

Ancient Near Eastern Religion

Religion 227**Classroom:** 218 Comenius Hall**Class Time:** TTh 2:35-3:45pm**E-mail:** radine@moravian.edu**Telephone:** x1314**Professor:** Jason Radine**Office:** 108 Comenius Hall**Office Hours:** TTh 1:30-2:30pm
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%. Plagiarism can result in a failed paper or failing grade in the class as a whole (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 Elaine Mara, 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 January 15th

Mesopotamian Religion

Overview of Mesopotamia January 17th
Readings: Bottéro 1

Dumuzi and Inanna/Ishtar January 22nd-24th
Readings: Bottéro 2; Dalley, *Descent of Ishtar*

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

Anzu, Etana, and Dummu January 29th
Readings: Bottéro 5; Dalley, *Anzu, Etana, and Dummu*

The Triumph of Marduk January 31st –Feb 5th
Readings: Bottéro 5; Dalley, *Enuma Elish*
Mesopotamian Religion Exam 1

Gilgamesh February 7th
Readings: Bottéro 6; Dalley, *Gilgamesh*
Bottéro paper #1 due

Gilgamesh February 12th
Readings: Bottéro 6; Dalley, *Gilgamesh*

Erra and Nergal February 14th
Readings: Bottéro 7; Dalley, *Erra and Nergal*

Mesopotamian Religion Exam 2 February 19th

Ancient Egyptian Religion

Introduction to Ancient Egypt <i>Readings: David 1</i> Bottéro paper #2 due	February 21 st
Old Kingdom Egypt, cult of Re <i>Readings: David 2</i>	February 26 th
Old Kingdom Egypt continued, pyramids <i>Readings: David 3</i>	February 28 th
Middle Kingdom Egypt <i>Readings: David 4</i>	March 12 th
Middle Kingdom Egypt, cult of Osiris <i>Readings: David 4</i>	March 14 th
New Kingdom Egypt <i>Readings: David 5</i> David paper #1 due	March 19 th
New Kingdom Egypt and the Aten Revolution <i>Readings: David 6 and 7</i>	March 21 st
Hellenistic Egypt <i>Readings: David 8-9</i>	March 26 th
Ancient Egyptian Religion Exam	March 28 th

Ugaritic Religion

Introduction to ancient Ugarit <i>Readings: Parker, Introduction</i> David paper #2 due	April 9 th
Ugaritic Hero Tales <i>Readings: Parker, Kirta and Aqhat</i> First paper due	April 11 th -16 th
Ba'al Cycle <i>Readings: Parker, Baal</i>	April 18 th
Miscellaneous Ugaritic Myths <i>Readings: Parker, Shorter Texts</i>	April 23 rd

Ugaritic Ritual Life
Readings: Handouts
Second paper due

April 25th

Ugaritic Religion Exam

8:30am!

Friday, May 3rd