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SYLLABUS ARCHIVE

Course and Instructor Information:

Ethnic Identity in Antiquity

Prof. Jeremy LaBuff

Assistant Professor, Northern Arizona University

Helpful Context:

Course first designed in Fall 2015

Average enrollment: 15

This is an undergraduate course primarily intended for majors.

It is taught completely in-person.

It fulfills a History major capstone seminar requirement.

Reflections of the Instructor:

Q: What do you consider to be particular strengths of this course?

A: Non-western coverage, inclusion of race, and incorporation of reception

Q: In what ways do you think the course could still use improvements/adjustments?

A: If I were to teach this as a regular seminar, I would add more readings in the third month.

Q: How generally have students responded to the course? Have there been any patterns in student feedback?

A: Students are very engaged in this course; the big challenge for them is their lack of background in ancient history.



Department of History
HIS 498C: Ethnic Identity in Antiquity
Fall 2019
Wednesday 4-6:30pm, 3 credits, in-person

Instructor: Jeremy LaBuff, jeremy.labuff@nau.edu

Office hours: ---

Course Description:

This section of the History Senior Seminar will explore how notions of collective self were formed, evolved, and contested through the encounters of various societies in the ancient world. We will seek to understand how identity as a “people,” or ethnic identity, was conceived of, formulated, and expressed in several pre-modern contexts, including the Greek world, Egypt, Judea, and East Asia. Our exploration will be driven by three questions. First, what informed an ethnic group’s self-understanding and how does this compare or across time and culture? Second, was there racism in antiquity? As we will see, this seemingly simple question has evoked a host of controversies among scholars. Finally, how do ancient understandings of ethnicity relate to and influence our own notions of ethnic identity, race, and nationhood? Put more simply, what can this class tell us about the historical contingency of our own categories of thought & perception?

Course Purpose:

Historians portray the past in its own context with all its complexity, illuminating the tensions between human agency and larger historical forces; they connect the past to the public in order to inform honest debate on past and current events by an engaged, critical, and dynamic citizenry. In the **History Senior Seminar**, the culminating experience in the History BA/BS/BS-Ed and the Liberal Studies Programs, students inquire, synthesize, and apply the tools of the discipline, preparing them to go forth into their futures as informed, responsible, productive, engaged, and self-reflective citizens of the world.

In completing this semester long project, students also draw on the breadth of knowledge and skills that they have gained through their strong liberal studies education at NAU. The Capstone integrates the **Liberal Studies Distribution Block of Social and Political Worlds**.

Undergraduate historians produce original research papers on important historical topics either located in a specific social and political world and historical moment (examples: 5th-century Athens; Victorian England) and/or through application of an historical methodology for analyzing social and political worlds (examples: Constructivist Ethnicity; Critical Race Theory).

Through the process of researching and writing the capstone paper, this course integrates the **Liberal Studies Essential Skills of Critical Thinking and Effective Writing**.

Through course material, each student will learn various theoretical frameworks and methodologies that scholars apply to specific bodies of evidence in attempt to “get at” expressions of ethnic identity

and race. This will prepare students to research their own topic on ancient ethnicity or the use of antiquity in modern discourses of race and ethnicity. They will be guided through the multi-step process of engaging a self-selected body of evidence to produce an original contribution to our understanding of ethnicity in antiquity in the form of their capstone research project.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Historical Analysis of Social and Political Worlds

In the History Capstone, students employ different empirical and theoretical strategies to study histories of social, political, and cultural systems. Students study and produce an original piece of historical writing that addresses an example of the patterns that characterize the history of human communities, the relationships between the social, cultural and/or political components of human communities and/or dynamics of human interactions in varied context. This course enhances and assesses students' understanding of the relationships between communities and their ecological, cultural, or historical contexts, as well as relationships between societies in the global community, with acknowledgement of connections between past and present.

By fulfilling the **History BA/BS's Learning Outcomes**, Doing History and Producing History, students are also practicing an historian's approach to two **Liberal Studies Essential Skills, Critical Thinking and Effective Writing**, through the following strategies:

Critical Thinking in Doing History – finding, evaluating, and using primary and secondary sources:

- Interpret and extract meaning from a variety of primary sources;
- Gain knowledge literacy of several case studies on ancient ethnicity and research skills to locate, uncover, evaluate, and use evidence for the purpose of the historian;
- Recognize the underlying assumptions, methodologies, and theories in other historians' work on ethnicity and race to critique and build on this work with their own research;
- Historicize assumptions of factual authenticity or universal truth with regard to identity by showing them to be historical, social and cultural constructs;
- Apply theory on ethnicity or race and evaluate scholarship to frame historical questions;
- Recognize how historians position themselves in the relevant historiographies;

Effective Writing in Producing History – communicating historical analyses, interpretations, and narratives:

- Articulate historical findings and interpretations through writing and oral expression;
- Contextualize those findings using additional sources and evidence from the time period;
- Produce and/or deconstruct historical narratives organized around patterns and themes of causality, chronologies, and paradigms identified by professional historians;
- Position their research in pertinent historiographies;
- Address conflicting evidence, alternative perspectives, and multiple viewpoints;
- Comply with the professional conventions of the historical discipline by using and citing primary source evidence and the work of other scholars;
- Acknowledge subjective and societal concerns that inform their evaluations of the past.
- Apply the research of other disciplines in order to contextualize and inform hypotheses.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes: While assignments vary, they are all designed to build the historiographic, methodological/theoretical, and primary source base for the final research paper.

Participation: The format of this class is entirely discussion-based, since weekly engagement in the readings and the issues they raise is vital for you to develop a mature understanding of how to approach and write about ethnic identity. To prepare for each session, you must bring a sheet of paper with the following 3 elements for each reading:

- What didn't you understand? This can refer to lack of historical context or lack of clarity in the author's argument.

- A one-sentence summary of the author’s methodology (=how s/he proposes to locate ethnic identity in the evidence s/he has selected) *You can skip this for **McCoskey***
- A one-paragraph critical reaction to the author’s argument. This can pinpoint a particular claim, object to the author’s entire premise/methods, suggest further support, etc. It cannot simply agree or disagree with the author.

Proposal: Students must not only select a topic for their research paper but also present to the class the body of evidence (selection of primary sources) that will form the basis of their investigation and be prepared to answer questions about the content and relevance of these sources for their proposed project. Details to be distributed

Annotated Bibliography: This assignment involves a list of secondary sources for your research paper, accompanied by a summary of the main arguments of the source and an explanation of how the source will contribute to your project. Details to be distributed.

First and Second Drafts: These drafts are meant to provide you with feedback from peers and the instructor as you revise your project. Details will be distributed

Final Capstone Paper: Your final draft will be assessed on your ability to apply the tools and values of Liberal Studies and the historical profession, and as part of the History Program Assessment on how well you carry out the **Liberal Studies Essentials Skills of Critical Thinking and Effective Writing**, as well as the **History Learning Outcomes**. Details will be distributed.

Evaluation & Grading Scale: The breakdown of the final grade will be as follows:

Participation	250 points
Proposal	100 points
Annotated Bibliography	150 points
First Draft	50 points
Second Draft	50 points
Final Paper	400 points
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Total	1000 points

A = 1000-895 points; **B**= 894-795; **C**= 794-695; **D**= 694-595; **F**= below 594

Texts & Course Materials: Many readings will be made available on **BBLearn**. The following books will not be on **BBL** and should either be purchased or consulted from Library Reserve:

D. **McCoskey**, *Race: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (not in bookstore)

R. **Geary**, *The Myth of Nations*

S.J.D. **Cohen**, *The Beginnings of Jewishness* (also available as an ebook on the library website)

****Trouble paying for books?** Check out the Emergency Loan Program: <https://in.nau.edu/dean-of-students/emergency-textbook-loan-program/>

Course Policies

- Know NAU's Course Policies: <https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Syllabus-Policy-Statements.pdf>
- **Absences:** If you miss a regular session and communicate as soon as possible with me about why, you may submit a 5-6 page informal analysis of the reading for that week, due one week after your absence in most circumstances, to earn participation credit. If you miss on your proposal date, you may submit a 3-page written version, plus bibliography, with a letter-grade deduction, due within one day of your absence, in most circumstances. If you miss the peer-review session, you will earn a 0 on the first draft grade except in cases of emergency
- **Late Work:** Assignments will be deducted ½ letter grade per day late.
- **Plagiarism and Cheating:** In accordance with NAU standards, this course has a **zero tolerance policy** for plagiarism. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me. Any writing adjudged to be plagiarism will be given a 0% failing grade.

Class Schedule

<u>Topic & Readings</u>	<u>Capstone Work</u>
Aug 28: Introduction Read: McCoskey 1-34	
Sep 4: Ancient Egypt & Nubia + How to find a topic Read: BBL selections from <i>Wretched Kush</i> 10-57, 97-135	Brainstorm topic
Sep 11: Greek Discourse Read: McCoskey 35-62, 139-152; BBL <i>Hellenicity</i> selections (1-5, 9-29, 90-91, 104-11)	
Sep 18: Greek Identity + How to Find Primary Sources Read: BBL selections from <i>Hellenicity</i> 125-205/220	
Sep 25: Hellenistic & Roman Discourse Read: McCoskey 62-139, 153-166	Mandatory meetings to determine research topic
Oct 2: Ancient Jewish Identity Read: Cohen 1-24, 69-139	Research Primary Sources
Oct 9: Class Vote + How to Propose Research Read: TBD	Research Primary Sources
Oct 16: Tang China Read: Abramson, <i>Ethnic Identity in Tang China</i> , Chapters 1, 2, 5 (access through library site; subject to change)	Proposals Due; Group #1 proposals
Oct 23: Antiquity & Modern Identities Read: McCoskey 167-199; Geary 1-40; BBL: "Classical Slavery & Jeffersonian Racism"	Group #2 proposals

Oct 30: The Medieval Origins of Europe
Read: **Geary** 41-119

Group #3 Proposals

Nov 6: The Medieval Origins of Europe + **How to Write**
Read: **Geary** 120-174

Nov 13: No Class (or Make-Up)

Annotated Bibliographies Due

Nov 20: No Class

Think & Write

Nov 27: Peer-Review of First Drafts

First Drafts Due

Dec 4: No Class: Individual Meetings w/Professor

Second Drafts Due 1 day before meeting

Dec 9: Final Paper Due