

Introduction to Mediterranean Archaeology

CLST 1300/ANTH 1300

PROSPECTUS (syllabus will come later)

Lecture: Monday and Wednesday 12:00–12:59 PM

Recitations: Thursday 10:15–11:14 AM (402), Thursday 12:00–12:59 PM (403); Friday 10:15–11:14 AM (404), or Friday 1:45–2:44 PM (405)

Professor Tom Tartaron

Email: tartaron@sas.upenn.edu

Office: 293 Cohen Hall; Office Hours 2:00–3:00 PM Thursday or by appointment

Teaching Assistants

- To be announced

Overview

Many of the world's great ancient civilizations flourished on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea: the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Minoans and Mycenaeans, Greeks and Romans, just to name a few. In this course, we will focus on the ways that archaeologists recover and interpret the material traces of the past, working alongside natural scientists, historians and art historians, epigraphers and philologists, and many others. Through readings, lectures, discussions, and hands-on projects, you will learn how an archaeological expedition recovers the remains of the ancient world, and how we use those remains to construct narratives about ancient communities. These stories are derived from a close reading of the *material culture*, from the most spectacular to the most humble, from the Parthenon to wooden huts. Archaeological sites and themes from over 2000 years of Mediterranean history will be presented. As we examine ancient palaces, temples, houses, and forts, we will think about how physical objects (pottery, art, jewelry, tools, weapons) are created and used in a range of contexts (e.g., domestic, public, cultic, etc.) and how they may reflect social organization, cross-cultural trade, and other dimensions of life. We will learn how archaeology is relevant to many issues that concern our modern world. This course is a non-technical introduction that assumes no prior knowledge of archaeology.

Course Objectives and Requirements

- Introduce major archaeological sites of the Mediterranean world from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity
- Introduce the Penn Museum
- Teach students basic archaeological field methods and artifact analysis

- Familiarize students with political and ethical debates in archaeology
- Manage prehistoric and historical chronologies

Course Delivery:

1. **Lecture:** Presuming that the semester will be fully in-person, the Monday and Wednesday meetings will mix illustrated PowerPoint lectures with discussion of the readings and visual material that I present. You'll have several short readings to do BEFORE each class meeting.
2. **Readings:** There is no required text to purchase. The readings will be available on Canvas as PDFs, and you will also be assigned various Web sites to visit, read, and critique.
3. **Quizzes and discussion posts:** Once per week, after you've done the reading, you'll take a short quiz and/or make one or more discussion posts on Canvas. This is to make sure you've understood the content from the readings and lectures and to prepare you for the next week's class meetings.
4. **Response papers:** I will assign 1–2 short writing assignments in which you will be asked to react to some provocative, and possibly controversial, statement.
5. **Exams:** There will be a midterm exam and a final exam, both in-person. Details will follow, and there will be various optional study aids in advance of each exam.
6. **Recitations:** You will choose one recitation section, on Thursday or Friday, which will normally meet at the Penn Museum, which boasts one of the finest university collections of Mediterranean art and archaeology in the world. Visits to the museum will include wandering through its galleries, tours, and work in the classroom with objects. Further instructions will be provided.

Tentative Course Requirements/Evaluation:

- Participation (discussion/lecture posts, in-class discussion): 20%
- Response and/or positions papers: 20%
- Museum exercise: 20%
- Mid-term exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%

Lectures: The lectures will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays and are the heart of the course. If you attend all the lectures, take notes and pay attention, chances are good that you will flourish. Lectures do NOT duplicate readings: the two complement each other. Each lecture is designed both to convey a certain amount of information and to link various themes in a continuous narrative.

Images of the material culture (artifacts, monuments) will be used extensively throughout the course to facilitate our understanding of the archaeology of past Mediterranean cultures. It is, therefore, fundamental for you to learn (i.e., memorize) a certain number of the images, on which you will be tested in exams. Most of these images can be found in your readings or in the PowerPoint presentations, which will be posted on Canvas *after* each class.

Also posted on Canvas will be occasional **worksheets**. The worksheets include a series of questions that highlight the main topics and themes of the class. The completion of these worksheets is optional as they are meant to be used as a study tool.

Recitations: Recitation groups will be held on Thursday/Friday and normally take place at the Penn Museum. These **mandatory** meetings will enable you to engage intimately with the material culture under discussion by touring the galleries and working with objects in special classrooms. The Penn Museum possesses one of the finest university collections of Mediterranean art and archaeology in the world. One of your assignments will focus on material from the museum.

Detailed information will be available soon on the course syllabus. If you have any questions, please email the instructor at the address above.