COLLEGE YEAR IN ATHENS

H368 (H 468):
To the Strongest: The Ancient Near East from the Death of Alexander to the Coming of Rome.

Fall Semester 2017
Tuesday/Thursday: 11.00 – 12.35
Instructor: Dr. John Karavas

Course Description/Objectives

In many ways the conquests of Alexander the Great, which brought under Macedonian rule the regions of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, up to the borders with India, had a determinant and profound impact on the future course of the History of the Near East. Through the study of primary sources, both literary and archaeological, this course seeks to explore the long history of interaction between the Greco-Roman world and that of its Near Eastern counterpart and the significant influence this interaction had on the formation and development of a common cultural, religious and political identity, which modern scholars have labelled as "Hellenistic". Within this perspective, our main focus will be on the investigation of particular aspects of Near Eastern civilization: the emergence of new cultural and social institutions, new forms of economic life, and the creation, fusion, and amalgamation of religious institutions (to which this course will give a special emphasis). The main purpose of the course will be to provide significant insight into an often neglected and yet very important and formative era in world history, the Hellenistic period.

Bibliography
The standard prescribed textbook for this course is the one by G. Shipley, “The Greek World after Alexander”. However, during the course of the semester, students will be expected to become familiar with specific passages or chapters from other relevant works such as:
M.M. Austin, The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest
M. Cary, History of the Greek World
P. Green, From Alexander to Actium
N. Hammond, The Genius of Alexander the Great
A. Stewart, The Faces of power
W. Tarn, G.T. Griffith, Hellenistic Civilisation
F.W. Walbank, The Hellenistic World
I. Worthington, Alexander the Great (ed.)

In addition, further background or specialist reading material, including passages from ancient sources (in translation) as well as epigraphic texts, will be introduced to students at the beginning of each separate thematic entity.
Class Schedule/Course Readings

1. Tuesday, September 5
   General Introduction.
   A brief overview of the history of the Near East after Alexander.
   Establishing the basic chronological brackets and objectives of this
course. The nature of the available evidence and the problems usually
associated with its interpretation.

2. Thursday, September 7
   Alexander the Great: The Dream, the Vision, the Legacy.
   D.B. Nagle, The Cultural Context of Alexander’s Speech at Opis, TAPA

3. Tuesday, September 12
   The Brake-up of Alexander’s Empire and the wars of Succession.
   Green, 119-134; Shipley, 33-40; Bosworth, 246-278.

4. Tuesday, September 19
   The Formation of the “Successor” States. The Ptolemies, the
   Seleucids and the Antigonids.
   Walbank, chapter 3; Shipley, 40-59.

5. Thursday, September 21
   The Government of the Successor States. Cases in Study in the
development of “Enlightened Despotism”.
   Green, 187-200; Walbank chapters 6-7; Shipley, 59-86.

6. Tuesday, September 26
   Shipley, 86-106; Green, 382-395.
   (Class Visit to the Athenian Agora).

7. Thursday, September 28
   Trade, Commerce and Interconnectivity – the Maritime approach.
   (Class visit to Athenian Trireme at Floisvos)

8. Tuesday, October 3
   Cultural developments. The creation and diffusion of Hellenistic
   Culture.
   Green, 286-312.
   (Class visit to the Panathenaic Stadium)
9. Thursday, October 5
Language, Literature and Learning in the Hellenistic Age.
Tarn and Griffith, chapter 8; Walbank, chapter 4; Shipley, 326-330.
(Class visit to the Lyceum of Aristotle)

10. Tuesday, October 10
The Age of Invention: Hellenistic Science and Technology.
Shipley, 330-368.
(Class visit to the Antikythera Mechanism Exhibition – National Archaeological Museum).

11. Thursday, October 12
Pushing the Frontiers: Trade and Exploration in the Hellenistic World.
Walbank, chapter 11; Tarn and Griffith, chapter 7.
(Class Visit to the Maritime Museum)

12. Tuesday, October 17
MID-TERM EXAM

13. Thursday, October 19
Excavating Material Culture from the Hellenistic World.
(Class Visit to the Voula Archaeological Site).

14. Monday, October 23
The Religious Developments. An outline.
Shipley, 153-192; Walbank, chapter 12
(Class Visit to Temple of Olympian Zeus).

15. Tuesday, October 31
Towards a New World Religion: The Greek Pantheon meets the Near Eastern Religions.
Tarn and Griffith, chapter 10.
(Class visit to the Egyptian Collection, National Archaeological Museum).

16. Thursday, November 2
Kingship, Cult and Court: The Added Dimension of Self Deification.
Lund, chapter 6; Class handouts.
(Class Visit to the Acropolis – South Slope).

17. Tuesday, November 7
At the fringes of Hellenistic religion: Rural, foreign and mystery cults.
Green, 396-414 and 586-617.
18. Thursday, November 9
Exploring the Occult: Magic and Mystery in the Hellenistic World.
Stewart, chapter 8. Class handouts.

19. Tuesday, November 14
“Jews and Gentiles”: Contact and Conflict.
Tarn and Griffith, chapter 6.
(Class visit to the Kerameikos)

20. Thursday, November 16
Hellenistic Art – An outline.
(Class Visit to the National Archaeological Museum).

21. Tuesday, November 28
Hellenistic mosaics – A workshop.

22. Thursday, November 30
The Hellenistic Queens; Seleucid and Ptolemaic queens
Macurdy, chapters 2 and 3.
(Class visit to the Numismatic Museum).

23. Tuesday, December 5
Women in Hellenistic Society.
(Class Handouts).

24. Thursday, December
The Fall of the Hellenistic World – A Historical overview.
The Coming of Rome.
Green, 647-682; Walbank, chapter 13.

Final Exam: TBA
Essays – Assessment - Grades

Students will be expected to write one major essay, of not more than 2,500 words, on subjects/topics relevant to this course. Individual titles will have to be agreed after consultation with the instructor. Papers must be properly documented and should include an appended bibliography. Credit will be given for originality, i.e. illustrations, maps etc, personal observation and evidence of independent reading-research.

Students who wish to turn in rough drafts of their essays for consultation are certainly welcomed to do so. The deadline for the submission of rough drafts is Friday, December 5.

The deadline for the submission of the final essay is **Friday, December 15**.

Title proposals and general outlines must be handed in at least three weeks before the respective deadline.
No extensions will be granted.

Grades

The mid-term grade will be calculated on the basis of the mid-term exam (75%) and with regard to student’s attendance of and participation in classes (25%).

The final grade will be an average of the grades assigned for the mid term-exam (25%), the final essay (25%), the grade assigned for the final exam (35%) and of that assigned for class participation and attendance over the course of the semester (15%). The final exam will consist of short essays.

Class Attendance - Absences

Student attendance is mandatory. All absences must be excused by the administration and not the instructor. Unexcused absence will result in a lowered participation grade.

The instructor is available for individual consultation after class or by prior arrangement:

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