

HISTORY/NEAR EAST 108  
THE MIDDLE EAST BEFORE ISLAM  
(ca. 600 B.C.E. to 650 C.E.)

Winter 2009  
MWF 10:00-10:50  
Peterson 102

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COURSE OUTLINE

1. Introduction: Definition of Terms; The geography of Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa; Survey of history from the Neolithic to the fall of the Assyrian empire.
2. The Achaemenid Persian Empire.
3. The Conquests of Alexander of Macedonia and the remaking of the Middle East.
4. The Ptolemaic Kingdom.
5. The Seleucid Kingdom.
6. The Rise of Parthia; The "Balance of Power" between the Parthians and the Romans.
7. The Problem of "Hellenization."
8. The "Third World." The Semitic speaking peoples between the Greco-Roman west and the Iranian east.
9. The Sasanian Persian Empire; The Byzantine-Sasanian balance of power.
10. The Cradle of Religions: Isis, Mithra, Judaism, Christianity, "Gnosticism," Mazdaism, Manichaeism, Islam.

READING LIST

Brosius, Maria. The Persians. An Introduction.  
Chauveau, Michael. Egypt in the Age of Cleopatra.  
Sartre, Maurice. The Middle East Under Rome.

Office Hours: Monday 11-12; Wednesday 1-2; or by appointment. HSS 4024