

98-030
Student College Egyptology

Course Syllabus

<http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/98-030/>

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Purpose

Since the days of Alexander the Great, travelers from around the world have marveled at the artistic and architectural legacy of the Egyptians, and have wondered at their literature, religion, and culture. Our understanding of this remarkable and long-enduring civilization continues to deepen and grow even today.

The purpose of this course is to give you a broad introduction to the ancient Egyptian civilization and the study thereof. We will start with an overview of Egyptian history as it is presently understood, followed by a history of Egyptology as an academic discipline. The rest of the course will discuss specific cultural topics such as the Egyptian language, religion, and funerary practices.

Grading and Attendance

This course is graded pass/fail. There will be two exams: a midterm worth 100 points, and a final worth 150. These exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Several homework assignments and pop quizzes will be given *for bonus points only*; between 30 and 50 bonus points will be available. If your final point total exceeds 150 (60%) and you have met the attendance requirements, you will pass the course.

Per Student College policy, if you have more than three (3) unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the course. If you need to take an *excused* absence, please don't hesitate to discuss it with me. Absences for family or medical emergencies will be automatically excused; other absences must be discussed with me in advance. Missed bonus points cannot be made up.

“Textbook”

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, I have written a short article about each topic. After each session, the article will be added to the course website in PDF format. (The URL is near the top of this page.) You can read the PDFs on your own computer, or in a cluster, or print them out if you wish; I'm saving trees by not printing unwanted copies.

You should still follow along with each lecture, taking notes and asking questions as they arise, as this will help to “flesh out” the printed material, and questions may lead to interesting information I didn't include in the articles. The slides I use in each lecture are visual aids to make things more interesting in class; you will not be tested on anything in the slides which is not also in the articles.

Course outline by week

1. (14 Jan) Course Info; Introduction to Geography and History
2. (21 Jan) History I: The Predynastic period to the Old Kingdom
3. (28 Jan) History II: The Middle Kingdom and Intermediate Periods
4. (4 Feb) History III: The New Kingdom and its aftermath
5. (11 Feb) History IV: The Late, Classical, and Coptic Periods
6. (18 Feb) History V: The history of Egyptology
7. (25 Feb) Midterm exam
8. (4 Mar) The Egyptian language
9. (10 Mar) Spring Break—no class
10. (17 Mar) Religion I: General Concepts and Heliopolitan mythology
11. (24 Mar) Religion II: Hermopolitan and Theban mythology
12. (1 Apr) Mummies and mummification
13. (8 Apr) Art and architecture
14. (15 Apr) Egypt in the media
15. (22 Apr) Review for final exam; random questions answered
16. (29 Apr) Final exam

The Midterm Exam will be returned on 4 March at the beginning of class, so you won't wonder how you're doing over Spring Break. The Final Exam takes place during the last week of classes, so you needn't worry about Egyptology during your other finals.

Typography notes and credits

A phonetic rendition of Egyptian writing is a *transliteration*. Transliterations will be represented throughout our documents in an italic typeface, which includes a few letters with diacritical marks such as *ǝt*, and a few that don't look quite like English letters at all like 'ʒ. Breaks between affixes and compounds are represented by periods and hyphens in the transliteration, such as in the phrase *mdw.w-nṯr*. The exact meanings of these symbols will be discussed when we discuss the Egyptian language; for now, just treat them as integral and important parts of the spelling of the words (as, indeed, they are).

All printed material for this course has been typeset using the L^AT_EX 2_ε macro package, originally by Leslie Lamport, for T_EX, the typesetting system by Donald Knuth; pdfT_EX was used to generate the output in PDF format. The lovely hieroglyphic text and transliterations were produced using HieroT_EX by Serge Rosmorduc. The work was done on my Apple MacBook Pro, using the T_EXShop frontend by Richard Koch and Dirk Olmes.

Keeping in Touch

As I said above, it's up to you to discuss with me any absences you may need to be excused for. Also, please feel free to contact me regarding any questions you might have about the course material or procedures. I can be reached via electronic mail at shawn@cmu.edu. My office phone number is campus extension x8-7662; you can call there anytime you like, and leave me voicemail if I don't answer, but e-mail is best.