This course introduces students to ancient Near Eastern cultures. The survey begins with early farming communities of 8000 BCE at sites like Fayum, Jericho, Çatal Huyuk, and Jarmo. It then covers the Bronze and Iron Age kingdoms of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Israelites, Egyptians, Hittites, and Iranians plus the spread of Hellenism. Emphasis will be placed on agriculture, urbanization, state formation, dynastic history, social stratification, literacy, legal and economic issues, and religious developments. Archaeological and textual information will be utilized in conjunction with visual aids. No previous knowledge or course prerequisites are needed.

Course fulfills COAS Cultural Studies list A, COAS Social & Historical Studies (S&H), and Intensive Writing (IW) requirements. It is cross-listed with Ancient Studies, Hutton Honors College, NELC, and Religious Studies.

Undergraduates taking the class for Honors College credit must write a 10-12 page (single spaced) library-based research paper on a topic relating to the course. The topic must be approved by the instructor. The paper’s outline and bibliography are due by the middle of semester and the completed paper is due by the end of semester.