

Final Exam Review Sheet

History of Ancient Religion • Fall 2022

Description of the Exam

The exam will consist of different kinds of questions:

- **Identification and Impact** – I’ll have a few terms and individuals and ask you to discuss what they mean/who they were and their impact or importance.
 - You’ll choose terms you’re most comfortable writing about from a selection (so if I ask for 5, there might be 10 to choose from).
 - All of the terms will come from this sheet.
 - Remember, the definition itself will only be half of this question — you must also be able to discuss in detail why it’s important.
- **Essays** – I will ask you to write two essays having to do with overall themes of the course.
 - You will need to provide an argument supported by three solid examples on a topic related to a major theme of the course.
 - Your examples and evidence can come from the textbooks, the weekly primary source readings, class discussion, and the research you did for your written assignments.

There will be some kind of extra credit. The essays will count for most of the grade on the exam (around 60%).

Approach to Preparing

Make a list of the most important milestone events in the periods we’ve discussed.

- **CAUSES** – Make sure you can identify the most important factors that helped cause these events — including long-term factors (“the environment”) and short-term factors (“the spark”)
- **LEGACIES** – Make sure you can identify the legacies of the milestone event. How did it change the culture, society, etc.? What impact did it have on future milestones and events?

Using this review sheet

- For each of the questions below, see whether you have a strong idea how to answer, an okay idea how to answer, or a weak sense of how to answer. Review from the books and your notes at least the “weak” ones.
- Approach the questions below as a means of gauging topic to spend more time with in review, and as a guide to how you’ll express and illustrate what’s really important—the larger themes of the course.
- Take note of the terms below and review ones you’re unfamiliar with.
- Note that there is seldom one and only one answer to the kind of questions on this review sheet.
 - WHY almost always means “For what reasons...?”
 - HOW almost always means “In what ways...?”

Preparation for the essays

- Try to come up with possible essay questions and map out in advance examples and interpretations that might pertain.
- List the key topics that might relate to important periods of change, such as wars or reforms that changed everything.
- Discussion groups can be helpful in comparing others’ interpretations of topics and ideas with your own.
- In the essays you should be able to talk about, and use as examples, relevant primary source documents and assigned articles.
- **Concerning dates:** I’m not going to ask you for exact dates but you should know the period in which a people are important or an event occurs, and which events occur before or after which other events. You’re best off if you know centuries.

Concepts and terminology

- What is religion? What are some of the reasons early societies develop a need for it? Meeting 1
- Paganism is a kind of polytheism. What's distinctive about paganism specifically? Meeting 1
- What does the "theologization of history" refer to? What would be an example of this? Meeting 3
- What are the original three spheres or dimensions ascribed to polytheism? Meeting 3
- What's the difference between evolutionary monotheism and revolutionary monotheism? What would be an example of each? Meeting 7

TERMS: polytheism – monotheism – dualism – paganism – evolutionary monotheism – revolutionary monotheism

Pantheons and divine worlds

- What does it mean to say that polytheists tend to believe in a "unity of the divine"? Meeting 3
- What does Ishtar's behavior in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* suggest about the Sumerian gods? Meeting 2
- The Kassites favored the Sumerian gods, led by Enlil. How did Marduk end up becoming dominant instead? What's Marduk's relationship with the other gods of the Babylonian pantheon? Meeting 3
- Who were the Indo-Europeans? What can we say about their religion and gods? Meeting 4, 10
- Why was the pantheon of the Hittites so diverse? Meeting 4
- What is meant by a *hysistos* or "superdeity"? Meeting 7
- What are some of the ways generalized concepts of a god or goddess across many communities of the same culture might be combined with local stories and rituals of that god or goddess? Meeting 7
- How does the separateness and autonomy of the Syrian, Canaanite, and Etruscan city-states affect each city's pantheon and how they relate to the gods? Meetings 6, 12
- What is a divine epithet? How were they used in Greek communities? Meeting 11

TERMS: pantheon – Ishtar – Bull of Heaven – Marduk – Ahura Mazda – El and Baal – hyphenation – epithet – trinity

Myths and legends

- What are some of the reasons ancient societies develop myths? Meeting 3
- What is the cosmos? What parts does it normally consist of? Meeting 8
- What does it mean to say the Egyptians saw the cosmos as a "process"? Meeting 8
- What are some common elements of ancient creation myths? Meeting 8
- What is the Egyptian solar myth? How does it connect cosmos, state, and individual destiny? Meeting 8
- How is ritual different from myth? What do they have in common? Meeting 9
- What are some of the reasons similar stories appear in the mythology of different cultures? Meeting 10
- Texts that begin "I will sing" and the like suggest what about the nature of mythology? How does this help explain the diffusion of mythological stories? Meeting 10
- How does mythology relate to a community's collective memory? Meeting 10
- How is Homer important to understanding Greek religion? How did Homer treat the local versions of the Greek gods? Meeting 11
- What does the death of Patroclus tell us about how the Greeks understood their relationship with the gods? Meeting 11

TERMS: cosmos – mythology – creation myth – Osiris cycle – Homer

Rulers and gods

- How is a priest-king different from a god-king? How is a priest-king in Sumer different from one in Syria or Judea? Meetings 1, 2, 6
- What might lead to the political or military oppression of a cult? Meeting 4
- The Hittite Instructions to Temple Officials state, “Are the minds of man and gods somehow different? No!” How did the Hittites see the gods as being like mortals? Meeting 4
- What kinds of reforms were associated with the Judean king Josiah? What were the long-term effects? Meeting 7
- What role did the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews have in reshaping Judaism? Meeting 7
- How did Akhenaten try to reform religion in Egypt, and why? Meeting 8
- How did the Romans deal with religious diversity within their empire? Meeting 13

TERMS: priest-king – god-king – Akhenaten – Babylonian Captivity

Religious life

- Why didn’t Sumerians trust their gods? Why was the opposite true of Egypt? What does the Flood represent to each? Meetings 2, 8
- What does the *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* tell us about the Babylonians’ relationship with their gods? How does it compare with the *Book of Job*? Meeting 3
- How were individuals in antiquity subject to multiple religions at once? Meeting 4
- How does Zoroastrianism emphasize free will in relation to the gods? How does *The First Civilized Man* reflect this? Meeting 5
- What does it mean when we talk about the “imminence of the divine” with respect to Syrian and Canaanite religion? Meeting 6
- Why is religion concerned with human moral behavior? Meetings 6,13
- What lesson was the story of Abraham and Isaac meant to tell about the Jews’ relationship with Yahweh? Meeting 7
- What is the connection between monotheism and the importance of scripture? Meeting 7
- What is ma’at? How does it help describe the relationship between Egypt and its gods? Meeting 8
- What kinds of factors are preventing us from understanding the Minoans? What do we know about their religion? Meeting 9
- For the Greeks, what was the basis of the relationship between humans and the divine? Meeting 11
- What was a mystery cult, and why was it a mystery? Meeting 11
- How is initiation into a mystery cult similar to adolescent rites of passage or joining a guild? What’s different about it? Meeting 11
- Given that literacy belonged to the few, what kinds of roles did writing play in polytheistic religions? Meeting 12
- What is the potential significance for the Romans of the story of Cn. Flavius “publishing” the religious calendar? Meeting 12
- How did new cults become a part of Roman culture? Under what circumstances might that happen? Meeting 13
- What did early Christianity have in common with a mystery cult? Meeting 14

TERMS: patron deity – imminence of the divine – covenant – ma’at – peak sanctuaries – charis and timē – mystery cult – gospel

Sharing and transmission

- What are some of the circumstances in which the religion of one culture influences the religion of another culture? Meeting 2
- Caesar saying “the Gauls worship Mercurius” is an example of interpretatio. What’s going on when someone does this? Meeting 2
- What connections do you see between Judaism and the polytheistic religions of Syria and Canaan? Meeting 7
- What factors were most important in the spread of Christianity? Meeting 14

Afterlife

- How is a Sumerian's understanding of the afterlife different from an Egyptian's?
- How might what a culture expects will happen when you die affect how they approach life?
- What does *The Papyrus of Ani* tell us about the Egyptian understanding of the gods and the afterlife?

Meetings 2, 8

Meeting 8

Meeting 8

Rituals and divination

- What stands out about the Hittite method of divination? How is consulting the gods different among other cultures—the Romans, for example?
- What does “cult” refer to when speaking about actions (rather than a group)?
- What's the difference between pollution and sacrilege? How were they dealt with?
- What factors motivated the ancients' study of the heavens?
- What is a scapegoat ritual? What function is it normally meant to perform?
- Why did festivals of the new year in antiquity often involve reversals?
- What was the Etruscan Discipline? Why do you think they said it came from a wise divine child out of the earth?
- What is the Roman ritual of “driving the nail” meant to accomplish?

Meeting 4

Meeting 3

Meeting 6

Meeting 8

Meeting 9

Meeting 9

Meeting 12

Meeting 13

TERMS: divination – temple – altar – pollution – sacrilege – purification – appeasement – scapegoat

Priests and prophets

- Who was Zarathustra? What change did he bring about in ancient Iran?
- What kind of role do seers and prophets play in Syrian and Canaanite religion? Why are prophets so important there?
- What do you think the story of the eunuch priests in *The Syrian Goddess* tells us about Syrian religion in that city? Why did the author emphasize this aspect of the religion, do you think?
- What was the distinction between magic and religion in the ancient world? What would be a good example? How was a magician different from a priest?
- What are some of the ways words and language played a role in ancient magical practices?
- How was Roman religious authority related to Roman civic authority?
- Who were the gnostics? What was their role in the development of Christianity?
- Who was Saul of Tarsus? How was he involved in the membership crisis in early Christianity?

Meeting 5

Meeting 6

Meeting 6

Meeting 5

Meeting 5

Meeting 13

Meeting 14

Meeting 14

TERMS: priest/priestess – Zoroastrianism – prophet – magic – patrician families – gnostics