

Travel in the ancient Mediterranean world

Syllabus

Course Information

Description

In this course, we will examine travel practices and geographical knowledge as attested in the cultures of ancient Greece, Egypt, and Rome. In an attempt to reconstruct, as much as possible, the ancient traveling experiences of voyagers who crossed the Mediterranean Sea, of caravan members who sweated on the sandy paths of Near Eastern deserts, or of explorers who dared distant lands to collect information about unknown cultures, we will do close readings of a selected corpus of ancient sources which mainly comprises documentary and fictional travel accounts. Our own insight into these ancient sources will be then tested against current travel-related theories developed by famous experts in this field. In this way, we will be touching upon a number of intriguing questions about life in the ancient Mediterranean world, such as “how difficult was to travel in different parts of the ancient Mediterranean?”, “how were foreign travelers treated in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, or Roman Italy?”, or “to what extent did the contact with foreign cultures shape the native identities of ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans?”.

Course Materials

Required Books and Articles

- Adams, C. “‘Travel narrows the mind’: cultural tourism in Graeco-Roman Egypt”, in C. Adams and J. Roy. *Travel, geography and culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East*. Leicester Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 10. Oxford 2007, 161-184 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Baines, J. R. “Travel in third and second millennium Egypt”, in C. Adams and J. Roy (eds.). *Travel, geography and culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East*. Leicester Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 10. Oxford 2007, 5-30 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Dueck, D. and K. Brodersen. *Geography in classical antiquity*. Cambridge 2012
- Galli, M. “Pilgrimage as elite *habitus*: Educated pilgrims in sacred landscape during the Second Sophistic”, in J. Elsner and I. Rutherford (eds.). *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian antiquity: Seeing the gods*. Oxford 2005, 254-289 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Harvey, S. A. “Interpreting Punt: Geographic, cultural and artistic landscapes”, in D. O’Connor and S. Quirke (eds.). *Mysterious lands*. London 2003, 31-51, 81-91 (**free copy in PDF available**)

- Loprieno, A. “Travel and fiction Egyptian literature”, in D. O’Connor and S. Quirke (eds.). *Mysterious lands*. London 2003, 31-51 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Rinon, Y. “The Pivotal Scene: Narration, Colonial Focalization, and Transition in ‘Odyssey’ 9”, *The American Journal of Philology* 128.3 (2007), 301-334 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Roy, J. “Xenophon’s *Anabasis* as a traveller’s memoir”, in C. Adams and J. Roy (eds.). *Travel, geography and culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East*. Leicester Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 10. Oxford 2007, 66-77 (**free copy in PDF available**)
- Woolf, G. *Tales of the barbarians: ethnography and empire in the Roman west*, Wiley-Blackwell 2011

Additional Readings

- Additional readings that cannot be found online will be made available in PDF.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Explore ancient sources, assessing their reliability and connecting them to their historical and cultural context.
- 2) Construct persuasive arguments based upon ancient sources.
- 3) Develop critical reading skills and historical analysis.
- 4) Understand the complex network of relationships between space, travel, cultural knowledge, and social practices.

Outline/Schedule

- **Day 01 (July 9): Studying ancient travel: methodology and issues**
- **Day 02 (July 10): Ancient geographers**
 - 1) Dueck & Brodersen, *Geography in classical antiquity*
- **Day 03 (July 11): Ancient Egyptian sources**
 - 1) *Sinuhe* (available in PDF)
 - 2) *The Shipwrecked Sailor* (available in PDF)
 - 3) *Wenamun* (available in PDF)
 - 4) *Harkhuf* (available in PDF)
- **Day 04 (July 12): The Egyptian experience of travel and foreign lands**
 - 1) Baines, Travel in third and second millennium Egypt
 - 2) Harvey, Interpreting Punt
 - 3) Loprieno, Travel and fiction

- **Day 05 (July 13): Odysseus in foreign lands**
 - 1) Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book 9 (available at <http://www.theoi.com/Text/HomerOdyssey9.html>)
 - 2) Rinon, The pivotal scene
- **Day 06 (July 16): Travel in Xenophon**
 - 1) Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Book 4 (available at <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/x/xenophon/x5an/contents.html>)
 - 2) Roy, Xenophon's Anabasis
- **Day 07 (July 17): Pilgrimage and tourism**
 - 1) Aelius Aristides, *Sacred Tales*, Book 4
 - 2) Galli, Pilgrimage as elite habitus
 - 3) Adams, Travel narrows the mind
- **Day 08 (July 18): Travel in Arrian**
 - 1) Arrian, *Alexander's Anabasis*, Book 8 (available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/arrian-bookVIII-India.asp>)
 - 2) Hamilton on Arrian (available at <http://www.southwestern.edu/departments/classics/fys/arrian.html>)
- **Day 09 (July 19): Us and the barbarians**
 - 1) Woolf *Tales of the barbarians*

Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Points	Description
20	Discussion coordination
10 each	Two responses/reviews
60	Essay
100	Total Points Possible

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Course Policies

Participation and Absences

The student is expected to attend, and participate in, every class. Before each class s/he will be expected to have done the assigned readings and demonstrate critical knowledge of them. **One or more absences will result in F for the course.**

Discussion coordination

Each student will be assigned with at least one class, during which s/he will be required to raise interesting questions, to contribute critically to the discussion, and to manage efficiently the discussion.

Responses/Reviews

Starting from Day 2 the student must choose **two** days to write critical responses/reviews to their assigned materials. In the case of an ancient source, the student should discuss its historical importance, as well as its themes, style, and intentions, linking it to the overarching theme of the course. In the case of a scholarly work, the student should highlight and review its main arguments. Each response/review must have a minimum length of **2 full double-spaced pages** and will be due on the day the discussed materials are assigned.

Essay

For the essay, which is due on **August 20**, the student will have to research on and discuss a particular aspect of traveling and geography in the ancient Mediterranean world. The essay must have a minimum length of **10 double-spaced pages**, excluding the bibliography. More guidelines for this essay will be provided at the

end of our session. The essay will be graded on the basis of its analysis, argumentation, and style of writing.

Commit to Integrity

The student of this course is expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class, and also integrity in her/his behavior in and out of the classroom. Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will result in F for the course.