

YALE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic world

SUMMER 2025

HIST S402/CLCV S202

MWF 09:00-11:15am

Prof. J.G. Manning

Departments of Classics and History

HQ 237

Joseph.manning@yale.edu

OFFICE HOURS: MW 11:15 - 1 PM

Aims of the course

To introduce the student to the history and culture of what is called the Hellenistic period, that period of history between the rise of Macedonian imperialism in the fourth century BC and the death of Cleopatra VII, and the annexation of Egypt by Augustus in 30 BC. The period was in many ways a pivotal one in world history. The “Greek” world was considerably expanded into the Mediterranean and as far east as Afghanistan, India and south into the Sudan and beyond. Two of the great world religions, Judaism and Christianity, rose to prominence in the period, world trade was extended for the first time from the Mediterranean to the Far East, coinage was used in market exchange, and the sciences as well as philosophy were extended and developed. Societies became “multi-cultural” for the first time, and a major concern of the course will be on the definition of “Hellenistic.” By the end of the course you will have a sound foundation of the basic facts and the sources of the period as well as a good sense of Alexander-one of the most important historical figures in world history- and the culture, and socio-economic trends of the period, which in some ways mark the beginning of the modern world. You will better understand the context of the rise of

Rome, the split between the Latin West and the Greek East, the coming of Islam, and ultimately just how intimately bound together we moderns and the Hellenistic world are.

Grading

Essay 1 15%

Essay 2 15%

Midterm 30%

Participation: Required

Final Exam 40%

NOTE: Attendance at lectures is required.

Plagiarism (via Yale College Writing Center <http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/>

[Links to an external site.](#)

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Plagiarism is the use of

someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. Here are three reasons not to do it:

- By far the deepest consequence to plagiarizing is the detriment to your intellectual and moral development: you won't learn anything, and your ethics will be corrupted.
- Giving credit where it's due but adding your own reflection will get you higher grades than putting your name on someone else's work. In an academic context, it counts more to show your ideas in conversation than to try to present them as *sui generis*.
- Finally, Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. The most common penalty is suspension from the university, but students caught plagiarizing are also subject to lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of expulsion. Please be sure to review [Yale's Academic Integrity Policy](#)

See: <http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/undergraduate-writing>

Required Reading

- M. Errington, *A History of the Hellenistic World*. Blackwell, 2008. (= *History*)
- Michel Austin, *The Hellenistic world from Alexander to the Roman conquest*. 2d ed. Cambridge, 2006

(= Austin).

- Plutarch, *The Age of Alexander*. Penguin, 1973. (= Plutarch)

Additional reading will come from Polybius, *The rise of the Roman empire*. Penguin (=Polybius), as well as a few articles, which will be placed up on the course website in pdf format and/or available in the Classics library in Phelps Hall.

Recommended resources

- Excellent online information here: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*:
<http://orbis.library.yale.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=1191&recCount=50&recPointer=2&bibId=10421056>
- [Links to an external site.](#)
- Worthington, Ian, ed. 2003. *Alexander the Great: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- Levi, *Atlas of the Greek world*. Facts on File, 1991.
- *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 7, part 1, with plates volume. *The Hellenistic World*. Cambridge, 1984.
- *A companion to the Hellenistic world*, ed. Andrew Erskine. Blackwell. (= *Companion*)
- The Perseus Project, on-line resources (outline of Greek history, and texts of ancient authors):

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0009>

[Links to an external site.](#)

Week 1

Monday June 30

- General Introduction to the Course.
- General background to Hellenistic History. Sources and problems.

READING: *History*, pp. 1-9; Austin, pp. 1-17.

Wednesday July 2

- Sketch of fourth century history. **Philip II and the rise of Macedon**

READING: Plutarch, *Demosthenes*; Demosthenes, *Second Olynthiac*; Isocrates, *Address to Philip*.

- Philip's creation of a "national" state

READING: Wilcken, *Alexander*, pp. 5-49; Borza, *Shadow*, pp. 5-57, 198-252; Fredricksmeyer, "On the final aims of Philip II."

Friday July 4 Holiday

Week 2

Monday July 7

- Alexander the man (356-323 BC), the myth, the legend, and a decade that shook the world

READING: Austin, TEXTS 2-4, 7; 11-14; 19-20; 23; Plutarch, *Alexander*; Badian, "Alexander the Great and the loneliness of power;" Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, pp. 121- 48.

- The successors to Alexander. **The division of the empires**

READING: *History*, pp. 13-62; Austin, TEXTS 26, 29, 45, 58; Plutarch, *Demetrius*.

Wednesday July 9

- Greeks abroad

READING: Shipley, "Armies and emigration," in *The Greek world after Alexander*, Routledge, 2000, pp. 54-60; Walbank, "The Hellenistic world: A homogeneous culture?" in *The Hellenistic world*, Harvard, 1981, pp. 60-78.

- The world's first megalopolis: **Alexandria**

READING: R. Bagnall, "Alexandria: Library of dreams," Austin, TEXTS 292, 322-323; EM Forster, *Alexandria*.

Friday July 11

Week 3

Monday July 14

- **Social life in the Hellenistic world**

READING: Menander, “Old Cantankerous.” Austin, TEXTS 303, 307, 309, 311-312, 320, 324-325.

- **Edges East & West**

READING: Austin, TEXTS 178, 188; Walbank, in *The Hellenistic world*, Harvard, 1981, pp. 198-208; Bernard, “An ancient Greek city in central Asia” (Ai Khnum).

Wednesday July 16

- **Political and Economic Institutions**

READING: *History*, pp. 63-76; Reger, “The economy,” in *A companion to the hellenistic world*, pp. 331-53; Austin, TEXTS 12, 29, 46, 166, 255, 256, 258, 296-299.

- **The Greek World in the Hellenistic Age**

READING: *History*, pp. 79-110, 181-190, 198-213; Austin, TEXTS 61, 64, 67, 69, 70, 71, 100.

Friday July 18 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 4

Monday July 21

- **The Seleucid Kingdom**

READING: *History*, pp. 171-180, 221-224, 271-325, 267-278; Austin, TEXTS 57, 162-163, 166, 178, 184, 193, 205, 207-208.

- The Ptolemies of Egypt

READING: *History*, pp.143-64; 290-308; Austin, TEXTS 254-256; 262, 271, 282-283.

Wednesday July 23

- Armies, pirates, resistance and the role of climate change in the Hellenistic world

READING: Gabrielsen, "Piracy and the slave-trade," in *Companion*, pp. 389-404.; Austin, TEXTS 23, 104.

- The Maccabean Revolt

READING: Green, *Alexander to Actium*, Berkeley, 1990, Chapter 25 & 29, 1 & 2 Maccabees; Austin, TEXTS 214-217.

Friday July 25

- Hellenistic Religions and philosophies

READING: Shipley, pp. 153-91; Austin, TEXTS 146, 147, 149, 151, 214

- Pyrrhus and Greeks in Italy and Sicily

READING: Green, *Alexander to Actium*, Berkeley, 1990, Chapter 8, Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*, Austin, TEXT 59.

Week 5

Monday July 28

- The Achaean League

READING: Shipley, pp. 133-40; Walbank, in *The Hellenistic world*, Harvard, 1981, pp. 141-158; Polybius, pp. 148-177.

- Royal Women

READING: Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, *Moralia*, Diodorus Siculus, Carney, *Olympias: Mother of Alexander the Great*

Wednesday July 30

- Antony and Cleopatra and the end of the Hellenistic world

READING: Green, *Alexander to Actium*, Berkeley, 1990, Chapter 37.

- Science and technology in the Hellenistic age

READING: Selections from L. Russo, *The Forgotten revolution*, Springer, 2004.

Friday August 1

- FINAL EXAM