

Landscapes and Seascapes of the Ancient Mediterranean

CLST 3318/5318 AAMW 6130

Thomas Tartaron, Instructor

Location TBA

NB: This is the course outline for 2023. Dates and course content will change as I develop the course for Fall 2025

Fall 2025 • Wednesday 12–2:59 PM

The Mediterranean environment is both diverse and unique, and nurtured numerous complex societies along its shores in antiquity. This seminar offers a primer on theoretical and methodological approaches to studying landscapes and seascapes of the Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the early modern era, at scales from local to international and on land and underwater. Concepts from processual, post-processual, and current archaeologies will be considered, and field techniques including excavation and surface survey, remote sensing and geophysics, GIS modeling, and ethnography/ethnoarchaeology are examined. Course content and discussion focus on case studies that illustrate how these tools are used to reconstruct the appearance and resources of the natural environment; overland and maritime routes; settlement location, size, function, and demography; social and economic networks; and agricultural, pastoral, and nomadic lifeways. Seminar participants will develop case studies of their own geographical and chronological interest.

Participant responsibilities

The main responsibilities are:

- (1) do weekly readings and participate in seminar discussions;
- (2) write response papers (most weeks);
- (3) term paper on a project of your interest, agreed with me. As you develop the topic, there are two “milestones”: an initial proposal for the term paper is due on October 19; and on November 9 a detailed outline and bibliography are due. The paper due date is December 10.
- (4) an oral presentation on either November 21 or November 30. It makes sense that your presentation would be on your term project, though this is not absolutely required.

I will communicate details of these responsibilities during the semester. Course content will be hosted on CANVAS (<https://canvas.upenn.edu/>).

Schedule of Topics (Dates and Topics will change in 2025). This is just an outline; details such as readings and assignments will be added and posted on Canvas.

8/31: Introduction

- course details
- constructing tentative definitions of landscape and seascape
- evolution of disciplinary understanding of landscape

9/7: "Scientific/empirical" landscapes: reconstructing physical environments

9/14: "Socially constructed" landscapes: Phenomenology

9/21: Multiple scales of time and space

9/28: Networks: terrestrial landscapes

10/5: Networks: maritime cultural landscapes and seascapes

10/19: Networks: case studies

Initial proposal for term paper due.

10/26: Socially constructed landscapes: case studies

11/2: Surface survey, GIS, and other techniques

11/9: Ethnohistoric and ethnoarchaeological approaches

Detailed outline and bibliography for term paper due.

11/16: Indigenous points of view

11/21 Presentations I

11/30: Presentations II

12/7: Concluding discussion

Final paper due December 10