? What can we learn from studying a religion from its beginning to its end?

Lecture 16 (Oct. 25): Temples, gods, and the meaning of life
Lecture 17 (Oct. 27): Literature and political opposition

Readings:

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The Collapse of Civilization: The Case of Mesopotamia'. In J. Chr. Johansen, E. L. Petersen and H. Stevnsborg (eds.) *Clashes of Cultures: Essays in Honour of Niels Steensgaard.* Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag. 1992. Pp. 107-129.

Oppenheim, A. Leo. *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. (Rev. ed.) 1977. Pp. 171-183.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 12-13.

Texts: I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom (col. II, 1-48). Dialogue of Pessimism. Excerpt from The Babylonian Epic of Creation.

(Sixth section: Formal debate on Oppenheim's argument vs. the other authors)

Week 9: Science and Education

Goal: to search for the beginnings of scientific thought and instruction. How was the world explored and explained? What is the purpose of science, and how does it relate to religion in its origin? What is the history of counting, numbers and measurements, mathematical and astronomical description, music and medicine? How and by whom was knowledge accumulated, edited, stored, circulated and used?

Lecture 18 (Nov. 1): Controlling things to come: how science was (not) born
Lecture 19 (Nov. 3): Schooldays: instruction in the age of clay

Readings:

Glassner, Jean-Jaques. 'The Use of Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia'. In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995. Vol. III, pp. 1815-1823.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The Mesopotamian Lukewarm Mind. Reflections on Science, Divination and Literacy'. In F. Rochberg-Halton (ed.), *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner*. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society. 1987. Pp. 203-225.

Mieroop, Marc Van De *Philosophy Before the Greeks. The Pursuit of Truth in Ancient Babylonia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2016. Pp. 216-224.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 14-15.

Texts: Schooldays. Student's Drinking Song. At the Cleaners. A student's letter to his mother.

(Seventh section: The Birth of Science. Discuss Larsen versus Mieroop)

Week 10: Art and Aesthetics and Daily Life

Goals: To understand what defines art, and explore how modern definitions relate to ancient perceptions. Who made art, who paid for art, and who were the audiences? What forms and functions did art have? What does it tell us about aesthetic appreciation? What characterizes ancient visual imagery and how is it different from modern? How is ancient art exhibited in contemporary contexts? To examine the physical world of a pre-modern society. How was everyday life? What did the world look, taste, sound, feel like? How did people dress? What did they do for sports and entertainment?

Lecture 21 (Nov. 8): Šulgi's eye: patronage, fine art
Evening Event #2 (Nov. 9): Mesopotamian cook-in
Lecture 22 (Nov. 10): Homo Ludens: Folk culture, sports and play

Readings:

Winter, Irene. 'Defining "Aesthetics" for Non-Western Studies: The Case of Ancient Mesopotamia.' In M. A. Holly and K. Moxey (eds.) *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2002. Pp. 3-28.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle *The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Antique Land, 1840-1860*. London: Routledge 1996. Pp. 102-105.

Yamauchi, Edwin M. 'Athletics in the Ancient Near East.' In R. E. Averbeck, M. Chavalas and D. B. Weisberg (eds.) *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda MD: CDL Press. 2003. Pp. 491-500.

Hoerth, Alfred J. 'Games People Played: Board Games in the Ancient Near East.' In R. E. Averbeck, M. Chavalas and D. B. Weisberg (eds.) *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda MD: CDL Press. 2003. Pp. 471-489.

Texts: Gudea Statue B. Selection of proverbs and sayings.

(Eight section: Identifying aesthetics – applying art theory to objects in the Harvard Museum)

EVENING EVENT #2: Mesopotamian 'Cook-in'

Goals: to experience the past and understand culture and history through food. What are the connections between economy, gender and food production? What can we learn about ethnic identity, animal domestication, cultural exchange, market economy and local continuity through the study of food? Think like a Mesopotamian by cooking and eating like one: the class builds on both formal talks and informal conversations during food preparation and dinner.

The meeting takes place on Wednesday, November 9th between 5:00 and 8:00 pm in the Harvard Cooking Lab (room NW B145, courtesy Pia Sörensen) under the guidance of author and food historian, Prof. Nawal Nasrallah.

Readings:

Nasrallah, Nawal. *Delights from the Garden of Eden. A Cookbook and History of the Iraqi Cuisine*. 2nd ed. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing. 2013. Pp. 1-30.

The entire book is available on: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/delights-from-garden-eden/id1084418702?mt=11.

Week 11: Justice and Justification

Goals: to identify the ideals and values that keep society together. How was justice defined? How was social conflict perceived and managed? How did inequality come about, and how was it explained and justified? Who gave the law? What was social opposition? What role did slavery play in economy?

Lecture 20 (Nov. 15): A necessity of law

Lecture 22 (Nov. 17): State of mind: inequality and imagined

Readings:

von Dassow, Eva. 'Freedom in Ancient Near Eastern Societies.' In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. Pp. 205-228.

Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2014. Pp. 158-163.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 16-17.

Texts: Excerpt from the Laws of Hammurabi. The Cyrus Cylinder. Old Babylonian Legal Records. The Poor Man of Nippur.

(Ninth section: What is fair? Discussing Harari (week 1) versus Hammurabi, Cyrus and the Poor Man of Nippur)

Deadline for the final assignment, Groups A and B: November 22nd at 11 pm

Week 12: Warfare and Social Change

Goals: to define war and identify its origins. When did war begin? Who did the fighting? What role did it play in society? What impact did it have upon them? What is the social function of military? What is the role of war as a driver of technological innovation? What is the human potential for peace? Do societies change due to war? How do conflicts relate to social inequality? What general patterns can we detect across 3500 years of history?

Lecture 23 (Nov. 22): All things must pass

Readings:

Seabright, Paul. *The Company of Strangers. A Natural History of Economic Life*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2010. Chapter 4.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*. US edition. New York: Harper Collins. 2015. Chapters 18-20.

Texts: No texts this week.

(No section during Thanksgiving week)

Week 13: Present in the Past

Goals: to explore the use and importance of the past in the present. How is ancient history relevant today? How is it presented and (mis)used? And by whom? How is it managed? What does this say about the course and what it teaches?

Lecture 24 (Nov. 29): Clashing Agendas: the invention and destruction of the past from Kaiser to ISIL
Lecture 25 (Dec. 1): Project presentation and reception

(No section during the final week)

Performance of the Gilgamesh Epic on Dec. 2nd in the Harvard Semitic Museum

Deadline for the final assignment, Group C: December 3rd at 11 pm

Deadline for final reflections: December 9th at 6 pm

Readings:

Isakhan, Benjamin. 'Engaging "Primitive Democracy": Mideast Roots of Collective Governance'. *Middle East Policy* vol. 14/3. 2007. Pp. 97-117.

Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 'The "Babel/Bible" Controversy and Its Aftermath'. In J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995. Vol. I, pp. 95-106.

Damrosch, David. *The Buried Book. The Loss and Rediscovery of the Great Epic of Gilgamesh.* New York: Henry Holt &Co. 2007. Pp. 254-272.

Foster, Benjamin R. and Karen Polinger Foster. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq.* Princeton: University Press. 2009. Pp. 198-209.

Texts: Browse http://www.unesco.org/new/en/safeguarding-syrian-cultural-heritage/. Read http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/israeli-land-claims-archaeology-ideology-201311111 3012956687.html.