



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Gods World Man: Ancient Mesopotamian Religion - 42413

Last update 08-01-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Archaeology & Ancient near East

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Nathan Wasserman

Coordinator Email: nathan.wasserman@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Staff:

Prof. Nathan Wasserman

Course/Module description:

An in-depth overview of ancient Mesopotamian religion, from the rise of the cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium BCE (and even earlier, in the Neolithic period) to the end of the cuneiform culture in the Hellenistic period.

Course/Module aims:

To present basic questions and fundamental concepts in the history of ancient religions in general, and in the religions of the ancient Near East in particular. To present a broad panorama of Mesopotamian religion -- the essence of the divine, the principles of creation, the sources of evil, different ways of relating to the gods and more, communicating with them -- all while examining intra-cultural data and comparative systems.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*Getting to know basic concepts in ancient religions.
Learning the principles of Mesopotamian pantheon and ancient temples.
Appreciating the uniqueness of ancient Mesopotamian religion vis-à-vis other ancient religions.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture.

Course/Module Content:

*The geographical arena and introduction to Mesopotamian religion.
In the Mists of Time: Worship in the Neolithic World.
The Mesopotamian world of gods.
Sacrifices: From eating gods to an anorectic god.
Ishtar: The Goddess of contradictions.
The mythology of death.
Stories of Creation: Cosmogonies and Theogenies.
Magic and control.
Divination. The gods in the world. Signs and Miracles.*

*the Sun god. The universal god.
Religious belief and emotions.
The end of the Mesopotamian religious world. The end of the temples.*

Required Reading:

Will be assigned every class.

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

Written / Oral / Practical Exam 100 %

Additional information: