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# Middle East: Cradle of Civilizations, Part 1

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## OSHER 795-001

**Dates:** Tuesdays, 9/22/15-11/3/15, no class 10/13

**Times:** 5:15PM – 6:45PM

**Location:** Commander's House, Ft Douglas

**Instructor:** Ewa Wasilewska

### Course Overview

Clash of civilizations... The more we hear this phrase, the less we remember that civilizations, which are supposedly clashing, they all trace their beginnings to the Middle East. This course is an overview of the ancient civilizations of the Middle East before the Graeco-Roman period. Part 1 focuses on ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria-Palestine, and Iran. Part 2 is dedicated to Ancient Egypt.

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND DATES:

#### Week # 1:

Introduction to the Area, Its Civilizations, and Problems with their Discovery and Preservation.

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Cuno, James. 2008. *Who owns antiquity?* Princeton University Press.

Meskell, Lynn. Ed. 1998. *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, politics and heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.* Routledge. New York.

Pollock, Susan and Reinhard Bernbeck eds.,2005. *Archaeologies of the Middle East. Critical Perspectives.* Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

#### Week # 2:

The Basics of Civilization: Food production, sedentism and religion.

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Balter, Michael. 2005. *The Goddess and the Bull. Çatal Hüyük: An Archaeological Journey to the Dawn of Civilization.* Free Press. New York.

Cauvin, Jacques. 2000. *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture.* Cambridge University Press.

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Chazan, Michael. 2008. *World Prehistory and Archaeology. Pathways through Time*. Pearson education, Inc., Boston.

Diamond, Jared. 2002. "Evolution, Consequences and Future of Plant and Animal Domestication." In *Nature Magazine*, 2002. Vol. 418. [http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/history/lecture03/r\\_3-2.html](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/history/lecture03/r_3-2.html)

## **Week #3:**

Divine Economy and Profane Writing (invention of cuneiform script).

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Mieroop, Marc Van De (marked as MM in the text).2007. *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000-323 B.C.* Blackwell Publishing.

## **Week # 4:**

Sumerian Ideology: Not so perfect deities and even less perfect humans.

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Foster, Benjamin R. tr. 1995. *From Distant Days. Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia.* CDL Press.

Kramer, Samuel Noah and John Maier. 1989. *Myths of Enki, The Crafty God*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wasilewska, Ewa. 2000. *Creation Stories of the Middle East*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

## **Week # 5:**

Iran: Cradle of four (plus) civilizations.

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Covington, Richard. 2004. "What Was Jiroft?" In *Saudi Aramco World*. Sept. Oct. 2004. Vol. 55, No. 5. <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200405/what.was.jiroft..htm>

Nielsen, Inge, ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium B.C. Regional Development and Cultural Interchange between East and West*. Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens. Vol. 4. 2001

## **Week # 6:**

The Hittites -- the first Indo-European empire.

Suggested readings:

Notes.

Macqueen, J.G. 2003. *The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor*. Thames & Hudson.

