

Myriad Mediterraneans

Archaeology, Representation and Decolonization

<https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/1085638>

Peter van Dommelen

- ARCH 0230
- TTh 10:30-11:50am
- Rhode Island Hall, 008



As debates rage about the Classical roots of Western society, the ancient Mediterranean itself is largely overlooked and continues to be seen in stereotypes. Because the ancient Mediterranean was not just white, male and colonizing, this course will explore the extensive archaeological evidence for cultural, gender, ethnic, economic and other forms of diversity during the first millennium BCE. Can Mediterranean archaeology contribute to current debates about decolonization? Conversely, can contemporary debates about indigenous ways of being shine a fresh light on ancient evidence?

As the Classical roots of the Western world are increasingly challenged and questioned, it is rapidly becoming clear how deep, wide, and entangled these roots have grown over the millennia – the debate about statues of Roman emperors on the Brown campus is a case in point. These debates have tended to concentrate in the present and on our own society, however, and have so far largely overlooked the ancient world – which was not necessarily less diverse than ours.

In this course, we look beyond stereotypical representations of the ancient world dominated by male politicians and philosophers in white togas. Drawing on a wide range of archaeological evidence and the unique insights that it affords, we examine instead the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, races, genders, and class in the ancient Mediterranean – in short, this course will take us on a tour of myriad Mediterraneans, mostly in the first millennium BCE.



Ancient Phoenician DNA tells a story of settlement and female mobility



We will pay particular attention to ancient colonization because of the disproportional role it has played in modern Western colonialism and by extension in its impact on the modern world; but we will also explore how decolonizing the ancient Mediterranean may contribute to the decolonization of our own society.

Course Organization

The course is articulated into three parts. The first three weeks are used to introduce the broad themes, to provide a theoretical framework and to lay out a factual basis for the entire course. The following six weeks constitute the heart of the course and explore in depth the core questions posed in the introductory weeks. The final part of the course is made up of the final weeks of the semester during which students begin work on their final project, as we look into the many connections between the past and the present.

Each week is dedicated to a single, if broad topic as listed in this course outline, with the Tuesday seminar mostly dedicated to an introductory lecture and discussion of one key publication; the Thursday session will entirely be taken up by discussion of the week's theme guided by course readings. In addition, starting from week 4, i.e during the thematic module, students will act as discussants and post comments, questions and ideas on the course blog to kickstart and steer discussions.

Over 13 weeks, students will spend three hours per week in class (39 hours total). Required reading for the course is expected to take up approximately seven or eight hours per week (up to 100 hours). In addition, writing of and commenting to blog posts as well as researching and writing coursework are estimated to add up to a total of approximately 70 hours over the course of the term. The total course is therefore estimated at around 200 hours.

Learning Goals

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the mutual and continuous impacts between past and present, including to make them aware of the particular roles that 'Classical Civilization' has played and in many ways continues to play in the Western world. In the second place, it aims to equip students with a robust factual knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean, in particular of the first millennium BCE, and to make them aware of diversity, cultural and otherwise, in the ancient world; a corollary aim is to expand students' understanding of the ancient world beyond Greece and Rome.

More specifically, the learning goals of this course are

- to provide students with a robust knowledge of archaeological and relevant historical evidence across the (West) Mediterranean region;
 - to encourage students to understand classical sources critically and as culturally embedded;
 - to instruct students in critical analysis of current research on a study region (problems, method and theory, quality of data);
 - to stimulate students to work across regional boundaries and research traditions as well as to formulate sophisticated approaches to major topics like colonialism and culture contact;
 - to engage students with the material and resources related to the study regions of the Mediterranean.
- There are no prerequisites for taking this course.

Practical Information

- Instructor: Peter van Dommelen (peter_van_dommelen@brown.edu)
- Office hours: Wednesday and Thursday, 1-2 pm
- Office: Rhode Island Hall, room 009

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform us if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. I am always available after class or during office hours, but you could also make an appointment for another time. For more information, phone 401-863-9588 or email SEAS@brown.edu.

Course requirements and assessment

There are no prerequisites for taking this course.

- 30% final paper
- 40% short writing assignments (three in number, making up 10%, 10% and 20% of the assessment)
- 10% class presentation
- 10% blog posts
- 10% class participation and online responses

Assignments and deadlines

1. short paper 1 (10%): around 500 words, due September 24
2. short paper 2 (10%): around 750 words, due October 8
3. short paper 3 (20%): around 1000 words, due October 29
4. final paper (30%): 2,000 to 2,500 words, due December 12

In addition, all students are required

- to present in class a short preliminary report of their final course project (ca 10 mins), in weeks 10 and 11 (between November 9 and 18);
- to write two blog posts on the course blog about the assigned readings, in weeks 4-9 (between September 28 and November 4);
- to take part actively in class discussions and contribute to online questions and discussions on the course blog, in all weeks.

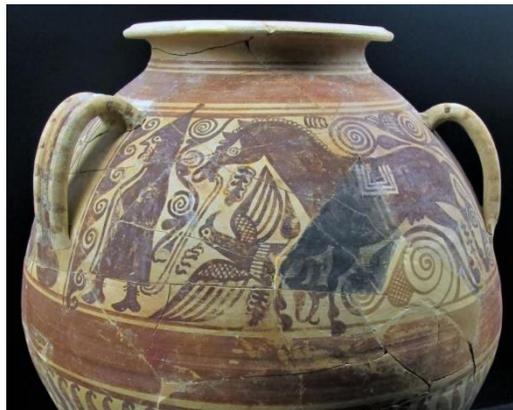
Coursework has to be submitted through Canvas by the specified deadline. Late submission of coursework without prior consultation is likely to lead to a penalty in the form of a reduced grade. Further details of the assignments are set out in detail in Canvas (under 'assignments')

Reading

You are required to read four papers every week: these are journal articles and book chapters that are listed in this syllabus and on Canvas; there is no single textbook for this course. All readings are accessible electronically either in Canvas or through the University Library.

Note that the course canvas pages *always* offer the most up-to-date, correct and more detailed information

<https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/1085638>



Course Outline and Reading Assignments

week 1 The Ancients and Us

The first class begins with an introduction to the course itself, highlighting its goals, rationale and set-up. It will be followed by discussion of a short text to be read in class.

- Sept 9 [course materials provided in class]

PART 1: FOUNDATIONS

week 2 Beyond Greece and Rome

This week offers a basic introduction to and whirlwind tour of the wider Mediterranean beyond the Greek and Roman heartlands, highlighting where, when and how connections were made across the Mediterranean, with and away from Greece and Rome.

- Sept 14 Hodos 2020: 66-94 (ch.3)
- Sept 16 Díaz-Andreu 1998; López-Bertran 2012; Pérez-Jordà *et al.* 2021

week 3 Myriad Comparisons (and Other Modes of Juxtaposition)

Comparison lies at the heart of this course and of studying the ancient world in its diversity and it is therefore the central concept of this week: what makes a good comparison? How and why have modes and objects of comparison changed through time?

- Sept 21 Detienne 2008: 1-21 (ch.1)
- Sept 23 De Angelis 1998; Vasunia 2005; Garnand 2019
introduction to the library by subject librarian Karen Bouchard

short paper 1 due on Sept.24

PART 2: THEMES

week 4 Ancient Colonialism and Cultural Interactions

Colonialism past and present are a core theme of this course, and in this week we will explore the implications of studying colonialism and delve into the murky details of several ancient colonial situations in the Mediterranean.

- Sept 28 Dietler 2005
- Sept 30 Marín-Aguilera 2018; Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez 2015; Kistler 2020

week 5 Different and Changing Identities

Self-identities and external identifications do not and never did overlap; they are also difficult to trace in archaeological contexts, but as multiple case studies show an awareness of minor but crucial details and an interest in tracking ancient identities can lead to interesting results.

- Oct 5 Ghisleni 2018
- Oct 7 Foxhall 2020; Luley 2020: 119-146 (ch.5); Steidl 2020

short paper 2 due on Oct.8

week 6 Indigenous Traditions

The ancient Mediterranean was certainly not short of indigenous peoples, even if they are rarely recognized as such today. In this week, we examine efforts to bring ancient indigenous identities to the fore.

- Oct 12 Trouillot 2005: 108-140 (ch.4)
- Oct 14 Morris 2003; Woolf 2011: 8-31 (ch.1); Roppa 2019

week 7 Gendered Practices

Gender in all its facets and dimensions was as much part of ancient daily life as it has always been everywhere and is therefore a crucial theme for our course. In this week, we will examine various attempts to gender the ancient world.

- Oct 19 Díaz-Andreu *et al.* 2005: 13-42 (ch.2)
- Oct 21 Quercia and Foxhall 2014; López-Bertran and Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez 2018; Delgado Hervás 2020

week 8 Rural Landscapes

Landscape is a major category of archaeological research and in a pre-industrial and far less urbanized society as was the ancient world, rural landscapes were a prominent fact of people lives and identities. In this week, we consider a number of quite different rural landscapes to explore their significance for ancient diversity.

- Oct 26 Witcher 2006
- Oct 28 van Dommelen 2007; Rojas 2015; Bowes *et al.* 2017

short paper 3 due on Oct.29

week 9 Whose Past?

The final theme to be scrutinized concerns the role of the past in the present: how does the ancient world sit in our present-day world, and what do we make of the ancient world? In this week, we explore different case studies from around the Mediterranean to examine how different communities relate to the past in different ways.

- Nov 2 Herzfeld 2010
- Nov 4 Dietler 2006; Hamilakis 2008; Lafrenz Samuels and van Dommelen 2019

PART 3: INVESTIGATIONS (student presentations)

week 10 Exploring Ancient Diversity

This is the first week dedicated to student presentation, and these will primarily concern case studies from around the ancient Mediterranean to highlight its cultural and social diversity.

- Nov 9
- Nov 11

week 11 Diversity Past and Present

This is the second week dedicated to student presentation, when the focus will shift towards the complex interplay between ancient finds and contexts on the one hand and contemporary societies and communities on the other hand.

- Nov 16
- Nov 18

The final paper is due on **December 12, 2021** (by midnight).