

Ancient Near Eastern Religion

Religion 227**Classroom:** 218 Comenius Hall**Class Time:** TTh 10:20am-11:30am**E-mail:** radine@moravian.edu**Telephone:** x1314**Professor:** Jason Radine**Office:** 202 Comenius Hall**Office Hours:** TTh 1-2pm
and by appointment

Course Description: A study of the religions of the ancient Near East, this course will explore the myths and rituals of the peoples of Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt before the Roman era. Foundational to western civilization in general, these religions also form the cultural context and background for the sacred scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Course Goals: This course will not just focus on mythology, but also on ancient religion as lived experience. While the differences between these religions and those of today are substantial and will be explored in detail, this course will reveal the commonalities of religious life then and now. Ancient religions were expressions of the hopes, fears, anxieties, and imaginations that are basic to the human experience, and the study of these religions opens a window to the understanding of people of the past as human beings, and a better perspective on modern religious life as well.

Assignments and Grading: There will be four exams, each worth 10% of your grade, and four take-home essay questions based on the assigned books, each worth 5%. There will be two research papers as well, each counting for 20% (see the Student Handbook for the academic honesty policy). Attendance roll will be taken in each class day, with two unexcused absences reducing the total course grade by 1/3 of a letter. Assigned readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned. This is not a passive-learning course; we will be actively studying and discussing the texts and other material in class. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Sample Paper Topics:

Magic and Ritual Power

Relations between Deity and Monarch

Comparative Views of the Netherworld

Militant Goddesses: Inanna, Ishtar, Anat

Sacred Sexuality: Temple Prostitutes, Homosexuality, Virgin Goddesses

Required Texts:Bottéro, Jean, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, University of Chicago Press: 2001.Dalley, Stephanie, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Revised Edition), Oxford: 2000.David, Rosalie, *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt*, Penguin Books: 2002.Parker, Simon B., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. Society of Biblical Literature: 1997

Simpson, William Kelly, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, Yale University Press,
online resource through Reeves Library.

Handouts

Class Schedule

Introduction and Overview

Introduction, overview of ancient religion August 31st

Mesopotamian Religion

Overview of Mesopotamia September 2nd
Readings: Bottéro 1

Dumuzi and Inanna/Ishtar September 7th
Readings: Bottéro 2; Dalley, *Descent of Ishtar*

Rosh Hashanah September 9th

Adapa and Atrahasis September 14th
Readings: Bottéro 3 and 4; Dalley, *Adapa and Atrahasis*

Anzu, Etana, and Dummu September 16th
Readings: Bottéro 5; Dalley, *Anzu, Etana, and Dummu*

The Triumph of Marduk September 21st
Readings: Bottéro 5; Dalley, *Enuma Elish*
Mesopotamian Religion Exam 1

Fall Convocation September 23rd

Gilgamesh September 28th
Readings: Bottéro 6; Dalley, *Gilgamesh*
Bottéro paper #1 due

Gilgamesh September 30th
Readings: Bottéro 6; Dalley, *Gilgamesh*

Erra and Nergal October 5th
Readings: Bottéro 7; Dalley, *Erra and Nergal*

Mesopotamian Religion Exam 2 October 7th

Ancient Egyptian Religion

Introduction to Ancient Egypt <i>Readings:</i> David 1 Bottéro paper #2 due	October 14 th
Old Kingdom Egypt, cult of Re <i>Readings:</i> David 2	October 19 th
Old Kingdom Egypt continued, pyramids <i>Readings:</i> David 3	October 21 st
Middle Kingdom Egypt <i>Readings:</i> David 4	October 26 th
Middle Kingdom Egypt, cult of Osiris <i>Readings:</i> David 4	October 28 th
New Kingdom Egypt <i>Readings:</i> David 5 David paper #1 due	November 2 nd
New Kingdom Egypt and the Aten Revolution <i>Readings:</i> David 6 and 7	November 4 th
Hellenistic Egypt <i>Readings:</i> David 8-9	November 9 th
Ancient Egyptian Religion Exam	November 11 th

Ugaritic Religion

Introduction to ancient Ugarit <i>Readings:</i> Parker, Introduction David paper #2 due	November 16 th
Ugaritic Hero Tales <i>Readings:</i> Parker, <i>Kirta</i> and <i>Aqhat</i> First paper due	November 18 th
Ba'al Cycle <i>Readings:</i> Parker, <i>Baal</i>	November 30 th

Miscellaneous Ugaritic Myths

Readings: Parker, Shorter Texts

December 2nd

Ugaritic Ritual Life

Readings: Handouts

December 7th

Ugaritic Religion Exam

1:30pm

December 16th

Second paper due