Syllabus

Class schedule: Wednesdays 5:30 - 8:30 pm. at Meyerson Hall B6
Office hours: Fridays 10-12 pm. Jaffe building (by appointment, please e-mail).
E-mail: harmansa@sas.upenn.edu
Blackboard site: https://courseweb.library.upenn.edu/ (Log-in with your Pennkey)
Course web page: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~harmansa/arth224.html

Course Definition

This course is an attempt to provide a selective and analytical survey of the architectural history in the Ancient Near East. Lectures and discussions will particularly focus on the development of urban and architectural traditions in their socio-cultural and economical context. The extensive geography of the Near Eastern world and the variety of its archaeological landscapes from prehistory into the Hellenistic period will be explored, with particular emphasis on Southern and Northern Mesopotamia, Syria and the Central Anatolian plateau.

In the ancient world, unlike the built environments of modernity, monuments were considered as bearers of both textual and pictorial representations. These texts and visual narratives were effective tools in the construction of social identity and historical consciousness among the public. Especially throughout the history of the Near Eastern world, the construction of buildings coincided precisely with the writing of history, a fundamental challenge to their makers and their audience alike. This course intends to see the production of architectural space in this light, as a social enterprise, a festive event where the economic and socio-cultural resources of a society are diverted into a productive undertaking. Important lines of inquiry in the discussions will be the idea of commemoration and historical narratives through architectural production, ideological aspects of architectural and sculptural display, and the development and circulation of construction materials and techniques, as well as architectural knowledge.
Practicalities and course requirements

- Every week the class will comprise a lecture with slides in the beginning and a discussion afterwards. While the lectures will cover the selective survey of the Mesopotamian architectural history, discussions will elaborate on specific theoretical issues pertaining to the subjects of the weekly lectures.

- The discussion session will be based on weekly readings. The students will be responsible to follow the required readings per week and participate in the discussions. The readings will involve the weekly assigned chapters from the course survey books (ordered at Penn Book center, see below) but also articles that will be assigned for each week, concerning particular theoretical issues. Weekly, the articles will be placed on reserve both as a hard copy at Fine Arts Library Reserve Desk and as an electronic copy on the Blackboard site.

Requirements of the course will be:

- one midterm exam (25%): mostly based on the comparative discussions of monuments (presented in slides), and 2 brief essays. Several essay questions (about 10) will be distributed on the week prior to the midterm, and 4 of those questions will be asked in the exam, and students will be required to select 2 to write their essays on.

- a research project (50%): students will be required to choose a specific research topic in consultation with the instructor, and submit the following throughout the semester:
  - 1 page paper proposal with preliminary bibliography for the chosen paper topic. Submit not later than Week 10, (having done some very preliminary reading); the paper topic will need to be approved by the instructor. Plan to have at least one meeting with him, before and/or after the submission of the proposal.
  - 2-3 page draft with complete bibliography by Week 11, (with some good ideas, on where the research project is leading to);
  - 10-15 minute presentation of the on-going research in class on Week 11 and Week 12.
  - 10-12 page final paper due at the finals week of the semester.

- participation in classroom discussions will be a major criterion for grading (25%). bonuses can be gained by submitting short summaries in response to weekly readings.

Books ordered at the Penn Book Center (34th and Sansom Streets):

- Roger Matthews; The archaeology of Mesopotamia: theories and approaches. London and New
WEEK 1. [SEPTEMBER 8] INTRODUCTION

- **Introduction to the course.** Basics of the course and practicalities.
- **Geographical orientation: the Land and the People.**
  A environmental and historical orientation: physical geography, natural resources, modes of human habitation, cultural landscapes, major routes of circulation. A brief overview of what is going to be studied: the idea of the long-term development, and the transformation of landscape with human activities.

WEEK 2. [SEPTEMBER 15] METHODOLOGIES AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

[Assignment 1 given: Insurance Company Building visit and architectural analysis.]

- **Ancient Mesopotamia and Mesopotamian archaeology:** brief overview of the history of archaeological exploration in the Ancient Near East. Rediscovery of the Ancient Near East in the 19th century; Early archaeological excavations; International phase; Large scale excavations; Scientific archaeology.
- **Discussion:** Colonialism and post-colonialism: discussion of Bahrani and Winter’s articles.
- **General introduction to methodologies in studying ancient architecture.**
  What we will study, how we will study. The study of architectural history and material culture. The dialogue between architectural history, archaeology and other disciplines. Introduction of basic architectural and archaeological terms, concepts. The use of archaeological evidence for architectural history.

**Readings:**

**On reserve:**
WEEK 3. [SEPTEMBER 22] FIRST VILLAGES, FIRST CITIES: SOCIAL COMPLEXITY IN MESOPOTAMIA

[First assignment due.]

- **From hunter-gatherers to farming societies:** the agricultural revolution and the early Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlements. Çatalhöyük in South Central Anatolia.
- **Hassuna, Samarra and Halaf cultures:** elaboration of domestic architecture: an overview.
- **Ubaid period in Southern Mesopotamia:** the precursors of the monumental temple. From shrine to temple: Eridu temples in stratigraphic sequence.
- **Uruk period:** Late Uruk period (3600-3200 BC) the site of Uruk (modern Warka). The Eanna precinct to the goddess Inanna. Kullaba precinct of the god An/Anu. Tell Uqair, the Uruk period temple complex and its architectural decoration.

- **Discussion:** Agriculture, the rise of social complexity and urbanization in the Southern Mesopotamia. The rise of the temple as an economical institution and the symbolic center of the urban society.

Readings:

On Reserve:

WEEK 4. [SEPTEMBER 29] EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD: THE TEMPLE AND THE ZIQQURAT.

[Start thinking about research projects]

- **The Early Dynastic Period in Southern Mesopotamia:** Introduction to the Third Millennium architectural traditions. Oriental Institute, Chicago excavations in the Diyala basin. The urban character of the Third Millennium southern Mesopotamian sites. The site of Khafajah: its urban layout and brief history. Other sites with monumental architecture: Tell Asmar, Tell Agrab. Mid-third millennium urbanization in Northern Mesopotamia

Readings:
P. Akkermans and G. M. Schwartz, The archaeology of Syria, Chapter 8, pages 233-287.

On reserve:

WEEK 5. [OCTOBER 6] PICTORIAL NARRATIVES IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BC MONUMENTS.

Akkadian Empire. The monumental stele and the ideology of its imagery. Akkadian buildings at Tell Brak. The Palaces at Kish.


Readings:
M. Van de Mieroop, A history of the Ancient Near East, Chapter 4., pp. 59-69.

On reserve:

WEEK 6. [OCTOBER 13] ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BC

[Submission of 1 page research proposals-topics settled with instructor]

Gudea and his building activities (the use of texts in the study of architectural history). Foundation rituals and deposits.
- **Ur III Period.** Presentation of Ur, the temple precinct and the city.
  
  *E-temen-ki-gur:* The ziqqurat of Ur-Nammu and the Court of Nanna
  
  *Gig-par-ku:* of the Entu Priestess and Goddess Ningal
  
  *E-hursag:* Place (?) of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi
  
  *E-nunmah:* Storehouse. Mausolea of Shulgi and Amar-Sin

- **Discussion:** Buildings and text: dynastic ideology and visual imagery. Construction materials and techniques: resources, the procurement of the materials. Limitations and potentials of the particular building materials. The theory of construction aesthetics and the architectonic quality. Foundation deposits in the Mesopotamian architecture.

**Readings:**

**On reserve:**
Claudia E Suter; *Gudea’s temple building: the representation of an early Mesopotamian ruler in text and image*. Cuneiform Monographs 17, Styx Publications: Groningen, 2000. pages TBA.


**WEEK 7. [OCTOBER 20] MIDTERM EXAM**

October 23-26 FALL BREAK

**WEEK 8. [OCTOBER 27] MIDDLE BRONZE AGE IN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA: NOMADS, TRADE AND NEW URBANIZATION**

- **Old Babylonian-Old Assyrian Periods** in Upper Syro-Mesopotamia:
  
  Assyrian colonies and the Central Anatolian trade: Kültepe (ancient Kanesh/Karum).
  

- **Discussion:** The palace, the temple and the city: new architectural technologies in Upper Mesopotamia. Techniques of wall decoration: an ideological tool of public display. The idea of technology, style and “technological style”. Discussions of “technique” versus “technology” in material culture studies.

**Readings:**
On reserve:
Elizabeth C. Stone; Paul Zimansky; Piotr Steinkeller; Vincent Pigott; Lisa Wells; Tony Wilkinson; *The anatomy of a Mesopotamian city: survey and soundings at Mashkan-shapir.* Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2004. (Skim the book, and read pages 26-42 and 373-380.)


- **Late Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean:** trade networks and the artisanal koiné. North Syria between the empires: the sites of Ugarit, Emar and the Levantine coast. The Kassites and the Middle Assyrians: the cities of Dur Kurigalzu and Assur. The idea of the ceremonial capital.

- **Hittite Empire and its architectural traditions** Boğazköy (ancient Hattusha); Extramural open–air sanctuary at Yazılıkaya (royal cult center). Eflatunpınar, spring sanctuary; Mașat Höyük (ancient Tapıgg ça), palace structure; Ortaköy (ancient Shipanuwa), palace architecture.

- **Discussion:** The question of the territorial state and empires: the role of the ceremonial urban center in the imperial ideologies. Formation of a royal rhetoric. Interregional trade and formation of artisanal exchange networks.

**Readings:**

**On reserve:**
WEEK 10. [NOVEMBER 10]  NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE AND ITS COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENTS

- **Iron Age; Neo-Assyrian Empire:** Large capitals and their architecture: Palace and the temple. Continuation of the ziggurat architectures in the urban scape. Kalhu (Nimrud), Dur Sharrukin (Khorsabad), Ninuwa (Nineveh). Provincial capitals, frontier cities and fortresses: Imgur-Enlil (Balawat), Til Barsip (Tell Ahmar).


**Reading:**

**On reserve:**

WEEK 11. [NOVEMBER 17]  IRON AGE CITY-STATES OF NORTH SYRIA AND SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA

[Submission of 2-3 page drafts/in-progress reports of research project, 10-15 minute presentations]

- **Iron Age: Neo-Hittite city states**
  The continuity in the Hittite architectural traditions in Anatolia and Northern Syria: Karkamis, Zincirli, Karatepe.

- **Discussion:** The transfer/circulation of architectural knowledge in the Ancient Near East. Formation of an interregionally shared architectural tradition: the idea of the orthostats and monumental buildings.

**Readings**

**On reserve:**


WEEK 12. [NOVEMBER 24] URARTIAN LANDSCAPES FROM THE CAUCASUS TO THE BANKS OF THE EUPHRATES

[10-15 minute presentations of research projects- continued from previous week]

- **Iron age: The kingdom of Urartu:**
  Eastern Anatolia, Northwestern Iran and Transcaucasus in the Middle Iron age: The cities of Tushpa, Ayanis, Hasanlu. Distinctive stone masonry achieved through the sophisticated use of iron technologies.

- **Phrygian kingdom:** Central Anatolia in the Iron age. King Midas and his Gordion.

- **Discussion:** The concept of monumentality, displayed in the high mound-lower mound setting of urban centers. Settlement patterns. City and its hinterland. Idea of the shaping of landscape. Landscape archaeology.

**Readings:**

**On reserve:**


WEEK 13. [DECEMBER 1] BABYLON: THE ANCIENT CITY AND ITS MODERN MYTH

- **The Neo-Babylonian period**
  The city of Babylon in archaeological evidence and post-classical myth. Important Neo-Babylonian Kings, who carried out building activity at Babylon: Nabopolassar (625-605 BC), Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BC). City planning, fortifications, Temple precinct of
Marduk: ziggurat (E-temen-an-ki) and the temple precinct (E-sag-ila); Northern and Southern Palaces and the supposed “hanging gardens”, processional way, Ishtar Gate.

- **Discussion focus**: Myth and the historicity of the image of the city. The architecture that is associated with this mythological view of the past.

**Readings:**

**On reserve:**


**WEEK 14. [DECEMBER 8] PERSIAN EMPIRE AND ITS AFTERMATH**

- **Achaemenids, Medes and Persians:**
  Pasargadæ and Persepolis.

- **Mesopotamia in the Seleucid Period.**
  The continuation of the traditions and the legacy of Mesopotamian architectural traditions. Wrap up session.

- **Discussion focus**: The continuity and legacy of the long-term Mesopotamian architectural traditions.

**Readings:**


**On reserve:**


**Finals week [December 15]** Final submission of 10-12 page research papers


**Bibliographies**

*Dictionaries:*


*Historical and archaeological references:*

Nissen, Hans J; 1999. *Geschichte Alt-Vorderasiens*, München. [Prehistory to Alexander, historical study, and a substantial bibliography] 

*Myth and religion*

Art historical surveys:


Main studies on the architecture and urbanism


Special topics in architecture and urbanism


Dalley, Stephanie et. al; 1998. The legacy of Mesopotamia, Oxford University Press.


Delougaz, Pinhas; 1933. Plano-convex bricks and the methods of their employment, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 7, Chicago, Illinois. [Also includes: The treatment of clay tablets in the field].


Heinrich, Ernst; 1934. Schilf und Lehm: Ein Beitrag zur Baugeschichte der Sumerer, Berlin.


Hodder, I (ed); 1996. On the surface: Çatalhöyük 1993-95. [McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research / British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monograph No.22]


