***CAHA Erasmus offerings 2014-15***

***Level C modules***

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|  | ***Semester 1*** | | ***Semester 2*** |
| ***Year 1***  ***For Erasmus purposes*** |
| *Greek and Roman History A* | *Greek and Roman History B* | |
| *Early Civilisations: Egypt* | *Early Civilisations: Western Asia* | |
| *Greek & Roman Literature A* | *Greek & Roman Literature B* | |
| *Greek Art and Archaeology* | *Roman Art and Archaeology* | |
| *World Archaeology (20)* |  | |
| *Byzantium & the Transformation of the Roman World* | *Barbarians & the Transformation of the Roman World* | |
| *Project A* | *Project* *B* | |
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All these courses are suitable for beginners and can be taken for 10 credits in one semester, except World Archaeology which is 20 credits in one semester. Specific project titles will not be available until later in the summer. It may also be possible to do a language in semester 1: Egyptian, Greek or Latin.

***Level I/H modules***

These are taught for 20 credits within a single semester but require prior subject knowledge. Places are limited and cannot be guaranteed.

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| **Semester 1** |
| **Artefacts and material culture** |
| **Greek and Roman Epic** |
| **Palace Societies** |
| **Mummification to burial** |
| **Death, burial and society** |
| **Late Antiquity** |
| **History & archaeology of Western Asia** |
| **Cities of the Mediterranean** |
| **Egypt in the first millennium BC** |
| **Catastrophes!** |
| **Semester 2** |
| **Egyptian mysteries** |
| **Sumerian language and culture** |
| **Age of empires** |
| **Imperial Egypt** |
| **Smash the Past** |
| **Mediterranean and European archaeology** |
| **Court Ritual in Byzantium** |

Level I/H module descriptions

***Semester one***

**Artefacts and material culture**

Artefacts and materials provide us with insights into other ways of life, art, cognition, technology and the materiality of human existence - practically and in terms of symbolic expression and sensory experience. Artefacts are also the primary media for representing the past in museums - a key point of contact for public engagement with cultural heritage. Archaeology is at the cutting edge of material culture studies, heavily influencing – and being influenced by – new approaches in anthropology, art history, heritage conservation and museology.

The module is divided into two sections. The first part explores the collection, curation, interpretation and presentation of material culture in museum displays and repositories. This will include discussion of display methods (including digital media), and the values, meanings and aesthetics of artefact presentation. The second part of the module examines current approaches to the interpretation of material culture, focusing on social life in the material world, relationships between beliefs, knowledge, action and artefacts, and fundamental aspects of human existence such as technology, ritual, gender, age, cult, ethnicity and power. The themes explored by this module are relevant to all periods of study and all parts of the world. By the end of the module you will be able to interpret material culture from a range of perspectives, and critically evaluate how past material worlds are recovered, curated, displayed and interpreted for modern audiences.

**Greek and Roman Epic**

This module examines the history of the epic poem in the classical world. This module aims to give a deeper understanding of the more familiar epic poems from antiquity, in particular the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid*, addressing topics such as the relationship between Homer's poetry and wider traditions of Indo-European and ancient Near Eastern mythology, the reception of epic themes in Greek tragedy, the reception of tragedy in the *Aeneid*, the ways in which the *Aeneid* addresses the bloody history of the first century BC. We will also be looking at some less familiar epics; these may include Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonantica*, Catullus' *Peleus and Thetis*, and Lucan's *Civil War*. In addition to this, we shall consider some of the ways in which ancient epic has been influential in English literature.

**From mummification to burial: travelling to the netherworld in ancient Egypt**

For the ancient Egyptians the most crucial part of life was their posthumous travel to the beyond without dying a second death. Each dead individual had to pass several stages before s/he could become an Osiris and lead his/her life as a circumpolar star in the beyond, “sitting and standing up with the gods”. In this option course we will be looking into the mechanics necessary to guarantee a positive outcome of this rite of passage in order to successfully socialise the deceased into the world of the dead. Textual as well as archaeological sources will help to unfold a detailed picture of the various processes and concepts involved. Among many other topics, we will look into several cemeteries in detail, discuss child burials, listen to recitations performed by priests in the embalming chambers and learn to understand how the Book of the Dead worked. The focus of this option course will be on funerary belief offering a complete picture of how a burial procession leading from the embalming chamber to the tomb was organised, including all rituals and personnel involved. It will enable you to understand ancient Egyptian funerary rituals and religion and will give you an integral picture of the complexity of ancient Egyptian ritual practice.

**Cities of the ancient and medieval Mediterranean: monuments and memories**

Looking at the past is important. Most people in the ancient and medieval worlds could not read and did not have access to books. Instead, they relied on visual communication, from monuments and their decoration down through the ornament on objects of daily use such as combs. The module will teach you how to look at the past, and how to see the past in a new way. The Parthenon in Athens, the Pantheon in Rome, Hagia Sophia and the Sultan’s Palace and Harem in Istanbul are major monuments of the Mediterranean world, but in all cases their original meaning(s) have changed, sometimes dramatically, over time. The Parthenon, for example, was a temple and focus of urban rituals; then a Christian church; then an arms depot; then became a symbol of ‘democracy’; and is now both a contested site (to whom do the Elgin marbles belong?) and a symbol of Greek cultural hegemony. This module looks at what these major monuments – and cities such as Jerusalem (successively Jewish, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and now split between Israel and Palestine) and Palermo – tell us about the creation of the past. It is an excellent preparation for travelling in Europe.

**Catastrophes! Humans and Environments**

This course aims to review a range of key issues in world archaeology and how environmental evidence can be used effectively to address, explain or clarify our past.

Some say Environmental Archaeology is a discipline in trouble and is dying on its feet. It is either seen as ‘irrelevant’ when we explore issues of why human societies changed or is brought in as a sole explanation. The latter can include a range of ‘Catastrophe Theories’ such as volcanic eruptions, comet strike and disease-based ‘mega deaths’.

This module takes the view that such an approach fails to appreciate the full range of information that environmental archaeology can produce beyond essential questions such as ‘what did they eat’ and ‘is this deposit poo or not’; and that there is a clear role for this discipline in terms of explaining and understanding the past which can address social and archaeological questions.

**Egypt in the first millennium BC**

This module will present an overview of the history of Egypt from the end of the New Kingdom to the creation of a Macedonian Greek dynasty in Egypt after Alexander’s conquest of the country. This is a fascinating era and one that has only really begun to be explored in recent decades. It’s a period that saw the settlement of Libyans, invasions of Nubians, Assyrians and Persians, as well as the arrival of Greeks as traders and soldiers. In some respects, Egyptian culture may appear resolutely immutable, with its temples as bastions of cultural continuity. In reality it was constantly responding to new stimuli, and the archaeological and textual record shows both a strong interest in the country’s own past and a pragmatic engagement with the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds. Many of the issues are encapsulated in Herodotus’ enthralling - and problematic - account of Egypt and its history**.**

**Death, burial and society**

The universality of the human experience of death, the presence of well-preserved bodies and artefacts in burials, and the prominence of funerary architecture and symbolism have led archaeologists to some of their most vivid encounters with past cultural worlds. In many cases, mortuary practices provide us with the richest sources of archaeological evidence for religious beliefs and social ideals, while at the same time offering insights into the life histories and deaths of individuals. This module explores the diversity and complexity of funerary ritual and representation through archaeological evidence, focusing on current approaches to the analysis of mortuary evidence and funerary monuments, and interpretative themes such as social reconstruction, death ritual, status, royal burials, spirit worlds and ancestors, identity and personhood, human sacrifice, power and cosmology.

These themes are examined with reference to the wide range of anthropological, sociological and historical perspectives that underpin the inter-disciplinary character of the archaeology of death. Case study material ranges from early prehistory and Roman and migration period Europe to the modern era, with comparative material from all parts of the world. By the end of the module you will be able to interpret burials, mortuary practices and funerary monuments from a range of perspectives, and critically assess how the evidence is used for interpretative purposes in all kinds of cultural contexts.

**Late Antiquity**

Late Antiquity is a crucial period in the Roman World (roughly the late third to the sixth centuries AD) encompassing the destruction of the Roman Empire in the West and its survival in the East. The module deals with the transformation of the ancient world addressing the social and political history of the period through literature, archaeology and material culture, including analysis of key emperors such as the reformer Diocletian who is alleged to have created a more autocratic imperial model, Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and Julian who abandoned his Christian heritage to return to paganism. The module will cover the relationship between Christianity and paganism including conversion, the creation of new holy space and religious violence; imperial capitals such as Rome and Constantinople; the evolution of the imperial court; Rome and barbarians; the Persian Empire; family and gender structures including eunuchs and the effect of Christianity on these structures.

**The Palace Societies of Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece**

The palace-based societies that flourished from 2000 BC in Crete and mainland Greece were the first advanced, literate societies in Europe, capable of major architectural and engineering projects on the basis of flourishing agricultural and 'manufacturing' economies. Their position in the Mediterranean allowed trade and even diplomatic relations with Egyptian, Syrian and Mesopotamian civilizations on the one hand and considerable influence in the development of Late Bronze Age societies in the Central and Western Mediterranean on the other. In this module you will have the opportunity to explore such topics as the administrative systems, palatial architecture, wall-paintings and other artistic creations, military focus and maritime enterprise of the civilisation which were the forerunners, indeed ancestors, of that of Classical Greece.

**History and Archaeology of Western Asia 1500-500 BC**

This module applies a broad-spectrum approach to the two heartland areas of the Ancient Near East, Assyria and Babylonia. The political history will be traced, including the diplomatic relationship and military interplay between these two areas. Also playing a key role in the module will be cultural history, including literature, religion and mythology. A strand that will give the module a unique identity will be a new investigation of the king, in both regions, as an individual.

***Semester two***

**Mediterranean and European archaeology**

How and from where did Mycenae get its amber? What was the importance of salt from Austria? Why is there Classical Greek pottery and metalwork in central Europe? Why had Roman amphorae already overrun Gaul long before Caesar? The Mediterranean and Temperate Europe are often regarded as two separate worlds before they were forcibly united by Rome. But in fact there was always contact between the two regions and they impacted on each other in crucial ways. This module will look at the evidence (principally archaeological, some textual) for these interactions from the later Bronze Age through the Iron Age to the eve of the Roman expansion out of the Mediterranean. It will look at the evidence for how contact was driven by the needs for natural resources and for luxury items and how these were obtained and how control of access to these resources resulted in profound social changes visible in the evidence for activities such as trade, warfare, ritual and religion, feasting, coinage. The evidence will include fortifications, settlements, funerary practice and material culture, with an emphasis on the long-distance links.

**Imperial Egypt (Dynasties 18-20)**

The New Kingdom (Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties, c. 1550-1070 BC) saw the transformation of Egypt from an impoverished country ruled by the foreign ‘Hyksos’ to an empire stretching from the Euphrates in Syria to the fifth cataract on the Nile in modern Sudan. It was thus an era of warrior pharaohs but also of Hatshepsut, Akhenaten and Tutankhamun. International trade and diplomacy figure prominently, as do enormous religious building projects, extensively decorated tombs such as that of Nebamun, the Book of the Dead, personal religion and the village of Deir el-Medina. It’s also the period of Amenhotep, son of Hapu, later deified, and Khaemwese, the ‘first Egyptologist’.

The New Kingdom has left an extensive archaeological and historical record, richer in many respects than any other period of Egyptian history. This module addresses a range of different topics and themes in a broadly chronological framework and consistently emphasises primary sources. If you’re intrigued by Egyptian temples and gods, by what they believed about an afterlife, by famous pharaohs, by relief carving, painting and sculpture, diplomatic correspondence and private letters, or interconnections with Africa, the Near East and the Mediterranean, there is something here for you. Much of what you read about ancient Egypt is interpretation rather than ‘fact’, and this module will enable you to understand the evidence on which such discussion is based.

# Sumerian Language and Culture

“Almost everything that’s been invented was already invented by the Sumerians.” “A sumerologist is someone who knows the mostest about the leastest.” Both of these truisms tell us something about the study of the ancient Sumerians, their language and their culture. More than twenty centuries before the first Olympiad or the founding of Rome the Sumerians created an advanced civilisation with elaborate architecture, city planning, technology, science and writing. The range and sophistication of what was written in Sumerian allows us to gain an insight into the minds of men and women five thousand years ago, or to put it differently, about half way back to the beginnings of the Neolithic.

This option will investigate what it meant to be a Sumerian, and what the achievements of the Sumerians were, and how they were passed on to later civilisations, sometimes even surviving in their original Sumerian form, as for example in the case of our divisions of time and the circle. Perhaps most important of all are the texts that reveal to us the rich world of thought of the Sumerians, their mythology, legends, songs, courtship rites, stories and proverbs; all of these genres will be studied and debated in this module. But the module will also cover historical texts as well as the letters which the Sumerians wrote to each other – and sometimes also to their gods – and mundane matters from ancient admin to brewing.

The seminar will be structured in such a way that AL will be introducing the language and culture during the first five weeks of the first term. Right at the beginning though each student will choose two topics that they wish to specialise in, for example a legal code, a myth, a social or historical phenomenon or an individual city and its architecture and life. After the first five weeks the module will take on a more discursive character with students’ informal presentation of their findings and discussion.

*Websites*: [www.cdp.bham.ac.uk](http://www.cdp.bham.ac.uk), [www.mesopotamia.co.uk](http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk), [www.etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk](http://www.etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk)

*Key reading*: Crawford, H. E. W., *Sumer and the Sumerians* (Cambridge et al., Cambridge University Press: 2004).DS 72/C (Short Loan); Jacobsen, T., *The Harps That Once ... Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven/London, Yale University Press: 1987). PJ 4083; Kramer, S. N., *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine Firsts in Man’s Recorded History* (Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania Press: 1956, 19612, 19813), DS 72 (19612), DS 72 (19813) [a classic by the man responsible for the “mostest…leastest” quote].

**Age of Empires**

Empire and imperialism were constant features of the Greek world in the Classical period. We need look no further than Sparta’s exploitation of her helots or Athens’ fifth and fourth century empires for evidence of this. But there was more to Classical Greece than Athens and Sparta. In addition to Athens and Sparta this module explores the roles that Thebes, Thessaly, Macedonia and various other Greek *poleis* and *ethne* played in shaping the political landscape of Classical Greece. Particular emphasis will be placed on the concepts of freedom, autonomy and imperialism. Through case studies of these varied and often conflicting interests you will explore conflicts such as the Persian, Peloponnesian, ‘Sacred’, and ‘Social’ wars from the perspective of various “empires” that were fighting for hegemony, political relevance, and even survival.

**Egyptian Mysteries in Greece and Rome**

If you ever wondered how three of the main cultures of the ancient world Egypt, Greece and Rome were connected with each other through religion and culture, this option course is for you. You will not only learn how the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis was transformed into a Hellenistic goddess who was even welcome in Rome - you will also understand how mystery cults worked, who joined them and how secret rituals were performed at night, in dimly lit temples and what it was that Apuleius described as off-limits when talking to others. As secondary sources in English are limited, you will learn to work closely with primary sources such as archaeological evidence and texts written by ancient authors (English translations provided).

**Smash the Past: breakage, violence and transformation**

From the breakage and deposition of swords to human sacrifice, severed heads and tattoos, the world at and beyond the fringes of Rome was being continually reinvented and challenged by individuals and communities. In addition to broader themes of cultural evolution, these incidents of ‘breakage’ reflect moments of change that are rarely identifiable through material culture, but which can provide insights into the lives of these ‘barbarians’.

This module will explore themes and incidents of breakage, vandalism and iconoclasm within this period, and will draw parallels with earlier and more recent times, highlighting how the past has a habit of repeating itself. At the heart of the module will be a focus on moments of change and transformation and how we might begin to interpret the many potential meanings that such events could have had for past populations.

**Court Ritual**

This option examines the evolution of Byzantine court ritual through the two ceremonial books that have survived, one from the 10th century and the other from the 14th century. Ritual is studied in the context of its settings, the streets and monuments of Constantinople, especially the palaces of the city. Objects such as illuminated manuscripts, coins and seals, mosaics are studied in connection with ritual for what they can tell us about the dress of the emperors, empresses and other court members and about how ritual is portrayed in art. The ceremonial books will be complemented by descriptions of ceremonies by Byzantine authors and foreign visitors to the city. Particular emphasis will be placed on coronation and other promotions, banquets, processions.