



Civilizations of the Ancient World

Fall 2024 · Professor Wilson

HIS 246: Civilizations of the Ancient World. 3 hours, 3 credits. *In-Person lecture.* A survey of the Mediterranean world, beginning with the first humans and tracing the development of civilization from Mesopotamia and Egypt to ancient Greek City-States and the fall of Rome.

Details HIS 246-E301 (39487), Fall 2024.

- Crosslisted with: LEH 354-E301 (39165).
- Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00–4:15 p.m., in Carman 209.

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Office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:00–5:45 p.m. in CA-292.

Rationale

Our entire lives are conditioned by concepts like civilization and society, yet we seldom stop to think about how they shape our behaviors and expectations.

By traveling back to the very emergence of civilization, we can experience both the revolution in how humans related to each other and the proliferation of new kinds of societies—each with their own distinct ideas about communities and individuals, communication, trade, protection, gender, mortality, and the strange, unbounded realms of the gods.

All of this forms not just the background but the substance of the modern world: how we think, and what others think of us. The everyday hubbub of ancient worlds vibrates in the bones of our own societies.

Specific Learning Objectives

In this course we'll be pursuing a number of goals, including:

- Exploration of the emergence of civilization and its implications for humanity
- Exposure to the cultures and beliefs of a wide array of diverse Mediterranean civilizations
- Exploration of evolutionary changes in the realms of politics; economics; military techniques; religious beliefs; social norms; writing and literature practices; artistic expression; and science and philosophy
- Examination of how the many interactions and transformations of ancient civilizations developed into a Western identity, part of the origin of the modern Western world
- Development of skills associated with study of history, including interpretation of primary sources and other evidence.