

# CAS CC 101: ANCIENT WORLDS

FALL 2020: OVERALL COURSE A1 SYLLABUS

Credits: 4.0

Coordinator: Prof. Stephen Esposito, 745 Comm Ave Rm. 410  
email: espo@bu.edu, campus phone: 617-353-4540

Lectures: Tuesdays 9:30-10:45 AM  
Lecture Zoom: Meeting ID 957 1543 4188, password cascc101

Seminars: B1 w/ Sophie Klein, sophiek@bu.edu: TR 8-9:15  
B2 w/ Sophie Klein, sophiek@bu.edu: TR 11-12:15  
B3 w/ Swen Voekel, svoekel@bu.edu: TR 11-12:15  
B4 w/ Catherine Klancer, chudak@bu.edu: TR 11-12:15  
B5 w/ Stephen Esposito, espo@bu.edu: TR 12:30-1:45  
B6 w/ Rodrigo Lopes de Barros, rlbarros@bu.edu, TR 8-9:15  
B7 w/ Sophie Klein, sophiek@bu.edu: TR 2-3:15  
B8 w/ Catherine Klancer, chudak@bu.edu: TR 2-3:15  
B9 w/ George Vahamikos, gtv@bu.edu: TR 3:30-4:45  
C1 w/ Brian Walsh, bgwalsh@bu.edu: MWF 9:05-9:55  
C2 w/ Christopher Brown, cbbrown@bu.edu: MWF 10:10-11  
C3 w/ David Eckel, mdeckel@bu.edu: MWF 11:15-12:05  
C4 w/ Maria Gapotchenko, daisym@bu.edu: W 6:30-9:15  
C5 w/ Kyna Hamill, kynahamill@bu.edu: MWF 12:20-1:10

*For all discussion sections, check with your section leader to determine the rotation schedule for students attending class on campus.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The four semesters of Core Humanities explore some of the world's finest and most influential works of literature, philosophy, religion, and the arts. The semesters follow a historical sequence so that the great works can be studied as an evolving conversation about the enduring questions of human life. Our goal is to discover what the greatest works of the past have to say to us here, right now—to empower and deepen what the Chinese sage Confucius called human-heartedness. The fundamental questions we ask concern how very different global visions of what a community is interact with equally varied ideas of the nature of the individual, how these visions are explored by both cultures and individuals in the different modes of literature, philosophy, religion and the visual arts, and what it means to create something new out of the traditions we are all formed by and grounded in.

CC 101 explores two foundational components of the Western tradition: the culture of the ancient Greeks, and the world of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the origin of civilization in ancient Mesopotamia, to which both the Hebrews and Greeks were deeply indebted. As we compare these cultures' views we will consider questions such as heroism and power; friendship; death and grief; sexuality and love; the city, and the journey home. We will explore the very different views of Mesopotamia, ancient Israel and the Greeks on the experience of the divine; the impact of war; the differing roles of human reason and imagination; and the concept of beauty in the literary and visual arts, and also trace how views on these questions change among the Greeks between the archaic view of Homer and the classical view of Plato. As we do so we will develop skills in analyzing sources, in written and oral communication, and in identifying and developing the factors that promote creativity.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:***Aesthetic Exploration:*

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of notable works in literature and the arts, including the epics of *Gilgamesh* and *The Odyssey*, Greek tragedy, and the visual traditions of the Parthenon. Particular attention will be drawn to the cultural contexts in which those works were created, as students compare differing roles of the two epics as foundational for their respective cultures and the differing ways in which Greek tragedy and the Parthenon self-consciously assert the cultural values of fifth-century Athens. Students will also use this focalization to consider the many layers involved in Greek tragedy's critique of its society as well as how tragedy engages with adaptations of Homeric characters and myth. Finally, students will consider the ongoing significance and relevance of these works not only to the cultures that created them but to following cultures that both used and appropriated them and, most importantly, to ourselves. This consideration will take place not only in CC 101, but, for students who continue on in Core, through the entire Core Humanities sequence, as students follow the conversation begun in Mesopotamia through the Western tradition into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.
2. Students will acquire and demonstrate the reasoning skills, concepts and vocabulary necessary to interpret a work of art as narrative, practicing these both in classroom discussion and assignments and, particularly in the case of the visual arts, by applying what has been learned in lecture and seminar to the study of materials in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All CC 101 students will also complete a reflection paper based on their engagement with the MFA collections, although the form of that written assignment will differ according to seminar.
3. In addition to considering works of literature, architecture, and visual art for their intrinsic and cultural importance, students will engage in an ongoing critique of the methods and values embedded in the art and literature studied in CC 101. Beginning with the explicit commandment in Exodus that forbids "graven images," students will interrogate the values of understanding and communicating aesthetic forms from a particular period and be able to understand how meaning is shaped for modern viewers/readers. In particular students will examine and evaluate critiques of art and poetry made or implied by Thucydides and in Plato's *Republic*.
4. In conjunction with the Creativity/Innovation learning outcome which is part of CC 101, students will not only evaluate and analyze the literary and artistic works studied in seminar and in written assignments, but will also produce their own work of creative art incorporating lessons learned from this study. Students will be evaluated based on their mastery of characteristic such as genre, mode, style, and cultural history of the works examined in their written assignments, and on their ability to incorporate this understanding into their own creative work.

*Global Citizenship & Intercultural Literacy:*

**Note:** Although only one the following outcomes is mandated, CC 101 addresses both.

1. By examining the Classical and Hebrew traditions and tracing changes in Greek civilization over time, students will learn to analyze and compare differences between the perspectives of cultures and between the different perspectives arising from different historical circumstances within a single culture. These differences will include such aspects of a culture and/or time-period as views of the divine, political systems, gender relations, views of creativity and aesthetic expression and the relation of cultural views to origin stories and cultural ideals.
2. Students will demonstrate detailed understanding of two distinct cultures different from their own but which have also contributed to the modern worldview. They will also be able to articulate the challenges and benefits of viewing the world from a radically different point of view and be able to analyze the roots of a modern view of the world.

*Creativity/Innovation:*

1. Students will explore the nature of creativity through a study of literary and visual art in exercises such as a study and reflection on works at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Students will also conduct an in-depth examination of such very different views of art and creativity as those of Exodus, *The Odyssey* and *The Republic*. Students will reflect on what it means to produce something genuinely new, consider the risks and dangers of innovation, and evaluate the elements both in different individuals and in different societies that encourage or inhibit creativity.
2. Students will further develop their reflections on the nature of creativity by designing and executing at least one creative project either alone or as part of a team and explicitly reflecting on the relation of these creative projects to works and ideas studied in class. Examples of creative projects are given below under Writing/Creative Work. Specific assignments in regard to creative work will be made by the student's individual seminar leader.

**INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT, COURSE PEDAGOGY, AND APPROACH TO LEARNING:**

Students are required to partake in all lectures and seminars. If a student is unavoidably absent from lecture, recordings of each lecture can be accessed via [www.bu.edu/core/cc101](http://www.bu.edu/core/cc101). Students should speak with their seminar leader to account for absences. Individual seminar leaders will note attendance in seminar. And, as our aim is to look and speak directly to each other, the use of electronic devices during in-person sessions of lecture or discussion may be restricted by your instructor. Questions and active participation are, on the other hand, strongly encouraged.

**Lectures/Plenary Sessions:** Lecture will focus on the cultural context and main concepts of each of the works studied, and will connect these works to the ongoing themes and questions of the course. As designated by individual seminar leaders, students will demonstrate their comprehension and critical evaluation of key ideas raised in lecture through discussion in seminar, oral responses to specific questions, or written responses either to specific questions or on subjects of the student's choice. As individual seminars will vary in the direction they take, but the body of lectures is common to all, the common final exam will focus on questions and topics specifically raised in lecture.

**Lecture sessions will be recorded** for the benefit of registered students who are unable to attend live sessions (either in person or remotely) due to time zone differences, illness or other special circumstances. Recorded sessions will be made available to registered students via the password-protected course webpage. Students may not share such sessions with anyone not registered in the course and may certainly not repost them in a public platform.

**Seminars:** Seminar discussion will focus on the analysis and critical evaluation of works studied with particular attention to how the basic questions studied differ in the broad range of cultural and historical settings considered. Discussions of particular works will be supplemented with sessions dedicated to techniques used to examine these works through writing and other media, as well as to reflection on individual and group creative works that further explore these ideas.

The aim of seminar is that students learn to share, evaluate and collaborate on an understanding of some of the greatest works developed by the human mind and that students explicitly reflect on their own process of learning and understanding. Active participation is crucial to this end. Always come prepared, not only by having read, viewed or listened to the work under discussion, but with questions that you wish to bring to the attention of your peers and with ideas about alternative approaches to the concepts being explored.

**Museum of Fine Arts:** All students will be asked to engage in study of works at the MFA which are associated with the cultures examined in the course, either virtually or through small group tours as conditions permit. If tours take place, they will be led by faculty members and may or may not be directed at a particular seminar. Students are expected to have examined the guide to the MFA works under consideration and to be prepared to discuss the works during tours or in seminar. Students

also complete at least one reflective writing assignment considering the nature of creativity as expressed through the works seen in the museum.

**Writing/Reflection Assignments/Creative Work:** There will be a strong focus on both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write in CC 101, particularly in anticipation of work to be done in the spring-semester course CC 102, which will give credit for Foundational Writing (WR 120). We will particularly consider, develop and reflect upon various criteria offered for aesthetic expression, the critiques of aesthetic expression that we encounter, and what creativity entails and requires in regard to the works studied.

Although individual seminar leaders will vary in their particular assignments, at least one paper will consider the course's learning objectives through an argumentative, thesis-driven paper. Other related assignments will be ongoing throughout the semester and may include identification and explication of a focal question, outlining of critical arguments, peer evaluation, and presentations to the seminar. In addition, CC 101 requires one-on-one work with the Core Writing Fellow assigned to each seminar. Students are encouraged to work regularly with their Writing Fellow, who will also be in direct and regular communication with their seminar leader.

As our aim in this course is to study other cultures in order finally to become more aware of ourselves as global citizens, several reflective assignments will be due throughout the semester. Topics of reflection papers will be discussed in seminar but any student should feel to alert their seminar leader ahead of time to particularly sensitive issues, and accommodations will be made.

Creativity in CC 101 is expressed in (a) interpretation, (b) posing questions, and (c) written and other forms of creative expression. Students experiment with creating written or other products in imaginative ways, explore how CC 101 works conceive of creativity/innovation as well as their opposites and perhaps their limitations, and reflect, in writing and in discussion, on the nature of creativity. As problem-solving, creativity is a means to an end. As a source of deep human satisfaction, it is an end in itself. We will put emphasis on the learnable nature of creativity but believe that students will also naturally experience creativity as a fundamental aspect of human nature.

Students will accordingly develop and execute at least one creative work and reflect on that work and on the creative process more generally, both in writing and in discussion. Creative work may take any one of a number of forms, such as composing a Homeric simile, producing a scene from a play studied, work in the art of rhetoric, or using the principles of Greek art as seen on the Parthenon and in the MFA to create visual art.

Creative projects may be developed and executed individually or as part of peer work. Individual seminar leaders will work with students to decide upon and develop appropriate creative projects.

**Peer Work:** Students will explore the views and cultural presuppositions of the various cultures studied and compare these to their own worldviews not only in seminar and in their individual writing assignments, but also by working directly with their peers. Peer work will take various forms as determined by individual seminar leaders, but may include such activities as group work on a creative project, group preparation for seminar presentations on particular works, peer evaluation of written work, or class debates. This work will be evaluated through oral and written feedback as assigned by individual seminar leaders.

**TEXTS:** All texts are required and may be purchased at the BU Bookstore.

- *Gilgamesh*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (9780743261692)
- *The Five Books of Moses*, trans. Robert Alter (9780393333930)
- Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (9780374525743)
- Plato, *The Republic*, trans. C.D. Reeve (9780872207363)
- *Odysseus at Troy: Ajax, Hecuba and Trojan Women*, ed. Stephen Esposito (9781585103966)

When purchasing your books, please take careful note of the edition and translator, so that you do

not find yourself inadvertently using a different text. Students in need of a required text may email the Core office staff at [core@bu.edu](mailto:core@bu.edu) to ask about the availability of copies in the Core Book Bank to own or borrow. An online writing handbook is available at [www.bu.edu/core/handbook](http://www.bu.edu/core/handbook). Students are encouraged to consult it regularly.

**COURSEWARE AND COMMUNICATION:** Course communication will take place via announcements and handouts in lecture and seminar, and email messages sent from [core@bu.edu](mailto:core@bu.edu) and from the accounts of individual seminar instructors. Lecture media, handouts, and readings can be accessed via this webpage. Elsewhere on the Core website you will find reading lists, a calendar of academic and community events, Writing Fellow contact information and writing FAQs, and other resources.

Your seminar leader may additionally make use of a course site specific to your section, for sharing assignment materials, readings, and other resources. Seminar-specific courses sites can be accessed via [www.learn.bu.edu](http://www.learn.bu.edu).

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA:**

**At least one major paper and one creative work is required for this course.** In addition, ongoing written work will be assigned by particular seminar leaders, including writing leading to the completion of the major assignments, informal or low-stakes writing, reflections on the writing process, and **reflections** on creative work. There will be ample opportunity for feedback.

A **midterm** (given online, and administered by section) and a common comprehensive **final exam** (also online) are required. The exams will be largely essay driven, and cover specific information and central ideas raised in lecture and seminar. Individual seminar leaders will track and evaluate lecture and seminar attendance and participation as well as assigned peer work. Specific evaluation criteria used for the assessing of grades can be found the syllabus for a student's individual seminar.

The relative weight of each assignment is as follows:

- seminar papers/reflective papers/creative projects: 50%
- attendance, participation, and engagement: 20%
- midterm exam (online): 15%
- final exam (online): 15%

### **RESOURCES AND SUPPORT:**

**The Core Writing Fellows** are available for help throughout the semester. Fellows are graduate students who have been trained in compositional skills, are familiar with the works read in Core, and who work closely with individual seminar leaders. To make an appointment with your Writing Fellow or with the ESL Writing Fellow, follow the instructions on your individual seminar syllabus or at [www.bu.edu/core/writing](http://www.bu.edu/core/writing), or email your discussion section's assigned Writing Fellow.

**Learning and testing accommodation.** Boston University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, you should contact your seminar leader and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services. Letters of accommodation should be presented as soon as possible to ensure that student needs are addressed from the start of the course.

**Office of Disability Services**, 617-353-3658, [www.bu.edu/disability](http://www.bu.edu/disability). The Office of Disability Services is responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability, you are strongly encouraged to register with this office. Lecture hall and seminar rooms used in Core are accessible and ADA-compliant.

**COMMUNITY OF LEARNING – CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

All students share the responsibility for ensuring a positive learning environment in this course. Always ensure that you come to class prepared and ready to participate.

**Attendance and Absences:** Attendance at lectures and seminar discussions is a critical part of the course. Absences from lecture and seminar will be weighed seriously by your seminar leader, and will bring down your final grade. See the syllabus for your particular seminar section for specific policies on excused absences, etc.

**Assignment Completion and Late Work:** Individual seminar leaders will determine how papers and other work should be submitted, as well as the penalties assigned for late work. It is possible for you to take a make-up version of the final exam if you have a test scheduling conflict or three exams scheduled on the same day. Contact the Core office at [core@bu.edu](mailto:core@bu.edu), and your seminar leader, if this is the case.

**Academic Conduct:** All members of the University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity; we have the same expectations of each other in this course. Seminar leaders take the issue of plagiarism seriously and expect all the work you do in this course to be your own. If you have general questions about what plagiarism is and how it differs from the appropriate use of other people's work, consult the Academic Conduct Code at [www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code). For specific questions, having to do with, for example, collaboration and documentation, see your individual seminar syllabus and/or speak with your individual instructor.

Please note: **September 16** is the last day you can add this course if there are available places. **October 7** is the last day you can drop this course without a "W" grade. **November 6** is the last day you can drop this course with a "W" grade.

**COVID safety expectations for Fall 2020:** All Core students, faculty and staff are required to practice safe COVID protocols during this fall semester. Our expectations are that community members:

- will wear a mask at all times
- will maintain social distance of 6 feet from other people
- will wash hands frequently (at least once an hour)
- will not eat in classrooms or in the Core office
- will follow all safety guidelines for building and classroom entrances, exits, and egress
- will maintain safe behavior in our personal lives as a show of respect for the health of colleagues and peers

**FALL 2020 SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND EVENTS:**

**Please note:** All schedules and topics are subject to change; any such changes will be announced in lecture or communicated to you via email. Consult the syllabus provided by your individual seminar for the due dates of specific assignments. Please consult your individual seminar leader with any questions on the schedule, topics to be covered, or assignments due.

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 Week 1: Ancient Mesopotamia

Lecture 1, 9/3: Brian Jorgensen on Gilgamesh

Note: This lecture recording is to be viewed asynchronously, before Monday 9/7.

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 Week 2: Hebrew Bible (Part 1)

Lecture 2, 9/8: Ariel Burger on the Hebrew Bible and Midrash

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 Week 3: Hebrew Bible (Part 2)

Lecture 3, 9/15: Kathe Darr on the Book of Genesis

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 Week 4: Hebrew Bible (Part 3)

Lecture 4, 9/22: Jonathan Klawans on the Book of Exodus

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 Week 5: Homer's Odyssey (Part 1)

Lecture 5, 9/29: Steve Scully on the Culture and Gods of Ancient Greece

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 Week 6: *The Odyssey* (Part 2)

Lecture 6, 10/6: Stephanie Nelson on the wanderings of Odysseus

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 Week 7: *The Odyssey* (Part 3)

Lecture 7, 10/13: Steve Esposito on Penelope and Female Heroism in Books 19-24

Note: Classes on Tuesday 10/13 follow a Monday class schedule due to the Monday holiday. There will be no lecture meeting this week, and this lecture recording is to be viewed asynchronously.

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 Week 8: Historical Transition

Lecture 8, 10/20: Becky Martin on the Art & Politics of the Athenian Acropolis

Midterm Exams will take place this week, administered by discussion section.

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 Week 9: The Peloponnesian War

Lecture 9, 10/27: Jay Samons on Thucydides and the Great War

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 Week 10: Greek Tragedy (Part 1)

Lecture 10, 11/3: Steve Esposito on Homeric Heroism vs. Tragic Heroism

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Week 11: Greek Tragedy (Part 2)

Lecture 11, 11/10: Kyna Hamill on Euripides' *Hecuba*

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Week 12: Plato's *Republic* (Part 1)

Lecture 12, 11/17: David Roochnik introduces Plato's *Republic* with Book 1

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Week 13: Plato's *Republic* (Part 2)

Lecture 13, 11/24: Jill Frank on City & Soul in *The Republic* Books 2-5

**Thanksgiving Recess:** no classes between November 25-29

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Week 14: Plato's *Republic* (Part 3)

Lecture 14 12/1: Allen Speight on Plato's Metaphysical Ideas in *The Republic* Books 6-7

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Week 15: Plato's *Republic* (Part 4)

Lecture 15 12/8: Zara Amdur on Women in Plato's *Republic*

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Last Day of Classes: December 10

Study Period: December 11-14

Final Exam: TBD