

The Archaeology of Ancient Iran
University of Washington

Course: NEAR E 207 / ARCHY 269A

Term: Winter 2019

Room: Denny 258

Time: T/Th 3:30-5:20pm

Instructor: Stephanie Selover

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-3pm

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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the archaeology of ancient Persia, the modern country of Iran, from the time of the earliest inhabitants in the Paleolithic period, to the end of the Sasanian period and the arrival of Islam (ca. 10,000 BCE-651 CE). Though little work was published on the archaeology of Iran in English after the 1979 Revolution, recent archaeological studies and archaeological excavations during the last ten to fifteen years have brought new information to light. This is a cultural, rather than historical class, and we will emphasize cultural change over time, rather than political and historical events. Together, we will analyze how archaeology can inform us about our cultural past, and what remains to still be discovered in this important region.

The course is split into three sections: (I) The Pre-Urban World, (II) The Establishment of Urbanism and Empire, and (III) Persia in the Global Context, covering roughly the three large cultural time periods in ancient Iran and the greater Near Eastern world.

Each section will have at least one spotlight on an important archaeological site. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and come prepared for a discussion regarding the archaeological site. Specific research and discussion questions will be uploaded onto the course Canvas site a week before these classes. These will be special classes on archaeological practice in the 20th and 21st centuries in Iran and in archaeology in general.

Students are responsible for all assigned readings, in-class discussion, a one-minute essay during each class, one in-class map quiz, one in-class midterm, a short report on an Iranian archaeological site of the student's choice, and a final exam.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students are expected to learn:

- An introductory understanding of ancient Iranian archaeology, history, and culture
- To apply historical methods to a range of important questions in Iranian history through critical analysis of archaeological evidence and modern opinion and through the construction of detailed, reasoned arguments
- To recognize the distinctive features of the various time periods of Iranian history and culture
- Critical analysis of ancient textual and archaeological evidence and modern opinions
- Basic archaeological excavation methods and publication standards, using ancient Iranian examples

Course Format:

Class will meet twice a week. Each class is expected to be a discussion rather than a straight lecture by the instructor, so students are responsible for all readings before the start of class and are expected to actively contribute. At times, the class will be split into smaller groups to further discuss the themes of the class and then each group will present their collected ideas. In some classes, we may watch a short video, and then have a class discussion of the themes presented in the video.

Each class will begin with a question on the theme for the day (posted on the course syllabus unless otherwise noted), and a short “one-minute” essay on the topic of the day will be given at some point during class, based on readings. Please come to class prepared for discussion.

Each student is responsible for *all* assigned readings before the start of class and must be prepared to discuss them. The discussion section of the course will utilize both a voluntary method of question and answers, as well as a Socratic one, where the instructor may choose who will answer the question.

In the second week of the quarter, on January 15, a short map and geography quiz will be given at the start of class. Understanding the geography of Iran and its surrounding area is of great importance in order to understand the various cultures and peoples covered in this course.

Students are required to write a short research paper on an archaeological site of the student’s choice. The final version of the papers will be due by 11:59 pm on Friday, March 15.

A midterm will be administered in-class at the end of Week 6, on February 12, covering all material from the first half of the course. A final exam will be administered during final’s week, on Thursday, March 21, covering material from the entire course, with an emphasis on the final half of the course.

Prerequisites:

This course is open to all students interested in archaeology, ancient Persia/Iran, or the ancient or modern Middle East. No prior knowledge of these areas or ancient or modern languages is necessary. All instruction and readings will be in English.

Required Reading and Participation:

The readings from this course are taken from a variety of journals and monograph chapters. All readings will be made available in pdf form on the class Canvas website. Readings are subject to change as determined by the instructor, with at least one week's notice.

All assigned readings are to be completed by each student **before** the start of each class. Staying on top of the readings will maximize a student’s learning experience and prepare them for in-class discussions. It also allows students to ask relevant questions during class. The material covered in the readings will not repeat exactly the material covered in class, so both readings and good class attendance are a must for getting the most out of the course.

Please arrive on time for class. It is rude and disrespectful to both your fellow students as well as to the instructor to arrive after the start of class, interrupting lecture or discussion. Everyone here is an adult, please be responsible for your own time management.

Optional Reference Books:

- J. Alvaraz-Mon, G.P. Basello, Y. Wicks (2018) *The Elamite World*. (Routledge)

- J. Curtis and N. Tallis, eds. (2005) *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* (University of California Press)
- J. Curtis and S. Simpson (2010) *The World of Achaemenid Persia: The Diversity of Ancient Iran* (I.B. Taurus)
- M. A. Dandamaev, V.G. Lukonin, P.L. Kohl, D.J. Dadson eds., (2004) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge University Press)
- J. Perrot and J. Curtis (2013) *The Palace of Darius at Susa: The Great Royal Residence of Achaemenid Persia* (I.B. Taurus)
- C.A. Petrie ed. (2013) *Ancient Iran and Its Neighbours: Local Developments and Long-Range Interactions in the 4th Millennium BC* (Archaeological Monograph Series/British Institute of Pers)
- D.T. Potts (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran* (Oxford University Press)
- D.T. Potts (2016) *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge World Archaeology)
- K. Rezakhani, T. Daryae, A. Mousavi (2014) *Excavating an Empire: Achaemenid Persia in Longue Durée* (Mazda Publishers)
- H. Stierlin (2006) *Splendors of Ancient Persia* (White Star)
- C. Vesta, M. Rodgers, R. Hillenbrand, eds., (1997) *The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Persia: New Light on the Parthian and Sasanian Empires* (St. Martin's Press)

Grading Policy

- Class Discussion Participation 5%
- One-Minute Essays (1 Point Each) 15%
- Map Quiz (January 15) 10%
- In-Class Midterm (February 12) 20%
- Archaeological Site Report (March 15 by 11:59pm) 25%
- Final Exam (March 21, 4:30-6:20PM) 25%

Grade Scale:

You can always track your grades throughout the quarter on the online grade book on Canvas. I encourage you to do so to gauge your progress in class. Please contact us as soon as possible if you suspect any errors.

Letter	Number	Percentage	Letter	Number	Percentage	Letter	Number	Percentage
A+	4.0	>95%	B-	2.8	83%	C-	1.6	71%
A	3.9	94%	B-	2.7	82%	C-	1.5	70%
A-	3.8	93%	B-	2.6	81%	D+	1.4	69%
A-	3.7	92%	B-	2.5	80%	D+	1.3	68%
A-	3.6	91%	C+	2.4	79%	D+	1.2	67%
A-	3.5	90%	C+	2.3	78%	D	1.1	66%
B+	3.4	89%	C+	2.2	77%	D	1.0	65%
B+	3.3	88%	C	2.1	76%	D	0.9	64%
B+	3.2	87%	C	2.0	75%	D-	0.8	63%
B	3.1	86%	C	1.9	74%	D-	0.7	60-62%

B	3.0	85%	C-	1.8	73%	E	0.0	<62 %
B	2.9	84%	C-	1.7	72%			

Technology in Class:

The use of laptops in class is allowed for note taking and for referencing class readings. Surfing the web, checking emails or social media, online shopping, etc. is prohibited. Such activity is disruptive to the individual, the instructor, and to the remainder of the class. However, I would highly encourage students to take notes in class by hand, as numerous studies have shown handwritten notes to be far more useful for students than typed notes.

If I do find a student using a laptop for any purpose other than note taking, the privilege of using the laptop in class will be revoked after one warning.

Please turn off your cellphones before coming to class; the use of cellphones is prohibited for any reason.

Disability Resources for Students:

If you need any type of accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Resources for Students (<http://www.washington.edu/students/drs>). We are happy to work with Disability Resources to provide appropriate accommodation.

Make-Up Policies:

Make-ups for the map quiz, midterms and the final exam will not be permitted except in the case of *documented* emergencies or medical reasons.

No make-up exams will be allowed for the map quiz, midterms or final exam unless for dire situations, (kidnapped by aliens, leg caught in a bear trap at the time of midterm, etc.), with proper documentation.

Please be on time to class, and if for any reason you must leave early, please leave quietly and do not disrupt the other students on your way out. No talking during class, except during discussion periods. However, always feel free to ask the instructor a question at any point during class. If you have a question, chances are five other students have a similar question, please speak up.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to treat their fellow classmates and instructors with honesty and respect throughout the course. All exam answers and posters must reflect original work. No form of cheating will be tolerated. The following link has information on academic honesty, plagiarism, and consequences: <http://www.washington.edu/uaa/gateway/advising/help/academichonesty.php> Student are expected to adhere to the University of Washington Code of Student Conduct which can be found at the following link: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120> The University of Washington is committed to fostering an environment where the free exchange of ideas is an integral part of the academic learning environment. Disruption of classroom discussions can prohibit other students from fully engaging and participating. Any student causing disruption may be asked to leave any class session, and, depending on the severity and frequency of that behavior, an incident report may be filled with Community Standards and Student Conduct. As a condition of enrollment, all students assume responsibility to observe standards of conduct that will contribute to the pursuit of academic goals and to the welfare of the academic community. For more detailed information on these standards, please visit: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120>.



Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction to the Course; Geography and History

January 8: Introduction and Geography of Iran/Persia

No Required Readings for Today

Optional Readings:

- M.D. Jones (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “Key Questions Regarding the Paleo-Environment of Iran”
- D.T. Potts (2016) *The Archaeology of Elam* “Environment, Climate and Resources” pages 14-46

January 10: History of Archaeology in Persia and Iran

Discussion: What were the reasons for the rise of archaeological study and excavations in Iran and the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries?

Required Readings:

- Mousavi (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “The History of Archaeological Research in Iran: A Brief Survey”

Optional Readings

- T. Harrison (2010) “Reinventing Achaemenid Persia” in *The World of Achaemenid Persia*, J. Curtis and S. Simpson, eds., pages 21-32
- M.G. Majd (2003) *The Great American Plunder of Persia’s Antiquities 1925-1941*, “Introduction” pages 1-28

Part I: The Pre-Urban World

Week 2: The Pre-Elamite Period

January 15: The Paleolithic Period

Discussion: What unique information does the study of Paleolithic Iran give us about the rise of hominid and human cultures?

Map Quiz at the Start of Class

Required Readings:

- N.J. Conrad, E. Ghasidian, S. Heydari-Guran (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “The Paleolithic of Iran”

Optional Readings:

- M. Otte, F. Biglari, J. Jaubert *Iran Paleolithic*, International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences

January 17: The Proto-Elamite Period and the Neolithic Revolution

Discussion: What is the so-called “Neolithic Revolution” and what was Iran’s place in it?

Required Readings:

- H.F. Nashli and R. Matthews (2013) “The Neolithisation of Iran: Patterns of Change and Continuity.” In R. Matthews and H..F. Nashli (eds) *The Neolithisation of Iran: The Formation of New Societies*, Oxbow Books, pages 1-13
- R. Young and H.F. Nashli (2013) “Animals and People in the Neolithisation of Iran.” In R. Matthews and H..F. Nashli (eds) *The Neolithisation of Iran: The Formation of New Societies*, Oxbow Books, pages 178-188

Optional Readings

- A. Alizadeh (2003) *Excavations at the Prehistoric Mound of Chogha Bonut, Khuzestan, Iran, Seasons 1976/77, 1977/78, and 1996* [Oriental Institute Publications 12], “Preface” and “Introduction” pages 1-12
- L.R. Weeks (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “The Development and Expansion of a Neolithic Way of Life”

Part II: The Establishment of Urbanism and Empire

Week 3: The Rise of Elamite Culture

January 22: Archaeological Highlight: Sheikh-e Abad

Discussion questions posted on Canvas

Required Readings:

- R. Matthews, et. al. 2013 “Excavations, Surface Collection and Geophysics at Sheikh-e Abad” in *The Earliest Neolithic of Iran: 2008 Excavations at Sheikh-E Abad and Jani* (Oxbow Books), pages 25-52

January 24: The First Iranian Empire: Elam

Discussion Question: What cultural conditions allowed for the rise of the first empires in Iran?

Required Readings:

- J. Álvarez-Mon (2012) *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* (Wiley Blackwell), D.T. Potts, ed., “Elam: Iran’s First Empire” pages 740-757 (Focus primarily on the earlier time periods in the reading)

Optional Readings:

- D.T. Potts (2016) *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge World Archaeology), Chapter 1 “Elam, What, When, Where?” pages 1-13 and “The Kingdom of Susa and Anshan” pages 176-197

Week 4: Elam in Context

January 29: Class Canceled

January 31: Elam from the Global Perspective

Discussion Question: What role did Elam and the Elamite empire have in the greater Near Eastern and Indus Valley cultural spheres?

Required Readings:

- M. Vidale (2018) “Great Domino Games: From Elam, Looking Eastward.” In J. Alvaraz-Mon, G.P. Basello, Y. Wicks (2018) *The Elamite World*. (Routledge), pages 275-303

Optional Readings:

- B. McCall (2013) “Re-Assessing Elamite Highland Boundaries: New Evidence for the Middle and Neo-Elamite Periods in the Mamasani Valleys, South-Western Iran” In K.D. Gaef, J. Tavernier (eds.) *Susa and Elam: Archaeological, Philological, Historical and Geographical Perspective: Proceedings of the International Congress Held at Ghent University, December 14-17, 2009*, Brill. Pages 191-205
- Bryce 2003 *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East*, “The Interaction of the Players: Imperial Administration and International Relationships” pages 38-49 and “The Club of Royal Brothers” pages 70-88

Week 5: Elamite Susa

February 5: Class Canceled

February 7: Archaeological Highlight: Susa

Discussion questions posted on Canvas

Required Readings:

- F. Thone 1930 “Susa: Oldest City on Earth, Tells About Early Culture” *The Science News-Letter*, 18:505, pages 374-375+382
- J.P. Peters 1915 “Excavations in Persia” *The Harvard Theological Review* 8:1, pages 82-93
- V. Scheil 1904 “Excavations Made by the French in Susa and Babylonia, 1902-1903” *The Biblical World* 24:2, pages 146-152

Week 6: The Medes

February 12: In-Class Midterm

February 14: The Median Period

Discussion: What are the unique cultural attributes of the Median period?

Required Readings:

- M. Liverani (2003) “The Rise and Fall of Media.” In G.B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, R. Rollinger (eds.) *Continuity of Empire: Assyria, Media, Persia*, History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs V, pages 1-12
- M. Roaf (2003) “The Median Dark Age” In G.B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, R. Rollinger (eds.) *Continuity of Empire: Assyria, Media, Persia*, History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs V, pages 13-22

Optional Readings

- B. Genito (1986) “The Medes: A Reassessment of the Archaeological Evidence” *East and West* 36:1/3, pages 11-81

Week 7: Godin Tepe

February 19: Archaeological Spotlight: Godin Tepe

Discussion questions posted on Canvas

Required Readings:

- T. C. Young, Jr. (1969) *Excavations at Godin Tepe. First Progress Report*, Royal Ontario Museum, Occasional Paper 17
- T. C. Young, Jr. and L. D. Levine (1974), *Excavations of the Godin Project: Second Progress Report*, Royal Ontario Museum, Occasional Paper 26

February 21: Class Canceled

Part III: Persia in the Global Context

Week 8: The Achaemenids

February 26: The Achaemenid World

Discussion: What cultural and political circumstances allowed the Achaemenid empire to prosper?

Required Readings:

- M.A. Dandamaev and V.G. Lukonin (1989) *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 “The Social Institutions and Economic Structure of the Achaemenid Empire,” pages 90-116 only
- S. Razmjou (2013) Curtis J. & Tallis N. (eds.), *Forgotten Empire. The World of Ancient Persia*, (British Museum Press) “Religion and Burial Customs” pages 150-180

Optional Reading:

- H.D. Baker (2010) *The World of Achaemenid Persia: The Diversity of Ancient Iran*, J. Curtis and S. Simpson eds., (I.B. Taurus) “The Social Dimensions of Babylonian
- J. Curtis and N. Spencer (2005) *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*, J. Curtis and N. Tallis, eds. (University of California Press) “The Archaeology of the Achaemenid Period,” pages 30-50
- M.B. Garrison (2000) “Achaemenid Iconography as Evidenced by Glyptic Art: Subject Matter, Social Function, Audience and Diffusion” In C. Uehlinger (ed) *Images as Media: Sources for the Cultural History of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)*, pages 115-163 Domestic Architecture in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods” pages 179-194
- P.G. Kreyenbroek (2010) *The World of Achaemenid Persia: The Diversity of Ancient Iran*, J. Curtis and S. Simpson eds., (I.B. Taurus) “Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians: A Non-Essentialist Approach” pages 103-110
- Nagel (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “Color and Gilding in Achaemenid Architecture and Sculpture”

- S. Razmjou (2013) Curtis J. & Tallis N. (eds.), *Forgotten Empire. The World of Ancient Persia*, (British Museum Press) “Transport and Warfare” pages 210-235
- M. Waters (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “Elam, Assyria and Babylonia in the Early First Millennium BC”

February 28: Archaeological Spotlight: Persepolis

Discussion questions posted on Canvas

Required Readings:

- S. Razmjou (2010) *The World of Achaemenid Persia: The Diversity of Ancient Iran*, J. Curtis and S. Simpson eds., (I.B. Taurus) “Persepolis: A Reinterpretation of Palaces and Their Function.”
- Schmidt, E.F. (1953) *Persepolis Vol. 1: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*. Read over especially the Preface, and the Summary Log of the Persepolis Expedition, pages 1-6. Look over the rest of the book

Week 9: Post-Achaemenid Persia

March 5: The Downfall of the Achaemenids

Discussion: Besides political issues, what other cultural aspects contributed to the downfall of the Achaemenid period and the rise of the Parthian period?

Required Readings:

- P. Callieri and A. Askari-Chaverdi (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, D.T. Potts ed., (Oxford University Press) “Media, Khuzestan, and Fars Between the End of the Achaemenids and the Rise of the Sasanians”
- L. Hannestad (2012) *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* (Wiley Blackwell), D.T. Potts, ed. “The Seleucid Kingdom” pages 984-1000

March 7: Culture in the Parthian Period

Discussion: What information is still unknown about the archaeology and culture of the Parthian period?

Required Readings:

- S.R. Hauser (2012) *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* (Wiley Blackwell), D.T. Potts, ed. “The Arsacid (Parthian) Empire” pages 1001-1020

Week 10: The Sassanids and Archaeology in Modern Iran

March 12: The Sassanids and Pre-Islamic Persia

Discussion: What are the cultural attributes of Persia at the dawn of the Islamic period? How did the culture of the Sassanid period contribute to the rise of Islam?

Required Readings:

- M. Roaf (1997) *The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Persia: New Light on the Parthian and Sasanian Empires*, C. Vesta, M. Rodgers, R. Hillenbrand, eds., (St. Martin’s Press) “Persepolitan Echoes in Sasanian Architecture: Did the Sasanians Attempt to Re-create the Achaemenid Empire” pages 1-7

- Mousavi and T. Daryaee (2012) *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East* (Wiley Blackwell), D.T. Potts, ed., “The Sasanian Empire: An Archaeological Survey, c.220-640” pages 1076-1094

March 14: Persian Archaeology in the Modern Day

Discussion: If you could excavate a site in Iran from any time period, what would it be and why?

Required Readings:

- W. Soward (2014) *Excavating an Empire: Achaemenid Persia in Longue Durée*, T. Daryaee, A. Mousavi and K. Rezakhani, eds., [Mazda Publications], “Ancient Persia in Cinema” pages 211-233
- L.P. Yazdi and O. Garazhian (2012) “Archaeology as an Imported Commodity: A Critical Approach to the Position of Archaeology in Iran” *Forum Kritische Archaologie* 1, pages 24-34

March 15: Archaeological Site Report Due by 11:59 pm

March 21: Class Final, 4:30-6:20pm, in Denny 258