

Course descriptions

Egyptian religion (ANE 130)

This lecture course is an introduction to the religious beliefs and practices of ancient Egypt (c. 3500 BCE – 395 AD). The aim of the course is to study Egyptian religion as a coherent system of thought and sphere of action that once served as a meaningful and relevant framework for understanding physical reality and human life to the inhabitants of the Nile Valley. It enabled the ancient Egyptians to comprehend the workings of nature, to define the relationship between man and the gods, and to structure human society. The first part of the course is entitled, ‘The basic concepts and principles of Egyptian Religion’ and deals with the essential concepts, principles, and cult practices of Egyptian religion. The second part, ‘The practice of ancient Egyptian religion,’ is concerned with the practitioners of the cult and the different roles Egyptian religion could play in people’s lives. The third part, ‘Transformations in Egyptian Religion,’ focuses on the developments and changes in theology and religious practices from the New Kingdom (starting c. 1550 BCE) until the end of the Roman period, when Christianity became the official and dominant religion in Egypt (395 CE).

Egyptian literature in translation (ANE 150B)

This seminar serves as an introduction to the history and forms of ancient Egyptian literature. It surveys the major works, genres, and historical developments starting with the development of writing and continuous written discourse in the late fourth millennium BCE up to the classical tales and didactic texts of the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000-1800 BCE) and to the rise of the Egyptian novel in the Late and Greco-Roman Periods (300 BCE – 300 CE). Reading these texts in a chronological and thematically coherent way will enable us to trace developments in thought and sentiments through time. In the end we can reconstruct an intellectual history of ancient Egypt – as opposed to a factual history. The class is set up as a discussion seminar inviting students to engage with Egyptian texts in translation in combination with articles on the study of literary texts in general and Egyptian literature in particular.

Magic in the ancient world (ANE / Classics M167)

This lecture course is an exploration of the art of influencing the natural course of events by occult means as practiced in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, and Rome. It covers the beliefs in supernatural forces, the rites aimed at controlling these forces effectively, and the character and social roles of ritual experts in the various cultures of the ancient world. Magical spells, literary texts about magic and magicians, and artifacts such as amulets and ritual implements serve as source material. The course has a comparative approach, both diachronically and cross-culturally, with a particular focus on aspects of continuity and change to bring out the differences and similarities between beliefs, practices, and discourses throughout the ages and across the various cultures.

Introduction to Middle Egyptian (ANE 120 A-C)

This one-year class serves as the basic introduction to the Egyptian language program at UCLA. Students will learn the principles of the hieroglyphic writing system and acquire basic knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the so-called Middle Egyptian language phase. Egyptologists consider Middle Egyptian the most important stage of the ancient Egyptian language, because it was in use as a written language from ca. 2100 BCE until 300 CE. It was spoken from about 2000 to 1600 BCE. Most royal and private inscriptions, funerary texts, cult liturgies, and literary compositions are written in Middle Egyptian. The first quarter is devoted to studying hieroglyphs, morphology and non-verbal sentences. The second quarter deals with verbs and verbal sentences. In the third quarter we read Middle Egyptian texts such as the *Shipwrecked Sailor* and the *Eloquent Peasant* to develop reading skills.

Intermediate Readings (ANE 121 A-C)

Intermediate Egyptian Readings are thematic reading courses that build upon the knowledge and skills acquired in the introductory course Elementary Ancient Egyptian (ANE 120A-C). Whereas Elementary Ancient Egyptian is an introduction to the writing system and grammar of so-called Middle Egyptian, these reading courses prepare students for working with authentic Old and Middle Egyptian texts by making them familiar with the most important philological tools and methods. By reading a thematically coherent group of texts and discussing their historical, cultural, and social contexts, students are challenged to reflect upon the ideological nature of ancient

Egyptian texts, to appreciate the genre conventions of specific text corpora, and to fully realize the limitations and problems of using Egyptian texts as sources for the modern study of ancient Egypt. Previous topics have been 'Texts of and about the First Intermediate Period: Ankhtify and Merikare,' 'The Emergence of the New Kingdom Empire,' and 'Hatshepsut and the queens of the Early Eighteenth Dynasty.'

Early and Old Egyptian (ANE 121 B)

This course is an introduction to the earliest evidence of writing from Egypt, dating to the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods, and to the textual record of the Old Kingdom. Inscriptions from the earliest periods record primarily names, titles, and individual phrases, but not yet continuous language. Egyptologists refer to this corpus of linguistic materials as Early Egyptian. The first part of the course will be devoted to studying these materials. At the end of the Second Dynasty (ca. 2700 BCE), the earliest continuous texts appear, displaying grammatical markers and syntactic features that allow Egyptologists to study aspects of grammar, language use, and linguistic change. This early phase of the ancient Egyptian language is called Old Egyptian and remained in use as a written language until the end of the Old Kingdom, when it was replaced by Middle Egyptian in the course of the First Intermediate Period. The most important text genres written in Old Egyptian are the tomb biographies inscribed on the walls of the mastaba chapels of courtiers and officials, and the Pyramid Texts recorded on the walls of the burial chambers in the pyramids of the kings of the late Old Kingdom. A selection of biographical texts and spells from the Pyramid Texts will be read in class in order to become familiar with the phraseology of Old Kingdom texts and to study Old Egyptian grammar in practice.

Late Egyptian (ANE 210)

This course is an introduction to the Late Egyptian language phase and to the text corpora written in Late Egyptian. Late Egyptian was in active use for writing documentary, literary, and religious texts from the Amarna Period until the end of the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1390-664 BCE). A developed form of Late Egyptian remained in use for about another century in Thebes, where notaries wrote legal documents in the so-called abnormal hieratic script. The Late Egyptian corpus includes

prayers of personal piety, student miscellanies, administrative records from Deir el-Medinah, official reports of investigation into such scandalous affairs as the looting of the royal tombs, the Harem Conspiracy, the Strikes, and the Elephantine Scandal, and, last but not least, the Late Egyptian Stories, with such famous compositions as *Wenamun* and *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*. By discussing the grammatical forms and constructions, doing grammatical exercises, and reading Late Egyptian texts, students will learn to use Late Egyptian texts in their research. Knowledge of Middle Egyptian (ANE 120A-C) is a prerequisite for participation in this course.

Demotic (ANE 221 A-B)

This course is an introduction to Demotic, the language phase and script of the same name, which was in active use as a written language for about a millennium from the seventh century BCE up to ca. 300 CE. The early documents are primarily administrative and legal in nature, but for the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, an extensive body of literary, religious, and ‘scientific’ texts is also in existence. Administrative and legal documents in Demotic have been preserved in large numbers. They allow for the study of Egyptian society, law, and economy in more detail than ever before. The literary, religious, and ‘scientific’ materials testify to a vested interest among the scribal and priestly classes in continuing Egyptian traditions, while at the same time also in innovating received models and conceptions. Students will learn to use these documents in their research by discussing Demotic grammar, doing grammatical exercises, and reading Demotic texts. As Egypt was a multicultural and bilingual society in these periods, issues of bilingualism and language contact will also be addressed in class.

Temple Texts of the Greco-Roman Period (ANE 211 A-B)

This course is an introduction to the texts and architecture of the indigenous temples built in Egypt during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (305 BCE – 250 CE), a period that witnessed the construction, enlargement and renovation of many major temple sites in the Nile Valley and Lower Nubia. The most famous and best preserved temple complexes are those in Edfu (Horus), Dendera (Hathor), Esna (Khnum), Kom Ombo (Haroëris and Sobek), and on the island of Philae (Isis). These sanctuaries were meant to represent an ordered cosmos in stone, an image of heaven and earth in unison, through a

meaningful integration of architecture, decoration, and inscriptions. Its underlying principles of thought and signification are nowadays studied as ‘the grammar of the temple.’ The temple texts inscribed on the walls of these buildings are written in an intricate and highly artificial hieroglyphic writing system that takes the principles of hieroglyphic writing to its logical limit. The writing system is commonly called ‘Ptolemaic hieroglyphs’ after the period in which the writing system was first fully developed and applied, even though its use was not restricted to the Ptolemaic period but continued through the Roman period while having its roots in earlier scribal practices.

Hieratic Paleography (Near East 290)

This seminar aims at preparing students for reading and interpreting Egyptian texts written in ink on papyrus, ostraca and wooden tablets in the so-called hieratic script. The course presents a diachronic overview of the developments in hieratic writing for the period of the Old Kingdom up to the Greco-Roman Period (c. 2300 BCE – 300 CE). The texts selected for reading in class are evenly distributed over this long period and reflect the major types of, and changes in, hieratic hands and orthographies. Knowledge of Middle Egyptian and Late Egyptian is a prerequisite (ANE 120A-C and 210).

Coptic (ANE 123 A-B)

This course is an introduction to Coptic, the final stage of the Egyptian language, which came into active use as a written language around 300 CE. With the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641 CE, Arabic started to gradually replace Coptic as a spoken and written language, so that by the fourteenth century CE Coptic had become extinct. Coptic is written in the Greek alphabet augmented with eight Egyptian signs to denote sounds not available in Greek. The presence of vowel signs allows Egyptologists studying the phonology and structure of Egyptian in more detail than for any other Egyptian language phase. Coptic is therefore essential to any student who is serious about learning Egyptian. As Egypt was Christian in Late Antiquity, most of the Coptic texts are Christian in nature; they range from stories about martyrs and saints to homilies, letters, and legal contracts. A substantial body of magical spells continues pharaonic beliefs and practices. The famous Gnostic Gospels found in Nag Hammadi are also written in Coptic.