

# *Theorizing Ancient Religion*

*Religious Studies 372 Fall 2018*

**Prof. Vaia Touna**

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**Department Main Office: Manly Hall 212 (348-5271)**

**Lectures**

**Mondays 3:30-5:50      Manly 210**

**Course Website**

**[www.as.ua.edu/rel/rel372touna.html](http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/rel372touna.html)**

## **Description**

In the study of religion scholars often talk about ancient religion in general, and, in particular, ancient Greek religion. But there is always a danger of projecting contemporary assumption backward in time—a concern we likely ought to keep in mind when it comes to studying such things as ancient Greek religion. This course therefore examines how the ancient Greek world is described and represented in the present, in museums, social media, scholarly works, etc. and towards what modern effects. We will also be discussing such topics as heritage, tradition, identity formation and nation-states, as they relate to discourses on the ancient Greek past, all in an effort to develop skills for how we study religion and the past.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

- Recall myths and rituals of the ancient Greek world.
- Describe and analyze concepts such as religion, belief, experience, sacred, heritage, tradition, etc.
- Summarize and analyze assigned reading material.
- Implement the above knowledge in writing assignments and oral presentations.
- Use technology effectively in the delivery of oral assignments.

## **Readings**

This course has no required books but PDF readings that will be available through the course's Blackboard site. The schedule below provides a list of the readings that you will be responsible for on any given day. Doing all of your assigned readings well in advance of class is important to have the necessary background knowledge provided by these readings.

## **Excused Absences**

Evidence of your legitimate absence must be presented to the professor in a timely fashion if you wish it not to count against you in the seminar. If you miss a presentation, that you were responsible for, you must contact the professor immediately to explain and document your legitimate absence, and you will be required to hand in your presentation as a writing assignment, the next class. The same applies for the abstracts, that is, if you miss a class for a legitimate reason you will be required to hand in the next time the class meets both the abstract of that day's reading but also the abstract of the day you missed.

## **Requirements and Assignments**

Regular attendance, adequate preparation for each day's readings, and active participation will be necessary requirements for this class as well as the following assignments:

**1. Abstracts (50%)**

You will be required to write 10 abstracts on the reading of the day (see tentative schedule below), that accurately describe the argument of the reading for that week, avoiding all assessment, commentary, or quotation, followed by a question regarding the reading; each abstract should be a paragraph long, typed, double spaced, and with a 12 point Times Roman or Times New Roman font. Each abstract is worth 5% of your course grade for a total of 50%. They will be graded and returned the following class.

**2. Presentations (20%)**

Throughout the course each student will have to make 1 presentation (assigned during the first day of class).

*Presentation I:* You will be required to present in class a piece of data related to ancient religion. The presentation will worth 20% of your course grade.

**3. Final Assignment (30%)**

At the end of the course you will be required to write a paper (between 1500 and 2000 words) applying things taught in the course at the piece of data you presented in class (see *Presentation I*). Each student is expected to make an informal presentation of their final paper topic and hand in a first draft of their final paper (see tentative schedule below).

**Grading Scale**

A+	95-100%	C	70-74
A	90-94	D+	65-69
B+	85-89	D	60-64
B	80-84	D-	50-59
C+	75-79	F	below 50

**General Comments**

**1.** Plagiarism is a serious scholarly offence and amounts to using the intellectual labor of another author without proper quotation, citation, and acknowledgment. If the instructor suspects that a student has copied the work of another author (whether that author is a peer, classmate, or published author), the case will immediately be referred to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**2.** No grades of "I" (incomplete) will be assigned in this course. In my experience, when awarded at the 100-level a grade of "I" rarely leads to the completion of course requirements. Please speak with me well in advance if you are having difficulties satisfactorily completing the course's requirements on time or if you anticipate your absence from class becoming routine. Although I cannot guarantee that reasonable accommodations can be made for all occasion that may arise, speaking with me before a problem arises will greatly enhance our ability to address the situation in a way that is both fair to your classmates and beneficial to you.

**3.** Students with documented physical and/or learning disabilities should contact the professor outside of class time as soon as possible to review documentation and discuss accommodations. Also, students should familiarize themselves with the Office of Disability Services at <http://www.ods.ua.edu>.

**4.** UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its web site at [www.ua.edu](http://www.ua.edu). In the event of an emergency, students consult this site for further directions. Also familiarize yourselves with UA's Severe Weather Protocol at [www.prepare.ua.edu](http://www.prepare.ua.edu)

**5.** The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website ([www.ua.edu/uact](http://www.ua.edu/uact)) provides a list of reporting channels that can be used to report incidences of illegal discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, retaliation, threat assessment or fraud.

## Tentative Schedule

M Aug. 27	Introduction to the Course—Case Study “Religion among Chimbs” (all readings are posted as PDFs on Our Blackboard site)
M Sept. 3	<b>NO CLASS - Labor Day</b>
M Sept. 10	Reading—J. Bremmer and J.P. Vernant
M Sept. 17	Reading—T. Asad / Case Study—Ancient Greece I
M Sept. 24	Reading—B. Nongbri /Case Study—Ancient Greece II
M Oct. 1	Reading—B. Nongbri /Case Study—Ancient Greece III
M Oct. 8	Reading—D. Lopez /Case Study—Ancient Greece VI
M Oct. 15	Reading—J.W. Scott /Case Study—Ancient Greece V
M Oct. 22	Reading—H. White /Case Study—Ancient Greece VI
M Oct. 29	Reading - M. Foucault /Case Study—Ancient Greece VII
M Nov. 5	Reading— M.H. Jauregui /Case Study—Ancient Greece VIII
M Nov. 12	Reading— V. Touna /Case Study—Ancient Greece IX
M Nov. 19	J. Bremmer and J.P. Vernant
M Nov. 26	Oral Presentations—Hand in first draft of your final papers
M Dec. 3	Individual meetings with the professor to discuss your paper

**Final Papers Due: Monday December 10 between 3:30-4:30 p.m.**