

ARCH B602
INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
AND EGYPT – GRADUATE INTENSIVE SURVEY
Fall 2026

Lecture: Mon, Wed, 10:10–11:00; Old Library 224
Meetings: Wed, 11:10-1200; Old Library 233

Dr. Henry Colburn
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Office hours: Wed 1:00-2:00, Fri,
12:00-1:00, Old Library 233

This syllabus supplements that for ARCH B101 and contains only divergences from that syllabus.

Goals

The main goal of this course is to provide first-year graduate students with a strong foundation in Near Eastern and Egyptian archaeology and exposure to various scholarly practices of archaeology.

Class Format

Graduate students will attend the lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays (and Fridays through 9/11), and meet with the instructor at a time to be determined.

Reading Assignments

In addition to all Monday and Wednesday reading assignments for ARCH B101 (and those for Friday, 9/4), there will be additional assignments posted on Moodle. These will be the subject of our meetings. Some will focus on articles to discuss, while others will address various aspects of academic life, such as writing abstracts, assessing scholarly literature, and job applications.

Assessment

Grade Breakdown

<i>Participation</i>	15%
<i>Take-Home Quizzes</i>	45% (15% each)
<i>Assignment 1</i>	10%
<i>Assignment 2</i>	15%
<i>Assignment 3</i>	15%

Participation in Discussions (15%)

The graduate students will meet with the instructor on a weekly basis to discuss the supplementary reading assignments listed below. Each student will be responsible for leading the discussion of one of the articles, including summarizing the argument and assessing its merits. (Some discussions will not focus on articles but on other discrete topics relating to academia.)

Take-Home Quizzes (15% each, for a total of 45%)

There will be three non-cumulative take-home quizzes. These quizzes will include multiple choice questions and object identifications. The quizzes will be completed on Moodle.

Quiz 1: 10/5

Quiz 2: 11/2

Quiz 3: 12/18

Assignment 1 (10%)

Students will write an abstract (no more than 250 words) for a hypothetical conference presentation. **Due 10/19.**

Assignment 2 (15%)

Students will write a brief assessment (800-1000 words) of one of the supplementary readings we have discussed. This should both summarize the author's argument and provide a critical assessment of it. **Due 11/23.**

Assignment 3 (15%)

Students will prepare a research prospectus for a topic in the realm of Near Eastern and/or Egyptian art and archaeology. This will include an abstract, tentative outline, sample images, and bibliography. These prospectuses will be presented in our final meeting. **Presentations on 12/8; final submission of prospectus due 12/18.**

Equal Opportunities and Title IX

Bryn Mawr College is committed to providing equal access to students with a documented disability. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability

must first register with Access Services. Students can call 610-526-7516 to make an appointment with the Access Services Director, Deb Alder, or email her at dalder@brynmawr.edu to begin this confidential process. Once registered, students should schedule an appointment with me as early in the semester as possible to share the verification form and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement. Any student who has a disability-related need to tape record this class must first speak with the Access Services Director and to me, the instructor. Because of laws within the State of Pennsylvania, class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded. More information can be obtained at the Access Services website (http://www.brynmawr.edu/access_services/).

All BMC employees (including TAs) are Title IX “Responsible Employees” and therefore are required to share a report of sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. For further details see <https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/policies-guidelines-handbooks/title-ix/am-i-responsible-employee>

List of Topics

Wed 9/2: Preliminaries

Please send me your current CV before this meeting.

Wed 9/9: Conjuring Mesopotamia

Reading

- Z. Bahrani, “Conjuring Mesopotamia: Imaginative Geography and a World Past,” in L. Meskell (ed.), *Archaeology under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1998), 159-74
- L. Meskell, “Imperialism, Internationalism, and Archaeology in the Un/Making of the Middle East,” *American Anthropologist* 122/3 (2020), 554–67 (already assigned in ARCH B101 for 9/2, but we’ll discuss it here too)

Wed 9/16: Bibliographic Resources

This session will be run by Laura Surtees, Manager of Library Experience and Engagement. A venue will be announced in due course.

Wed 9/23: Approaches to Egyptian Art

Reading

- J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Ch. 14 (“On the Status and Purposes of Ancient Egyptian Art”)

- D. Laboury, “Senwosret III and the issue of portraiture in ancient Egyptian art,” *Cahier de recherches de l’Institut de papyrologie et d’Égyptologie de Lille* 31 (2016–17), 71–84

Wed 9/30: Primary Sources and Scholarly Literature

Primary Sources

Please provide a citation of each of the following types of primary sources:

- A Greek or Latin historian
- A Greek or Latin orator
- A Greek or Latin poet (any genre will do)
- A book of the Hebrew Bible
- A Greek papyrus
- A Greek or Latin inscription
- An Egyptian language text or cuneiform text or any kind (optional)

Please identify an example of each of the following, providing a full bibliographic reference (don’t bring me hard copies, please):

- Academic monograph
- Festschrift
- Conference proceeding
- Trade publication
- Museum catalog
- Archaeological report
- Peer-reviewed article
- Non-peer-reviewed article
- One thing that doesn't fit into any of these categories

Wed 10/7: Approaches to Mesopotamian Art

Reading

- I. J. Winter, “The Body of the Able Ruler: Toward an Understanding of the Statues of Gudea,” in I. J. Winter, *On the Art of the Ancient Near East, II: From the Third Millennium B.C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 151-65
- M. H. Feldman, “The Sense of Practice: A Case Study of Tablet Sealing at Nippur in the Ur III Period,” in K. Neumann and A. Thomason (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Senses in the Ancient Near East* (London: Routledge, 2022), 17-34

Wed 10/14: Spring Break (no meeting)

Wed 10/21: Abstracts

Please be prepared to disseminate and discuss your hypothetical abstracts (Assignment 1).

Wed 10/28: Environmental Archaeology

Reading

- D. Langgut et al., “Climate and the Late Bronze Collapse: New Evidence from the Southern Levant,” *Tel Aviv* 40 (2013), 149-75

Wed 11/4: Forgeries

Reading

- O. W. Muscarella, “Forgeries of Ancient Near Eastern Artifacts and Cultures,” in B. A. Brown and M. H. Feldman (ed.), *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 31-53
- K. D. S. Lapatin, “Snake Goddess, Fake Goddess,” *Archaeology* 54.1 (2001), 33-6

Wed 11/11: Archaeological Theory and Its Limits

Reading (in this order, please)

- M. Johnson, *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction* (3rd edn., Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), Ch. 1 (“Common Sense is Not Enough”), Ch. 7 (“Postprocessual and Interpretive Archaeologies”)
- K. V. Flannery, “The Golden Marshalltown: A Parable for the Archeology of the 1980s,” *American Anthropologist* 84 (1982), 265-78

Wed 11/18: Job Applications

I've posted on Moodle some cover letters I wrote for recent job applications. Please read them and come prepared to discuss your observations.

Wed 11/25: (Almost) Thanksgiving Break (no meeting)

Wed 12/2: Approaches to the Hellenistic and Late Antique Near East

Reading

- M. P. Canepa, “Topographies of Power: Theorizing the Visual, Spatial and Ritual Contexts of Rock Reliefs in Ancient Iran,” in Ö. Harmanşah (ed.), *Of Rocks and Water: An Archaeology of Place* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 53-92
- S. M. Langin-Hooper, “Making Wonder in Miniature: A New Approach to Theorizing the Affective Properties and Social Consequences of Small-Scale Artworks from Hellenistic Babylonia,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 34/1 (2024), 27-42

Week of 12/9: (Informal) Presentations of Prospectuses