

**Syllabus: Ancient Civilizations, from the beginning to 500 C.E.**  
**Maybeck High School**  
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### **Course Description.**

The ancient world in all its rich diversity and interconnectedness will furnish the subject matter of this course. Students will explore the culture and world views of ancient peoples from East Asia to the Mediterranean basin Europe, from the dawn of history to the beginning of the classical period in Asia and the Mediterranean. We will read from a series of texts specializing in the civilizations we are going to cover (see below for required texts) as well as handouts and exercises. The material in these books will allow the students to examine the literary, historical, archaeological, and anthropological evidence for a vast web of cultural interrelations and innovations; to this end we will examine a wide variety of primary texts, including mythologies and historiography of the world's earliest civilizations in an effort to arrive at the beginnings of an understanding of the world's people as they saw themselves.

### **Course Objectives.**

1. Students will develop as writers of interpretive and argumentative prose by writing two interpretive essays and a research paper on the primary and secondary historical works we examine.
2. Students will come out of the course with a stronger grasp of world geography and the role of geography in global politics and development.
3. The student will enhance and expand his or her ability to understand cultural diversity and the role diversity has played in world history.
4. Students will have read and engaged intellectually with essential primary texts of many of the world's major cultures.
5. Students will emerge with a wider understanding of the interconnectedness of ancient world cultures, the nature of global politics and the modern world by having engaged in a study of the beginnings of global culture.

### **Required Readings:**

- Haywood, John. *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Civilizations*.
- Leick, Gwendolyn. *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City*.
- Kovacs, Maureen Gallery. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.
- Avari. Burjor. *India: The Ancient Past*.
- Silverman, David P. Ed. *Ancient Egypt*.
- Loewe, Michael. *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*.
- Qian, Sima. *The First Emperor: Selections from the Historical Records*.
- Brosius, Maria. *The Persian: an Introduction*.
- Castleden, Rodney. *Mycenaeans*.
- Hoyos, Dexter. *The Carthaginians*

### **Recommended Readings:**

- Basham, A.L. Ed. *A Cultural History of India*. Oxford UP. New York. 1975
- Boyce, Mary, Ed. *Zoroastrianism*. Chicago University Press. Chicago. 1984
- Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion*. Trans. John Raffan. Harvard UP. Cambridge, Mass. 1985

- Chan, Wing-Tsit Ed. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton UP. Princeton NJ. 1963
- Cornell, T.J. *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 BC)*. Routledge. New York. 1995
- Drews, Robert. *The End of the Bronze Age: Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe CA. 1200 B.C.* Princeton UP. Princeton NJ. 1993.
- Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*. Cambridge UP. New York. 1996
- Gernet, Jacques. *A History of Chinese Civilization*. Trans. J.R. Foster. Cambridge UP. New York. 1972
- Green, Miranda J Ed. *The Celtic World*. Routledge. New York. 1995
- Hoyland, Robert G. *Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. Routledge. New York. 2001
- Jullien, François. *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece*. Trans. Sophie Hawkes. Zone Books. New York. 2000
- Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*. Cambridge UP. New York. 1988
- Mair, Victor H. Ed. *The Shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*. Columbia UP. New York. 2000
- Mokhtar, G. *General History of Africa, Vol. II: Ancient Civilizations of Africa*. University of California Press. Berkeley. 1993
- Mallory, J.P. *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth*. Thames and Hudson. London. 1989
- Olmstead, A.T. *History of the Persian Empire*. Chicago University Press. Chicago. 1948
- Thapar, Romila. *Early India: from the Origins to AD 1300*. University of California Press. Berkeley. 2002
- Wiesenhöfer, Josef. *Ancient Persia: from 550 B.C. to 650 A.D.* Trans. Azizeh Azodi. I.B. Taurus Publishers. New York. 1996

**Grades will be based on the following:**

- 25%: In-class participation and discussion of assigned readings.
- 25%: quizzes, in class essay exams and handouts assigned.
- 25%: one long and two short papers.
- 25%: final exam.