

## **AncH 3104 The Greek World after Alexander**

**McInerney**

**Spring 2025**

### **Syllabus**

#### **1. Course Description.**

This class is designed as a detailed investigation of the world created by Alexander the Great. We will cover the three hundred year period known as the Hellenistic Age from the career of Alexander the Great (354-323 BC) until the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium (31BC). This was a period during which the world of the Greeks underwent extraordinary and far-reaching changes, as Greek culture was established as far afield as northwestern India, central Asia and Egypt. In the same period kingdoms controlled by Alexander's Successors used Greek culture to define their rule, establishing a Greek culture of the elite in regions which previously had been dominated by the Persians. As Greek and non-Greek worlds collided, a new interpretation of Greek culture emerged, giving rise, among other things, to universities and professional schools, state subsidized health care, triumphalist architecture, the heroization of the noble savage, coinage with royal portraits, the deification of men and a multitude of other social, artistic and political forms familiar to us. It was an age of radical change, dislocation, as Greek populations colonized regions previously unknown to them.

This class is about those changes, and attempts to evaluate the nature of Hellenism. Did the Greeks borrow from other cultures, or impose their own view of the world on others? Did Greek culture affect all non-Greek populations equally, or was the influence felt most in particular regions or among specific classes? To what extent did Greek culture facilitate the exploitation of non-Greek populations, helping to exclude the non-Greek? How did local elites "become" Greek? What role did classical culture play in helping the Greeks define themselves in relation to the conquered, and what were the most important elements in that culture: theatre, poetry, architecture? How did each of this contribute to a discourse on power, autonomy and identity in the eastern Mediterranean during the three centuries when Roman power was coming to dominate political affairs?

With an emphasis on primary sources, many of which are contemporary inscriptions and papyrus documents, I propose to examine these questions in a number of different settings. The first part of the semester will be organized chronologically, charting the fate of Alexander's empire and the kingdoms which arose from it. We then treat a number of themes, including the packaging of Greek culture in the Library of Alexandria and the origins of Pergamene cultural style, Hellenistic reliance on local urban elites, the use of philanthropy and benefaction, relations between town and country, the emergence of ruler-cult and the concerns of Hellenistic philosophy, all with a view to developing a more nuanced view of Hellenism as a culture defined by a set of power relationships.

#### **2. Contact Information.**

My office is located at Logan 264. My phone number is 898-8619, and my office hours will be held on Wednesday afternoons from 3.00-5.00 p.m. If you cannot make Wednesday afternoons you can email me: [jmcinern@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jmcinern@sas.upenn.edu).

#### **3. Requirements and Policies**

We meet twice each week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each week a part of the Thursday class will be devoted to discussion.

If you are going to miss class because of athletic commitments do not take this class, as I will not be offering make-up work. If you are a student with a learning disability please register with the Student Disabilities Service in the first two weeks of class. SDS will notify me once you have done so. If you become ill or experience an episode of serious hardship please make sure you contact the College Office and your academic advisor.

Plagiarism: In this class you are expected to be honest and to produce your own work. Plagiarism, which involves taking the work of others (even AI) and passing it off as your own, is dishonest. If caught you'll fail and the case will be referred to Penn's Office of Student Conduct. You can find out more about this at <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>.

Attendance: You may miss up to two sessions for any reason—illness, religious observance, sporting events—with no penalty. If a medical issue has a longer impact you need to discuss this with me. You'll be responsible for making up missed work by writing a short paper, after discussing this with me. After your two absences, you risk failing the class.

Electronics: Please don't use electronic equipment in this class. If you have a particular need please discuss it with me.

Late Work: Please submit your work on time. No late work is accepted except under exceptional circumstances.

Contesting grades: If you feel your work has not been fairly graded you are welcome to write a one page explanation of where you feel your work was misconstrued. Following this I will reread your work and discuss your complaints with you.

Generative AI: You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Please keep two things in mind: AI frequently gets facts wrong; and using it stunts brain growth.

The graded components of this class are as follows:

Midterm	30%
Final Exam	30%
Term Paper (12-15 p)	30%
Quizzes (2)	10%

As an alternative to the term paper students may prepare a PowerPoint presentation for delivery in class (20-30 minutes). This may be done individually or by groups of up to three students. Please note: oral presentations will still be graded on the quality of the research and the arguments presented in the report. If you wish to take this option you must notify me by Spring Break.

#### 4. Text Books

**Author:** Shipley  
**Title:** Greek World After Alexander  
**Publisher:** Routledge

**Author:** Arrian  
**Title:** Campaigns of Alexander  
**Publisher:** Penguin

**Author:** Stoneman  
**Title:** Greek Alexander Romance  
**Publisher:** Penguin

**Author:** Fowler  
**Title:** Hellenistic Poetry  
**Publisher:** Wisconsin

**Author:** Burstein  
**Title:** Hellenistic Age  
**Publisher:** Cambridge