



# Civilizations of the Ancient World

Spring 2023 · Prof. Wilson

Welcome to Civilizations of the Ancient World. Here's what you need to know to get started:

- 1 This course is in person, and the syllabus is on the course website, which is found at [markbwilson.com](http://markbwilson.com). Everything you need for navigating the course requirements is on the website. If you want a PDF version of the full syllabus to reference or print, click on the printer icon at the top right of the main page.
- 2 Watch the video first! It covers the key themes of the course and how things will work. Then, enter the course and read through the requirements, expectations, and assignments.
- 3 Announcements and updates will be posted on the Announcements page and by email. Bookmark the Announcements page to stay up to date on changes and upcoming due dates.
- 4 If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me at [mark.wilson@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:mark.wilson@lehman.cuny.edu).

# Course Info

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## Information about the course.

**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 (52305), Spring 2023.

- Crosslisted with: LEH 354-E301 (52290).
- Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00–4:15 p.m., room TBA.

**Instructor** Dr. Mark B. Wilson, Adjunct Assistant Professor.

- Office: Carman 292.
- Email: mark.wilson@lehman.cuny.edu.
- Website: markbwilson.com.
- BlackBoard: link.

**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.

# Books

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The following three books are required. Some possible ways to get them are listed below.

## 1. *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations, 3d Edition*

by Ralph W. Mathisen. Oxford U. Press, 2020. 9780190080945. \$84.99 (list price, but see links below for possibly cheaper alternatives).

- Getting this book:
  - Rent (new, used, or digital) or buy (new or used) via the Lehman Bookstore.
  - A physical copy of the second edition should be on reserve at Lief Library.
  - Rent or buy (new or used) via Valore Books or Amazon.
  - Buy (new or used) via Abe Books or Alibris.
- Try to get the right edition, especially if you're buying a used copy. The first edition is significantly different from the second and third, and page numbers will not match up with later editions.

## 2. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

trans. by Andrew R. George. London: Penguin, 2003. 9780140449198. \$16.00.

- Getting this book:
  - A full online copy can be found at the Internet Archive.
  - Rent or buy (new or used) via the Lehman Bookstore or Valore Books.
  - Buy Kindle or paperback (new or used) via Amazon.
  - Buy (new or used) via Abe Books, Alibris, Better World Books, or Powell's.
- I strongly recommend the Andrew George edition because he translated directly from the source. It also has a very useful introduction. If you get another edition, make sure it is based on the Standard Version of the epic.
- I recommend against using a random online transcription of the text, as for this 4,500-year old text you definitely want an expert translation with good commentary and extrapolation such as the George.

## 3. *Four Texts on Socrates, Revised Edition*

ed. by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1998. 9780801485749. \$14.95.

- Getting this book:
  - A physical copy is available in the stacks at Lief Library.
  - Hourly borrowing is available via the Internet Archive.
  - Rent or buy (new or used) via the Lehman Bookstore or Valore Books.
  - Buy (new or used) via Amazon, Abe Books, Alibris, Better World Books, or Powell's.
- *Four Texts on Socrates* has Aristophanes's *Clouds*, which we'll be reading in class, but the other works may help your interpretation of the play and especially your essay.
- There are basic transcriptions of *Clouds* online, but again the intro and notes will be vital to your appreciation of the play, so you should use this book or another full-text book edition.

The assigned books are available from Lehman College Bookstore and from Amazon and other online retailers (try searching aggregators such as Bookfinder for the best deals). Make sure you do so enough in advance that you'll receive the books in time for the assignments.

# Expectations

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The best path to doing well in the course and gaining a more solid understanding of the past? Engage actively with the material and with class discussions.

## Attendance and Participation

- **Participation in class discussion is a required part of the course.** Missing classes will damage your grade.
  - Textbooks are designed to give you the basics; in our class meetings we try to make sense of things, and sift out what's important. Missing classes means you miss out on a key part of our trying to put things together.
  - If you miss quizzes, it will put a big crimp in your grade for the course. Quizzes are not made up, so the quizzes you miss will count against you.
- Religious observances that affect your class attendance should be discussed in advance.
- **If you are not feeling well**, please stay home.
- **If you have tested positive for COVID-19**, please contact the Health Center at [med.requirements@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:med.requirements@lehman.cuny.edu) as soon as possible after your positive test result to initiate contact tracing and to get connected to support services.

## Guidelines

Don't waste this opportunity! Make the most out of this class.

- **Please use me as a resource.** Interact with me in class meetings online or send me emails with any questions you have—whether they relate to the requirements of the course, or to ideas we're reading about or discussing in class.
- **Come to the class meetings prepared.** By prepared, I mean you should have done the readings and videos for that day—and thought about them. Come in ready to talk about your reactions to the readings and the videos, and the questions they raised in your mind.
- **Take notes in class.** You are responsible for the material discussed in class meetings, and will be expected to discuss this material on exams and in assigned essays. Taking notes in class gives you a resource to review what was discussed.
- **Check your email.** Make sure I have a good email address for you and check it, as I occasionally send information and updates by email. If you have not gotten an email from me within the first week after school begins, check your spam folders. If you can't find an email from me, send me an email to let me know how best to reach you.
- **Talk to me if you're struggling.** Reach out to me via email, and the sooner the better. Don't wait until it's too late to turn things around. If you're considering withdrawing, talk with me first and see if we come up with a plan.

## Submitting Assignments

- **All written assignments must be submitted via BlackBoard** using the upload links there. BlackBoard is accessed through CUNY Login. If you have trouble with BlackBoard, please call the IT helpdesk at (718) 960-1111 or go to the Lehman College BlackBoard support page. I won't accept written assignments by email. If BlackBoard itself is down, I'll announce alternative arrangements to the class.
- **Late assignments will be marked down.** I'll still accept late submissions, but there will be a penalty that will hurt your grade.
  - Written assignments will be marked down one letter grade per class meeting after the assignment due date, up to a maximum of 30 points. That means you're still better off turning in your paper late, and having it be marked down, than not turning it in at all.
  - I do not give extra credit opportunities except to the entire class. I do not grade on a curve.
  - I do not give incompletes unless we've discussed and agreed on the grounds for giving one prior to the final exam.
  - Make-up assignments or exams are given only in cases of documented medical emergency or comparable life disruption.
  - I do not accept rewritten essays after an assignment has been submitted, graded, and returned; but some deductions are reversible (see the sample grading sheet on the Requirements page).
- Any instances of plagiarism, whether on essays, papers, quizzes, or exams, will have dire consequences. See the policies page for what counts as plagiarism and the penalties involved in presenting the work of others as your own.

# Grading

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Your overall course grade will be determined by your performance on quizzes, three interpretive essays, and two in-class exams.

Your grade for the course will be determined from the following:

Quizzes	15%
Interpretive Essays (3)	30%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	35%

## Quizzes

We'll have short, timed online quizzes to help gauge our relationship with the material in the readings most weeks. Quizzes are based on the material you've prepared for that class, including:

- the textbook assignment for that meeting as listed in the Schedule, and
- the assigned section from *Gilgamesh* or *Clouds* for that meeting if any.

If you did your reading for the class, you should be prepared for the quiz. Quizzes are always based on the materials assigned for that class meeting, even if I am slightly behind the syllabus in class. Make sure to always do the assigned readings.

**Missed quizzes are not made up.** If you miss a quiz, you'll get a zero for that quiz. Therefore, please make sure you are prepared each week and take the quiz.

## Interpretive Essays (3)

You'll write three interpretive essays. Details are on the Essays page.

- One on the portrayal of society or religion in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*;
- One on *Clouds* and its relationship with actual events in classical Athens; and
- A response to your choice of nonwritten artistic depictions of the ancient world, including sculpture, painting, performance, or film, comparing the history that's come down to us with how it has been represented.

**Optional Draft.** You can submit a draft of the paper to me up to a week before it's due; I'll give you some general feedback (but not a grade). Because I accept drafts, I do not allow students to submit revised versions of their final paper after the due date. To make sure I see it soonest, please email me your optional draft rather than uploading it to BlackBoard.

# Exams

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## Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be held in-person on Tuesday, March 14 in our normal meeting room and class period.

- Please arrive on time. You will only have the normal class period (from 3:00 to 4:15 p.m.) to take the exam.
- Review materials will be posted on the course website closer to the exam date.

## Final Exam

The final exam will be held in-person on Tuesday, May 23 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in our normal meeting room.

- Please arrive on time. You will only have the two-hour exam period to take the exam.
- Review materials will be posted on the course website closer to the exam date.

**If you miss the final exam:** Make-ups will be arranged only in cases of documented personal or medical emergency. Otherwise, per CUNY policy a student who does not complete the course by taking the final exam will automatically receive a grade of WU (unofficial withdrawal), which counts as an F toward your GPA, unless an incomplete has been mutually agreed by student and instructor prior to the ultimate submission deadline for the course (Monday, May 25).

# Schedule of Readings and Assignments

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For each meeting, please come into class having read and *thought about* the readings assigned for that class.

Readings listed with the book icon (📖) are from the assigned textbook, Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, 3d Edition.

Everything listed under each meeting—the textbook readings, *Gilgamesh*, and *Clouds*—is fair game for the quizzes we'll have at the start of some meetings.

January 2023							February 2023							March 2023							April 2023							May 2024									
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4																								
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29																	

## 1 Introduction and Themes

Thursday, January 26

Watch the Welcome and Orientation Video

- 📖 "Laying the Groundwork" (pp. 3-5)
- 📖 "The Palaeolithic Age" (pp. 5-13)

## 2 The Origins of Civilization

Tuesday, January 31

- 📖 "The Neolithic World" (pp. 13-24)
- 📖 "The Chalcolithic Period" (pp. 24-33)

## 3 Mesopotamia

Thursday, February 2

- 📖 "The Origins of Mesopotamian Civilization" (pp. 37-45)
- 📖 "The Rise of Sumerian Civilization" (pp. 45-52)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Introduction (pages xiii-xvi, xxxi-xxxii)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 1 [see next page]

## 4 Sumer

Tuesday, February 7

- 📖 "Historical Sumer" (pp. 52-60)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 2

## 5 Semitic Mesopotamia

Thursday, February 9

- 📖 "The Semitic Peoples and the First Near Eastern Empires" (pp. 60-75)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 5

## 6 God-Kings of Egypt

Tuesday, February 14

- 📖 "Before The Pharaohs" (pp. 77-84)
- 📖 "The Early Dynastic Period" (pp. 84-92)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 6

## 7 Egyptian Empires

Thursday, February 16

- 📖 "The Old Kingdom" (pp. 92-97)
- 📖 "The Middle Kingdom" (pp. 97-103)
- 📖 "The New Kingdom" (pp. 103-109)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 7

Tuesday, February 21

No meeting (Monday classes meet)

## 8 The Bronze Age Aegean

Thursday, February 23

- 📖 "Early Civilizations of the Levant" (pp. 111-113)
- 📖 "Aegean Civilizations" (pp. 113-125)
- 📖 *Gilgamesh*, Tablet 11

## 9 Dawn of the Iron Age

Tuesday, February 28

- 📖 "The Iron Age" (pp. 125-131)
- 📖 "The Hebrews" (pp. 131-140)

## 10 How Not to Run an Empire: The Assyrians

Thursday, March 2

- 📖 "The Assyrian Empire" (pp. 142-155)
- 📖 "The Successors of the Assyrians" (pp. 155-159)

## 11 The Success of the Persian Empire

Tuesday, March 7

- 📖 "The Persian Empire" (pp. 159-163)
- 📖 "Darius and the Operation ..." (pp. 163-171)
- ⚠️ Essay #1 is due on Monday, March 6.

## 12 The Greek Dark Age

Thursday, March 9

- 📖 "The Greek Dark Ages" (pp. 175-180)
- 📖 "Construction of Greek Identity" (pp. 180-187)

## 13 Midterm Exam

Tuesday, March 14

#### 14 Ancient Asia: China, India, and the Steppes

Thursday, March 16

- 📖 "The Eurasian Steppes" (pp. 296-301)
- 📖 "Eastern Asia" (pp. 301-310)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 1 [see below]

#### 15 Archaic Hellas

Tuesday, March 21

- 📖 The Archaic Age" (pp. 187-202)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 2

#### 16 Sparta and Athens

Thursday, March 23

- 📖 "The Spartan Way" (pp. 205-211)
- 📖 "The Rise of Athens" (pp. 211-218)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 3

#### 17 The Persian Menace

Tuesday, March 28

- 📖 "The Greeks and Persia" (pp. 218-226)
- 📖 "The Golden Age of Athens" (pp. 226-231)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 4

#### 18 Wars Between the Greeks

Thursday, March 30

- 📖 "The Peloponnesian War" (pp. 231-246)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 5

#### 19 The Rise of Macedon

Tuesday, April 4

- 📖 "After the Peloponnesian War" (pp. 249-257)
- 📖 "The Age of Alexander" (pp. 257-265)
- 🏠 *Clouds*, Section 6

April 6, 11, 13

No meeting (Spring Recess)

#### 20 The Legacy of Alexander

Tuesday, April 18

- 📖 "The Hellenistic Kingdoms" (pp. 265-279)
- ⚠️ Essay #2 is due on Monday, April 17.

#### 21 Early Rome

Thursday, April 20

- 📖 "Carthage" (pp. 319-326)
- 📖 "Cultural Encounters" (pp. 339-341)
- 📖 "Rome of the Kings" (pp. 341-349)

#### 22 The Roman Republic

Tuesday, April 25

- 📖 "The Early Roman Republic" (pp. 349-356)

#### 23 The Acquisition of Empire

Thursday, April 27

- 📖 "Warfare and Expansion" (pp. 356-371)

#### 24 The Republican Crisis

Tuesday, May 2

- 📖 "From One Crisis to the Next" (pp. 379-390)

#### 25 Collapse of the Republic

Thursday, May 4

- 📖 "An Age of Generals" (pp. 390-399)

#### 26 Crossing the Rubicon

Tuesday, May 9

- 📖 "The Triumvirates" (pp. 399-409)
- 📖 "Establishment of the Principate" (pp. 409-414)

#### 27 Augustus, Princeps, Imperator

Thursday, May 11

- 📖 "The Age of Augustus" (pp. 415-430)

#### 28 The Roman Principate

Tuesday, May 16

- 📖 "Julio-Claudian, Flavian Dynasties" (pp. 430-440)
- 📖 "The Antonine Dynasty (96-192)" (pp. 440-451)
- ⚠️ Essay #3 is due on Monday, May 15.

#### 29 Final Exam

Tuesday, May 23

The final exam will be held in-person from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in our normal meeting room.

### Tablets in The Epic of Gilgamesh

Page numbers refer to the Andrew George (Penguin) edition assigned for this class. Only the starred tablets (★) are assigned for meetings. That said, reading the whole thing might help you with your essay.

★ 1.	The Coming of Enkidu	pages 1-11
★ 2.	The Taming of Enkidu	12-22
3.	Preparations for the Expedition	22-29
4.	The Journey to the Forest of Cedar	30-39
★ 5.	The Combat with Humbaba	39-47
★ 6.	Ishtar and the Bull of Heaven	47-54
★ 7.	The Death of Enkidu	54-62
8.	The Funeral of Enkidu	62-69
9.	The Wanderings of Gilgamesh	70-75
10.	At the Edge of the World	75-87
★ 11.	Immortality Denied	88-99

### Sections in Clouds

Page numbers refer to the Wests' *Four Texts on Socrates* assigned for this class. Any good edition will have line numbers; see me if yours doesn't. We are reading the whole play (it's not very long).

	lines	pages
West's Introduction		29-37
1. Strepsiades's Problem	1-13	115-120
2. The Thinkery	133-365	120-130
3. Gods and Memory	366-518	131-136
Clouds' Response 1	518-626	136-141
4. Hen and Cock	627-888	141-151
5. The Debate	889-1114	151-161
Clouds' Response 2	1115-1130	161
Old and New Day	1131-1213	161-164
6. The Creditor	1214-1320	165-169
New Morality	1321-1492	169-176
The Purge	1493-1510	176

# Written Assignments

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For this course, you'll write three essays: one on *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, one on Aristophanes's *Clouds*, and one on images of the ancient world.

Before uploading, make sure your essays meet the Requirements for All Papers. All written assignments must be submitted via BlackBoard.

	<i>Upload by</i>
Essay #1 on <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	Monday, March 6
Essay #2 on <i>Clouds</i>	Monday, April 17
Essay #3 on Representations and Images	Monday, May 15

## **IMPORTANT**

**Watch the video.** The overview video explains what I want you to cover in the essay and what I'm expecting in terms of arguments, evidence, and structure.

**Before you upload,** make sure your essay meets the Requirements for All Papers, including formatting, structure, and citations. You will be marked down drastically if your paper is not properly cited. For how to do citations and bibliographies, see the Research and Citation Center.

## Essay on *Epic of Gilgamesh*

**The assignment:** Write a 3- to 4-page essay using three moments from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to take a position on the culture, beliefs, and social expectations of ancient Sumer, responding to one of the following three prompts.

### OPTION 1

#### *The mortal and the divine*

Choose any of the mortal characters from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and discuss his or her relationship with the gods.

- Describe and discuss three moments from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* showing your character interacting with or contemplating the gods.
- Make an argument about what these examples show us regarding Sumer's take on religion and the gods, and what it means to be human. Think about Sumerian culture's traditions and expectations and how they impact on the individual you're writing about.
- (Note: your best bets are either Gilgamesh or Enkidu; Utanapishtim is also a possibility.)

### OPTION 2

#### *Gender in Sumerian society*

Choose any of the female characters from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and discuss her relationship with the other characters and Sumerian society.

- Describe and discuss three moments from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* showing your character's actions or behavior and how it relates to her role as a woman in Sumerian society.
- Make an argument about what these examples show us regarding gender expectations and the roles of women in Sumerian culture. Think about Sumerian culture's traditions and expectations and how they impact on the individual you're writing about.
- (Note: your best bet is Shamhat; Ninsun and Ishtar are also possibilities.)

### OPTION 3

#### *Life and death*

Mortality is one of the major themes of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, but what is the epic saying about it?

- Describe and discuss three moments from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* that involve death or mortality—either an actual death, or discussion of death and mortality.
- Make an argument about what these examples show us regarding Sumerian ideas of death and legacy, and how Sumerian culture thought about death. Think about Sumerian culture's traditions and expectations and how they impact on the individual you're writing about.

## Essay on *Clouds*

**The assignment:** Write a 3- to 4-page essay comparing three moments from *Clouds* to another work in order to take a position on the culture, beliefs, and social expectations of classical Athens, responding to one of the following three prompts.

### OPTION 1

#### *Right and wrong in Clouds*

*Clouds* emphasizes traditional values throughout the play and then ends with violence. Does *Clouds* offer an internally inconsistent message on morality?

- First, choose a tragedy from the Greek classical period in which morality is a key issue. (Popular options include *Medea* by Euripides; *Elektra* by Euripides or Sophocles; and *Antigone* by Sophocles; but there are other possibilities as well.)
- Describe and discuss three incidents from *Clouds* that involve a moral decision or an argument between characters about what the morality of an action. Compare each of these incidents with a similar (or contrasting) moment in the tragedy you've selected.
- Make an argument for the consistency of the moral argument of *Clouds* by comparing it with the moral argument in the tragedy. Where do both plays stand with regard to the Athenian debate on relative morality (nomos vs. physis)?

### OPTION 2

#### *Aristophanes's agenda*

The surviving plays of Aristophanes range over a long and turbulent period of Athenian history. Do Aristophanes's opinions and technique change over time?

- First, choose another play by Aristophanes. (Popular options include *Frogs*, mounted in 405 BCE, 11 years after the revised version of *Clouds*; *Birds*, mounted in 414; and *Wealth*, mounted in 388; but any of the 11 surviving plays is fair game. Full texts in English are available on the course website, on the ancient texts page.)
- Describe and discuss three moments from *Clouds* that reflect either Aristophanes's opinions or how he makes the play reflect them. Compare each of these moments with a similar (or contrasting) moment in the other comedy.
- Make an argument for the consistency of Aristophanes's approach to writing, and the evolution of his overall philosophy across this most troubled period. What themes and ideas are present in both plays? Is his approach, methodology, or agenda consistent? If not, how does it change?

### OPTION 3

#### *Socrates vs. Socrates*

The “Socrates” found in Aristophanes’s *Clouds* is a deliberate distortion driven by a desire to discredit the real Socrates. What does this version of Socrates have in common with the one depicted in works by Socrates’s student, Plato?

- First, choose a work by Plato in which Socrates is a major character. (Possibilities include: *Phaedo*, which has Socrates discussing life and afterlife on the brink of his execution; *Apology*, a version of Socrates’s self-defense against charges of irreligion; or any of the other dialogs that focus on how Plato wanted to show Socrates’s methods and beliefs. Full texts in English are available on the course website, on the ancient texts page.)
- Describe and discuss three moments from *Clouds* that reflect an opinion or behavior expressed by Aristophanes’s version of Socrates. Compare each of these moments with a similar (or contrasting) moment in the work by Plato. What characteristics of Socrates and his philosophy were most exaggerated by the two authors (either in ridicule or praise), and why?
- Make an argument about how Socrates was seen by Athenians in their time of strife. What stood out about his behavior and beliefs that caused him to be venerated by some, and yet so feared by others that he was executed?
- (What’s important to remember is that both versions of Socrates are distortions, twisted in the service of what their authors were trying to say about them. Aristophanes and Plato each had an agenda with respect to how they wanted to show Socrates. That means that both authors offered a distorted picture of Socrates that separates us from the real-life man.)

## Essay on Representations and Images

**The assignment:** Write a 3- to 4-page essay using depictions of the ancient world to take a position on the representations of ancient cultural ideas and beliefs, following one of the following two options.

### OPTION 1

#### *Two pieces in a museum*

How a culture sees abstract ideas (masculinity, virtue, old age, divinity, and so on) is often reflected in its artwork. What can two different works of art depicting the same idea, but from different times or places, tell us about how the cultures that produced them?

For this option, you need to choose two works of art from the ancient world that (a) represent the same idea or concept but (b) come either from different periods or from different places in the ancient world.

In your essay, compare three things that these works have in common, using those comparisons to make an argument about what these two artists believed in and the insights this gives us into the cultures they came from.

#### *Choosing your subjects*

- Your two works of art must represent the same idea or concept. For example, you can choose two little girls, two warriors, two fertility goddesses, etc. The idea is to look for how similarities and differences in representations of the same idea tell us about the cultural beliefs and expectations that shaped the artists and their own culturally-conditioned visions of that idea.
- Your works of art must be from the ancient era (before 500 CE), and they must be from either two different places or two different periods. This allows you to talk about two separate societies and how they represent the same concepts differently. The two pieces can be in any visual medium: sculpture, painting, relief, etc. They do not have to be in the same medium as long as they are depictions of the same idea or concept.
- Ideally, you should experience the artwork face-to-face by attending a museum in person. Possible venues include: Metropolitan Museum's Egypt Collection; Metropolitan Museum's Greek and Roman Art Collection; Brooklyn Museum of Art's Ancient Egyptian Art Collection; and Fordham Museum of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Art. You are, of course, not limited to these venues, and you are not limited to New York. If you are not able to attend a museum in person because of ongoing restrictions, you may find imagery of artworks that meet the requirements on museum websites instead.

#### *Writing your paper*

- Choose three aspects of the works you can discuss for both pieces that seem to reflect how the artist felt about the subject and what the subject stood for.
  - Some possibilities include facial expression, dress, use of technique or medium, stiffness/fluidity, apparent strength/weakness, idealism/realism, or any other elements offering some kind of insight into what the artist was trying to convey. Describe and discuss your subjective impressions of these three aspects in the two works.
  - For each aspect, compare how it manifests in the first piece; then talk about how the second piece is similar or different and in what way; and finally talk about what these similarities or differences tell us about what each artist believed about their subject and what that might tell us about the cultural beliefs they came from in relation to the subject being depicted.

**For example:** say the works you've chosen are two sculptures depicting a goddess of love from different cultures, and one has a crafty expression while the other has an innocent expression. The different facial expressions can be used to talk about how each artist, and the cultures they came from, might have thought about things like the gods' attitudes toward their roles in creating relationships between mortals; the nature of love; the motivations of the gods, etc.

- Make an argument about how consistently the same core idea was seen in the two times or places that produced these two works. If art is an expression of cultural values, what do the differences between these works tell you about the respective cultures they come from? What do their similarities tell you about what these ancient cultures have in common?
- You do not need to preface your essay with background about the periods, the media used, etc. This essay is about your subjective reactions to these two specific works and what you believe they are telling you about the beliefs and social expectations of the cultures they came from.
- On a separate "Works Discussed" page after your essay:
  - List the title of each work, the artist, the approximate date it was created, the city or region it came from originally, and the name of the museum gallery where the work can be found.
  - Paste in photographs of the items. If it's permitted at the museum, take a picture of the items while you're there. If it's not, find pictures of those specific items on the museum's web site.

## OPTION 2

### *The ancient world on film*

Every depiction of an historical event, whether in prose, poetry, painting, theater, or film, involves an artist using history to convey his or her own beliefs. What do the creators of the film and the authors of the source material it was based on want you to believe?

For this option, you need to choose a film that is set in the ancient world and that is based on an ancient primary source. In your essay, compare the agenda of the filmmakers with the agenda of the authors of the primary source. Describe and discuss the similarities and differences in how these creators reshaped this event for their own purposes. Use these similarities and differences to make an argument about the ways in which this particular event is leveraged to impose ideas on audiences and about what this event means to the people who create art about it.

### *Choosing your subjects*

- First, choose and watch any feature-length film set in the ancient era (3500 BCE to 500 CE). You can also choose two episodes of a television series set in the ancient world.
- Then find the ancient primary source material it was based on and read it. For example, if you chose the movie *300*, which is about Spartans fighting Persian invaders at the Battle of Thermopylae, the primary source you'd need would be the main ancient account of that battle, which is in Book 7 of *The Histories* by the famous historian Herodotus. Your primary source(s) must come from the ancient world (before 500 CE).
- Some suggestions for possible films or series and their corresponding sources are listed on the Essay #3 page on the course website. The list is not exhaustive, and you are not limited to this list as long as the film you choose is set in the ancient world and is based on ancient primary sources.

### Writing your paper

- Choose three moments or depictions from the film and find the corresponding events or depictions in the primary source.
  - For each moment or depiction, describe and discuss how it appears in the film and how it is presented similarly or differently in the primary source material.

**For example:** In the movie *300*, Xerxes and the Persians are depicted in a very distinctive and heavy-handed manner. If this is one of your three topics, could describe and discuss what tropes and visual and dialog cues the filmmakers were using to suggest how we should think of the Persians in the film, and why the filmmakers might have chosen to represent the Persians this way as part of their overall point about these events.

Meanwhile, Herodotos's presentation of the Persians is very different, which you can use to discuss what Herodotos wanted us to think about the Persians and the role he saw them as playing in this war.

After that, you could discuss how and why the two depictions are different and what this means for their two different perspectives on differences between Greeks and Persians.

- Use these similarities or differences to make an argument about (a) the agenda of the primary source author and how it compares to the agenda of the filmmakers, and (b) the ways this historical event is used by others to present their own ideas, and what this tells us about the shape and meaning of this event's impact and legacy on history.
  - **Please take note:** This essay is about the agenda of the primary source author as much as the filmmakers'. Do not use the source to "fact check" the film and list what it got "wrong". You must consider the primary source to be at least as skewed, manipulative, and agenda-driven as the film.
- On a separate "Works Discussed" page after your essay, list the title of film, year, director, stars and studio. Then list the book or books you drew your written evidence from, using standard citation style. The references to the primary source must also be properly cited in the text as usual.

# Requirements for All Papers

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All written assignments for this course **MUST** adhere to these requirements—or be subject to a reduced grade. Check all of the following before submitting any paper.

## Formatting musts

All papers submitted to me must:

1. Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. standard font, with one-inch margins. Do not add extra blank lines between paragraphs; instead, indent the first line of each paragraph to show a new paragraph has begun.
2. Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date.
3. Have page numbers on each page after the cover. The cover should not have a page number.
4. Include both citations and a bibliography. (See Evidence musts.)
5. Run at least the required length specified in the assignment.
6. Have titles of books, films, and plays italicized and capitalized.
7. Be submitted via BlackBoard as a Word or compatible file attachment or as a PDF attachment.

*If you are uncertain how to do any of this, ask me before submitting your paper.*

## Evidence musts

All papers submitted to me must:

1. Support all assertions with evidence from your sources.
2. Use only primary and secondary sources. Tertiary sources are not allowed, ever.
3. Provide a footnote or a parenthetical citation for all direct quotations, descriptions, paraphrases, and ideas from sources, with the required info (author from bibliography plus page or section number).
4. Include a bibliography listing all sources used, with all required info (author, title, publisher, year).

*If you are uncertain how to do any of this, ask me before submitting your paper.*

## Structure musts

All papers submitted to me must:

1. Have an introduction paragraph that states the problem or question being addressed; discusses possible opinions on this problem; and ends with a thesis statement—a statement of opinion that someone could disagree with.
2. Cover three reasons why your thesis is true. Each should have an assertion (what your reason is), a description of supporting evidence (some moment in your evidence that's an example of your assertion), and a discussion of how your evidence demonstrates the point you're making.
3. Have a conclusion that summarizes your three reasons and why they support your thesis.

*If you are uncertain how to do any of this, ask me before submitting your paper.*

## Hints for meeting requirements

### *Formatting musts*

**Use the template.** Save the trouble of setting up the cover and page numbers—use the MS Word template file I created.

**Page counts.** Page counts are for full pages not counting the cover page and bibliography. If the requirement is “3-4 pages”, what I am looking for is at least 3 full pages of text, not counting the cover and not counting the bibliography.

**BlackBoard notes.** You may only submit via BlackBoard. Do not submit written assignments as submission text—they must be file attachments. If you need help with BlackBoard, go to the Lehman IT BlackBoard support page or call the IT helpdesk at (718) 960-1111.

### *Evidence musts*

**You may not use tertiary sources for any assignment.** Tertiary sources include textbooks, encyclopedias, study guides, dictionaries, my lectures, YouTube videos, TV documentaries, blogs (even history-themed ones), essay aggregation platforms, and generally almost everything on the internet except online scholarly journals and transcribed primary sources. If you’re not sure, ask me.

**Citing direct quotes is not enough.** This common mistake will lose you points. Paraphrases and ideas must also be cited.

**Citation styles.** You can use Chicago, MLA, or any other citation style. What matters to me is that anything that’s not your analysis must have a footnote or a parenthetical citation that points to an item in your bibliography. See the Elephant Pamphlet for more on citations and bibliographies.

The number of sources you need to use varies from assignment to assignment.

### *Structure musts*

**See the Elephant Pamphlet** for more on how to do all of this, including thesis statements, essay structure, and citations.

**Optional draft.** You can submit an optional draft for any paper, no later than one class meeting before the due date. I won’t grade it, but I’ll give you feedback about how well you’re addressing your topic and thesis. To make sure I see it soonest, please email me your optional draft rather than uploading it to BlackBoard.

**Grammar.** I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is important. Please spell-check and, if you’re not sure about your writing, have a friend read it.

**See me for guidance.** I am available anytime, by email or in office hours, to discuss any aspect of your paper.

## Grading Criteria

Each paper will be graded according to the following criteria. A copy of the grading form I use is shown at right.

- **Introduction (20%)** • States a topic and problem within the assignment • Ends with a definite thesis statement (a specific opinion that can be disagreed with) • Thesis gives insight into the assignment prompt
- **Organization (25%)** • Main body organized in 3 sections, each addressing a different aspect of the thesis and building support for it • Each section is driven by a specific, concrete assertion • Each section is self-contained and focused on its topic
- **Analysis (25%)** • Interpretation dominates over description (why over what) • Analysis prefers the specific to the general • Analysis provides insight on the relevant time and culture • Analysis supports the section assertions and overall thesis • Analysis provides in-depth answers to questions in prompt
- **Evidence (15%)** • Evidence used is relevant and well-chosen • Assertions are consistently supported by evidence • Independent voice retained with judicious use of quotes
- **Conclusion (15%)** • Paper ends with an appropriate concluding paragraph • Conclusion draws together the arguments made in each section and reinforces the thesis • Conclusion answers questions from assignment prompt

## Grading Deductions

There are two kinds of deductions relating to formatting, citations, and other technical requirements (see above for the requirements for all papers). Some deductions are reversible and can be gotten back by resubmitting the assignment with the issues corrected. Other deductions are not reversible.

**Reversible deductions.** If you have one of these deductions, you may resubmit your paper with these problems fixed, and I will modify or remove the deductions. Only these deductions can be reversed.

No cover sheet	-3
No page numbers	-2
Work titles not italicized/capitalized	-2
Missing items in bibliography	-4
No bibliography	-8
Some citations missing	-5
Many citations missing	-10
All citations missing	-30

**Nonreversible deductions.** These deductions reflect problems inherent to the paper as it was submitted. They cannot be reversed.

Submitted late (1 meeting)	-10
Submitted late (2 meetings)	-20
Submitted late (3+ meetings)	-30
Too short	-10
Fewer sources than required	-20
Tertiary sources used	-10
Heavy use of tertiary sources	-25
Plagiarism	-100

# Academic Policies

*Spring 2023*

**Assignments that include any plagiarism will receive a zero. Students engaging in repeated instances of plagiarism will fail the course outright and will be remanded to the College for disciplinary action.**

A variety of accommodations are available to students with disabilities, and tutoring is available to students seeking help.

Listed below are various official school policies included in all Lehman College syllabi, with clarifications relating to this course as required. You are responsible for this information and for all information in this syllabus.

- Attendance Policy
- Accommodating Disabilities
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy
- Technology and Blackboard Information
- Instructional Support Services (ISSP)
- Writing-Intensive Course Requirements
- Student Handbook

## Attendance Policy

Student handbook notes that “Students are expected to attend all class meetings as scheduled, and are responsible for all class work missed as a result of late registration or absence. Excessive absences in any course may result in a lower final grade.”

- Participation in online discussion is a required part of the course. Missing classes will damage your grade.
  - Textbooks are designed to give you the basics; in our class meetings we try to make sense of things, and sift out what’s important. Missing classes means you miss out on a key part of our trying to put things together.
  - If you miss quizzes, it will put a big crimp in your grade for the course. Quizzes are not made up, so the quizzes you miss will count against you.
- Religious observances that affect your class attendance should be discussed in advance.

## Accommodating Disabilities

Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may require any special considerations should register with the Office of Student Disability Services in order to submit official paperwork to instructor.

- Office of Student Disability Services: Shuster Hall, Room 238, 718-960-8441.
- Student Disability Services: <http://www.lehman.edu/student-disability-services/>
- Email: [disability.services@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:disability.services@lehman.cuny.edu).

## Technology and Blackboard Information

You are required to use Blackboard to access course materials and to post assignments to Safe Assign.

You are required to provide your best email address to me; if not provided I will use the one given by the school. Either way you must sign into that email account for course messages—and check it! Blackboard will only allow me to send individual and mass messages to Lehman accounts. If there is an issue, this is the only account to which I can send and if I email the class something, the fact that you didn't know about an assignment or course change because you don't check your email will never be accepted for not knowing the information.

- Blackboard Links and Support: <http://www.lehman.edu/itr/blackboard.php>
- For Information Technology: <http://www.lehman.edu/itr/>

## Instructional Support Services (ISSP)

Lehman College's Instructional Support Services Program (ISSP) is home of the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and Science Learning Center (SLC). Both offer students an array of activities and services designed to support classroom learning. Open to students at any level, there are individual, small group, and/or workshop sessions designed to improve "proficiency in writing, reading, research, and particular academic subject areas. Computer-assisted writing/language tutorial programs are also available," as well as individual tutors, workshops and tutors.

- Regular tutoring hours for fall and spring semesters are: M–T 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Lehman College Tutoring Center (LTC): Humanities, Social Sciences, and Writing Tutoring: <http://www.lehman.edu/academics/instructional-support-services/humanities-tutoring.php>
- Or visit the offices in the Old Gym, Room 205; or call ACE at 718-960-8175, and SLC at 718-960-7707.

Library Tutors are also available in the Library. These tutors offer help with Library resources and computers.

## Writing-Intensive Course Requirements

Lehman Students must complete four writing-intensive courses. In a WI Course, "students should be expected to write approximately 15-20 pages of proofread, typed work that is turned in to the instructor for grading." Various courses stipulate various requirements designed to meet this requisite over the course of the semester. WI courses focus on revision, short and long assignments, graded and ungraded writing, journals, etc, and each will have "a class-size limit of twenty-two. Under no circumstances will more than twenty-five students be admitted to any writing-intensive section."

- Writing Intensive FAQs: <http://www.lehman.edu/academics/general-education/writing-faqs.php>

## Student Handbook

Students are strongly encouraged to download and become familiar with the Student Handbook.

- Student handbook link: <http://www.lehman.edu/campus-life/support-services.php>

# Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

## What counts as plagiarism?

Here is CUNY's official definition of plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:
  - Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
  - Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without noting the source.
  - Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
  - Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
- Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers; paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source; and "cutting & pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

## Key points

**Use of writing or ideas.** The key phrase is right up front in the definition: "another person's ideas". Copying and pasting from another source without attribution is plagiarism, but so is using someone's ideas even if they're reworded. Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's work and presenting it as your own, under your name.

**What is an essay?** When you present an academic essay, it's an act that says, "This is what I think. These are the conclusions I have drawn from studying this issue." An essay is your assessment of a subject, and the ideas in it are presented as your ideas, with any ideas not your own carefully footnoted and clearly segregated so it's clear what is your analysis and what is evidence drawn from primary or secondary sources.

**Paraphrasing.** Paraphrasing or putting things into your own words does not alter the use of someone else's ideas as your own. Here's why. If the phrase appearing in an essay written by someone else is, for example, "To apply this type of painting to residential interiors was a Roman idea", and in your essay it's reworded as "it was the Romans who applied this type of painting method to home walls", it doesn't change the fact that someone else's ideas are being presented as if they were your own, as if those ideas originated in your own mind. It's still intellectual dishonesty.

**Citations.** All information from any source you use must have a citation, period. This is true whether it's a direct quote, a paraphrase, or just an idea you're talking about that came from the source you used. For more information on citations, please see the section on citations and bibliographies in the Elephant Pamphlet (pages 13-19).

**Self-plagiarism.** Reusing writing you've previously submitted for credit, in order to get credit for it a second time, is a form of academic dishonesty known as "self-plagiarism." For example, if you retake a course, you may not submit a paper, or parts of that paper, that you previously submitted for credit the first time you took the course for the same assignment the second time you take that course. You must write a different paper consisting of new material for the submission the second time around. Similarly, if you wrote a paper for course A, and course B has a similar assignment, you may not submit that paper, or parts of that paper, for the similar assignment for course B. You must write a different paper consisting of new material for course B.

## ***CUNY plagiarism policy***

“Academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York. Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion.” All violations are reported to the Department and Lehman College’s Academic Integrity Officer.

## ***Policy for this course***

Lehman College is committed to the highest standards of academic honesty.

Acts of academic dishonesty include—but are not limited to—plagiarism (in drafts, outlines, and examinations, as well as final papers), cheating, bribery, academic fraud, sabotage of research materials, the sale of academic papers, and the falsification of records. An individual who engages in these or related activities or who knowingly aids another who engages in them is acting in an academically dishonest manner and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Plagiarism includes the incorporation of any material that is not original with you without attribution, whether from a book, article, web site, or fellow student, in any paper or assignment.

Assignments that include any plagiarism will receive a zero and the offending student will be subject to additional action by the College. Students engaging in repeated instances of plagiarism will fail the course outright and will be remanded to the College for disciplinary action.

- For detailed information on definitions and examples of Academic Dishonesty, including Cheating, Plagiarism, Obtaining Unfair Advantage and Falsification of Records and Documents, please refer to the student handbook or visit: <http://lehman.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2017-2019/Undergraduate-Bulletin/Academic-Services-and-Policies/Academic-Integrity>