

Ancient Egypt

CAMS/HIST 104 – Fall 2026



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CAMS Department
Weaver Building 221

Class date & time: M/W/F 2:30 – 3:20 pm
Venue: Boucke Building 304
Office hours: 10:00 – 11:30 pm T/Th
Weaver 221 & Zoom

Course Description:

This course will track the history of Egypt, the first nation state in the world, covering a time span of over 3,000 years. The investigation of the history will focus primarily on the major players (i.e., the pharaohs themselves) and the political events that shaped their reigns. Its history involves not only the Nile Valley, but also that of the entire northeast African continent and lands of Western Asia. The magnificent ruins and artifacts that have survived offer the student a visual examination of the ancients and will provide illustration to a great extent of the specific time periods and dramatic incidents. The student will also be confronted at every turn by textual sources (in translation) and the archaeological evidence. The latter will be addressed at length with introduction to archaeological expeditions. This will serve to teach the student the contribution of archaeological method and interpretation in the knowledge and understanding of the history of the Near East.

Career Readiness in Liberal Arts

This course helps you build skills that matter beyond college, including communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical reasoning. Through reading, writing, discussion, and research, you will practice learning that connects directly to academic, professional, and civic life. By the end of the course, you should be able to identify the strengths you are developing and explain how they support your future goals and [career readiness](#). For further assistance and support, please visit the [Liberal Arts Career Enrichment Network](#) and [Nittany Lion Careers](#).

Career Skills You Learn in this CAMS Course

The career skills you will learn in this class are research, close reading, textual and material analysis, written and oral communication, project management, data organization, cultural awareness, and the ability to interpret historical evidence across languages and time periods.

Course Activities and Grading:

1. Participation (30%)

- Students are expected to **complete assigned readings** and **actively participate** in class discussions. (15%)
- The instructor will also start a threaded discussion in **Ed Discussions** each week, contributing to asynchronous discussions and interacting with your classmates is **required** to earn participation grades. (15%)
- You are allowed **two unexcused absences**, but if you need to miss more classes, make sure to notify me before class (or shortly afterward) and provide a valid excuse.

2. In-class quizzes (5% x 6 = 30%)

- Short **10–15-minute** short quizzes (delivered through Canvas) to test students' knowledge of assigned readings and content covered in lectures.

3. Student presentation (20%)

- Option 1: **Museum object project**
 - Visit the online catalog of any museum with a collection of **Egyptian artifacts**, choose an object of special interest to you and conduct research on it.
- Option 2: **Ancient Egypt in modern culture**
 - Select a movie/TV show/video game/anime inspired by ancient Egyptian themes and analyze how ancient Egyptian culture is represented, interpreted in the modern imagination.
- Present your findings with an **8–10-minute** in-class presentation.

4. Final exam (20%)

- **90-minute** closed-book exam consisting of identification questions, multiple choice questions, and short essay questions.

Make-up Work and Late Submission Policy:

- Make-up work or late submissions of assignments without a penalty require a documented, university-approved excuse, such as illness, health issues, or family emergency. Students who do not provide such documentation may still submit their work; however, late submissions will incur a penalty of **1% reduction in the final grade for the assignment per calendar day** past the deadline.
- Students who anticipate needing an extension should **notify the instructor as early as possible**, preferably **before the due date**, to discuss their situation and determine whether an accommodation can be made. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the instructor and typically require supporting documentation.

Grades will be assigned in accordance with the following scale:

A (93 – 100), A- (90 – 92.9), B+ (87 – 89.9), B (83 – 86.9), B- (80 – 82.9), C+ (77 – 79.9), C (70 – 76.9), D (60 – 69.9), F ($\leq$ 59.9).

Other Responsibilities and Information:

Students who miss a class are responsible for all class material, discussions, etc., occurring in their absence. Absent students are expected to make arrangements with other class members to obtain notes or to be apprised of class developments when absent.

Students must bear in mind that the **class lectures** and presentations are the **de-facto study guides** for all tests and written exercises in this course. Any necessary digital files will be uploaded onto Canvas **before** each class. PowerPoint presentations will be uploaded **after** class.

Courtesy is expected and much appreciated. The use or display of **cell phones, smartphones**, portable media players, and other electronic devices (except laptops or tablets used for note-taking and course materials) is **strictly prohibited** in this class. These gadgets must be turned off before the class starts and stored away. Should a student need to keep a cell phone on during class, due to a personal or family **emergency**, this student should let the instructor know before the class starts. During class, students are advised to abstain from checking their email, watching online clips, or surfing the web. Everyone is expected to behave in a **thoughtful** and **respectful** manner.

Students are expected to behave within the guidelines of **academic and personal integrity**. Penn State defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). For more information about academic integrity at Penn State, see the [policy website](#). Students who may need general guidance concerning writing should utilize the [Penn State Learning Center](#) in 220 Boucke.

Penn State **welcomes students with disabilities** into the University's education programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the [Office for Disability Services \(ODS\) website](#). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

Penn State takes great pride to foster a **diverse and inclusive environment** for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](#)

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may affect their academic progress, social development, or emotional well-being. The university offers a variety of **confidential services to help you through difficult times**. Please note the following:

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#) at University Park (CAPS): 814-863-0395

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

According to [Penn State policy G-9: Academic Integrity](#), an academic integrity violation is “an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically.” Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, you must complete all coursework entirely on your own, using only sources that have been permitted by your instructor, and you may not assist other students with papers, quizzes, exams, or other assessments. If your instructor allows you to use ideas, images, or word phrases created by another person (e.g., from Course Hero or Chegg) or by **generative technology**, such as ChatGPT, you must identify their source. You may not submit false or fabricated information, use the same academic work for credit in multiple courses, or share instructional content. Students with questions about academic integrity should ask their instructor before submitting work.

You may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude) to support your learning in this course, but you **must cite AI assistance properly** using the citation format specified in our course materials and **verify all AI-generated information against credible academic sources** before including it in your work. AI tools can make errors and produce inaccurate information, so critical evaluation and verification are essential scholarly skills. You are responsible for the accuracy and integrity of your submissions, and submitting AI-generated content without proper citation constitutes academic dishonesty. When in doubt about appropriate AI use, consult me before submitting your work.

Main Reference Books:

Baines, John, and Jaromir Malek. *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt*. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1980.

Shaw, Ian, ed. *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Note: All required reading materials will be provided by the instructor in **Canvas Modules**.

Class Structure and Schedule

Note: The instructor **reserves the right to amend the syllabus** in any way or fashion whenever deemed necessary. Students will be notified of any changes in advance.

Week 1

Class 1.1 Course Introduction

NO REQUIRED READINGS

Class 1.2 Geography and Natural Resources

Required readings:

- Baines & Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (1980), 12–21 (Geography).
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), chapter 3 (Environmental background).
- Explore Egyptian sites using [Google Earth](#):

Class 1.3 Development of Egyptology and Egyptian Archaeology

Required readings:

- Baines & Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (1980), 22–29 (Study of ancient Egypt).
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), chapter 1 (Egyptian archaeology).

Week 2

Class 2.1 Periodization of History

Required readings:

- Shaw, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 1–15.
- Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (2021), sections 1.3–1.5

Class 2.2 Prehistory

Required readings:

- Hendrickx & Vermeersch, “Prehistory,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 16–40.
- Teeter, ed., [Before the Pyramids](#) (2011), 169–206 (Catalog: Predynastic and Early Dynastic).

Class 2.3 The Naqada Period

Required readings:

- Midant-Reynes, “The Naqada Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 41–56.
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 5.1–5.5.

Week 3

9/7: NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

Class 3.1 Rise of Pharaonic State

Required readings:

- Bard, “The Emergence of the Egyptian State,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 57–82.
- Hendrickx, “Iconography of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods,” in *Before the Pyramids* (2011), 75–81.
- Teeter, ed., *Before the Pyramids* (2011), 222–260 (Catalog: Rise of the State).

Class 3.2 The Old Kingdom: 3rd and 4th Dynasties

Required readings:

- Malek, “The Old Kingdom,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 83–99.
- Baines & Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (1980), 132–33 (Maidum), 134–36 (Memphis, Mit Rahina), 137 (Dahshur), 138–41 (Pyramids: Types and Construction), 142–51 (Saqqara), 155 (Zawyet el-Aryan), 156–62 (Giza).

Week 4

Class 4.1 The Old Kingdom: 5th and 6th Dynasties

Required readings:

- Malek, “The Old Kingdom,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 99–107.
- Baines & Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (1980), 151–53 (Abusir), 154–55 (Abu Ghurab).

Primary texts:

- Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (2005), no. 21 (Decree of Pepy I from Koptos), no. 96 (Crimes of Sabni), no. 241 (Autobiography of Harkhuf), no. 242 (Autobiography of Heqaib), no. 243 (Autobiography of Sabni and Mekhu I), no. 256 (Autobiography of Weni).

Class 4.2 The First Intermediate Period

Required readings:

- Seidlmayer, “The First Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 108–36.

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (2006), 84–85 (Stela of Count Indi of This), 85 (Autobiography of Ankhtifi).

Class 4.3 The Transition to Middle Kingdom Period

Required readings:

- Callender, “The Middle Kingdom Renaissance,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 137–56.
- Baines & Malek, *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* (1980), 126 (Deir el-Bersha), 128 (Beni Hassan), 130 (el-Lahun), 131–32 (The Fayum), 133 (el-Lisht).

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (2006), 135 (Instruction of Amenemhet I), 139 (Prophecies of Neferti).

Week 5

Class 5.1 The Middle Kingdom Period

Required readings:

- Callender, “The Middle Kingdom Renaissance,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 156–71.
- “ANE TODAY - 201607 - [The Beni Hasan Tomb Painting and Scholarship of the Southern Levant](#),” *ASOR* (blog).

Primary texts:

- Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (2003), 418ff. (Autobiographies of Amenemhet and Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan).

Class 5.2 The Middle Kingdom Period: Foreign Relations

Required readings:

- Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (2018), 67–101.

Primary texts:

- Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” *JEA* 31, no. 1 (1945): 3–10.
- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (2006), 118 (Boundary stela of Sesostri III).

Class 5.3 The Middle Kingdom: Society and Culture

Primary texts:

- Heqanakht letters nos. 1–2 from: Allen, *The Heqanakht Papyri* (2002).
- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (2006), 211 (Shipwrecked Sailor), 222 (Story of Sinuhe).

Week 6

Class 6.1 The Second Intermediate Period

Required readings:

- Bourriau, “The Second Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 172–90.
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), section 7.11 (The Hyksos Kingdom).
- Explore the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo’s [Tell el-Dab’a website](#)

Class 6.2 The Second Intermediate Period

Required readings:

- Bourriau, “The Second Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 191–206.
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 7.12 & 7.13 (The Kerma Kingdom & The Theban State).

Primary texts:

- Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (2003), 69ff (The Quarrel of Apophis and Sekenenre), 345ff (Kamose texts).

Class 6.3 The New Kingdom Period: Early 18th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Bryan, “The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 207–41 (Ahmose to Thutmose III).

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II* (2006), 12ff (Autobiography of Ahmose son of Abana), 25ff (Inscriptions of Hatshepsut), 29ff (Annals of Thutmose III).

Week 7

Class 7.1 The New Kingdom Period: Mid-18th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Bryan, “The 18th Dynasty before the Amarna Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 241–64.

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II* (2006), 39ff (Great Sphinx Stela of Amenhotep II), 43ff. (Stela of Amenhotep III).

Class 7.2 The New Kingdom Period: The Amarna Age

Required readings:

- Van Dijk, “The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 265–81 (Amarna Age).
- Explore the [Amarna3D](#) website.

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II* (2006), 48ff (Boundary stelae of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten), 89ff (Hymns to Aten from Amarna).

Class 7.3 Evolution of the Egyptian Belief System 1

Required readings:

- Redford, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, chapter 14 (Evolution of the Egyptian belief system).

Week 8

Class 8.1 Evolution of the Egyptian Belief System 2

Required readings:

- Selections from the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Book of the Dead on lecture slides

Class 8.2 Ancient Egypt in Modern Imagination 1

Required readings:

- Lecture slides

Class 8.3 Ancient Egypt in Modern Imagination 2

Required readings:

- Lecture slides

Week 9

Class 9.1 Student Presentation Project Workshop

Class 9.2 The New Kingdom Period: Diplomacy and Foreign Relations

Required readings:

- Morris, *Ancient Egyptian Imperialism* (2018), chapter 5.
- Cohen & Westbrook, "Introduction," in *Amarna Diplomacy* (2000), 1–12.

Primary texts:

- Selections from: Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (2000).
- [Photos of the Amarna letters](#) on the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI) website

Class 9.3 The New Kingdom Period: The Late-18th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 281–85 (Late-18th Dynasty).
- Bryce, "The Death of Niphururiya and Its Aftermath," *JEA* 76, no. 1 (1990): 97–105.

Primary texts:

- Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (1995), 212ff (Tutankhamun's Restoration Inscription).

Week 10

Class 10.1 Ramesside Period: 19th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 285–96 (19th Dynasty).
- Watch the ISAC lecture: [The Battle of Kadesh: A Debate](#)

Primary texts:

- Watch the ISAC podcast: [Plague Prayers of the Hittites I \(Theo van den Hout\)](#) & [Part II](#)
- Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions* II (1996), no. 71 (Stela of 400 Years).
- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II (2006), 57ff (Kadesh inscriptions).

Class 10.2 Ramesside Period: 20th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Van Dijk, "The Amarna Period and the Later New Kingdom," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 296–307 (20th Dynasty).

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II (2006), 73ff (Israel Stela of Merneptah).

- Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (1994), 195ff. (Harem Conspiracy), 225ff. (Tomb robbery papyri).

Class 10.3 End of the New Kingdom and the Late Bronze Age Collapse

Required readings:

- Shaw, “Egypt and the Outside World,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 308–23.
- Watch the ISAC [lecture on the Late Bronze Age Collapse \(Eric Cline\)](#)

Primary texts:

- Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (1994), 7ff. (First Libyan War of Ramesses III), 23ff (Ramesses III against the Sea Peoples).

Week 11

Class 11.1 The Libyan Period: 21st - 24th Dynasties

Required readings:

- Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 324–45.

Primary texts:

- Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy* (2009), no. 21 (letter to Piankh), no. 24 & 36 (reburial of royal mummies under Pinedjem I and Siamon), no. 56 (Bubastite Portal: Reliefs of Osorkon I).

Class 11.2 The Libyan Period: 21st - 24th Dynasties

Required readings:

- Broekman, “Libyan Rule Over Egypt. The Influence of the Tribal Background,” *Studien Zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 39 (2010): 85–99.
- Booth, *The Role of Foreigners in Ancient Egypt* (2005), chapter 5 (Libyans).
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 9.1 & 9.3.

Class 11.3 The Kushite Period: 25th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 345–54.
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 9.4 & 9.5.

Primary texts:

- Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy* (2009), no. 145 (Piye Victory Stela).

Week 12

Class 12.1 The Kushite Period: 25th Dynasty

Required readings:

- Booth, *The Role of Foreigners in Ancient Egypt* (2005), chapter 6 (Nubians).
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 9.6 & 9.7.

Primary texts:

- Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy* (2009), no. 139 (Aspalta Election Stela), no. 140 (Seman Inscription of Queen Katimala).

Class 12.2 Assyrian Rule

Required readings:

- Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 352–54.
- Kahn, “The Assyrian Invasions of Egypt (673–663 B.C.) and the Final Expulsion of the Kushites,” *SZAK* 34 (2006): 251–67.
- Radner, “After Eltekeh: Royal Hostages from Egypt at the Assyrian Court,” in *Stories of Long Ago* (2012), 471–79.

Primary texts:

- EA 15 & 16 from: Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (2000).

Class 12.3 The 26th Dynasty & The Kushite and Saite Revival

Required readings:

- Lloyd, “The Late Period (664–332 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 364–74.
- Schipper, “The 26th Dynasty and the Southern Levant,” in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel* (2011), 268–90.
- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), section 9.2 & 9.7.

Primary texts:

- Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy* (2009), no. 171 (Adoption Stela of Nitocris), no. 174 (Libyan campaign of Psametik I).

Week 13

Class 13.1 Egypt under the Persians

Required readings:

- Lloyd, “The Late Period,” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 374–82.
- Venticinque, “What’s in a Name? Greek, Egyptian and Biblical Traditions in the ‘Cambyses Romance,’” *BASP* 43 (2006): 139–58.

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* III (2006), 36–41 (Inscription of Udjahorresne), 41–44 (Stela of Somtutefnakht), 44ff. (Inscriptions of Petosiris).

Class 13.2 Egypt under the Ptolemies 1

Required readings:

- Lloyd, “The Ptolemaic Period (332–30 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (2000), 388–413.

Primary texts:

- The British Museum online catalog: [Rosetta Stone](#)

Class 13.3 Egypt under the Ptolemies 2

Required readings:

- Bard, *Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (2015), sections 10.1, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5.

Primary texts:

- Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature III* (2006), 107ff. (Hymns to Hathor), 109ff. (Hymns to Khnum).

11/22 – 11/28 NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY)

Week 14

Class 14.1 Student Presentations

Class 14.2 Student Presentations

Class 14.3 Student Presentations

Week 15

Class 14.1 Student Presentations

Class 14.2 Student Presentations

Class 14.3 Student Presentations

12/12 – 12/13 Study Days

12/14– 12/18 FINAL EXAM WEEK