Introduction
The art of the Ancient Near East has been in the headlines, as ISIS destroys entire sites, monuments, and artifacts. Why should we care? Because it was in ancient Mesopotamia, the heartland of modern military conflicts, that some of the first answers emerged to the following questions: What does god look like? How should a king appear to his subjects? What is the relation between humans and animals? How are stories told through images?

These questions and many others will be explored in this introduction to the art and architecture of the Ancient Near East. We will survey the world of ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia: its settlements, temples, palaces, monumental arts, metalwork and ceramics. We will do so in close connection to the political, social, and religious contexts in which the material culture emerged. We will also consider the modern context of the ancient Near East, and the ways in which its cultural heritage is now at the crux of military and political confrontations. How can this ancient culture be protected?

NOTE: This is my first time teaching this class; it is an experiment! Come with an open mind and lots of suggestions for how to improve it. You will be more than students in this class- you will help me teach it to future generations.

Course Objectives:
1. To become familiar with the key monuments and problems of the visual culture of the Ancient Near East.

2. To investigate a single topic within this tradition by producing a critical response to a recent journal article (see “paper” below).

Assignments:
- Mid-Term Examination 25%
- Response Paper 35%
- Second Examination 30%
- Class Participation 10%

In the readings and lectures for this class, we have surveyed the art of the Ancient Near East. This assignment offers you the opportunity to engage more closely with a specific and cutting-edge issue in the field. Choosing from the articles below, please write a double-spaced 10-page response to a recent work of scholarship on the art and culture of the Ancient Near East. In this response, please provide:

1) Introduction to issue
2) Summary of argument and methodology
3) Evaluate what is new and original in this paper and how it challenges our notions of the Ancient Near East.


Exams: Both exams will focus on slide identification and comparisons. The second examination will include an essay. Review materials for these exams will be posted on Trunk.

(This is an older text but very useful as a basic reference)

Articles and Essays are on Trunk under “Assignments”

Lecture Schedule:
September 9: Introduction to class
No Reading—bring in three news items about Ancient Near East looting

September 14: The Protoliterate Period
Reading: Frankfort, 17-37.

September 16: The Sumerians, part 1.
Reading: Frankfort, 39-82

September 21: The Sumerians, part 2

**September 23: The Akkadians**  
**Reading:** Frankfort, 83-91

**September 28: Gudi and the Kassites**  

**September 30: Babylon**  

**October 5: Assyrian Art, part 1**  
**Reading:** Frankfort, 131-142

**October 7: Assyrian Art, part 2**  
**Reading:** Frankfort, 143-199

**October 12: Book Discussion**  

**October 14: Neo-Babylonians**  
**Reading:** Frankfort, 200-205

**October 21: The Hittites**  

**October 26: Aramaeans and Phoenicians in Syria**  
October 28: Mid Term Review

November 2: class cancelled

November 4: Mid Term

November 11: Early Persia
Reading: Frankfort, 333-378

November 16: Achaemenid Persia

November 18: Sasanian Persia

November 23: The Emergence of Islamic Art
Reading: Finbarr Barry Flood, “Faith, Religion, and the Material Culture of Early Islam,” in Byzantium and Islam, Age of Transition, 7-9th centuries (New York: MMA, 2012); eds. Helen Evans and Brandie Ratliff, 244-257.

November 26: Thanksgiving no class

November 30: Is Armenian Art ‘Ancient Near Eastern’?
Reading: Maranci, “The Art of Pre-Christian Armenia”

December 2: Discussion about Looting and Art.

December 7: Review for final examination

December 9: Final Examination