ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA
History and Culture
Fall 2005

Instructor: N. Yoffee (Office hours: Frieze Bldg, rm B-188, T 2:30-3:30, W 11-12, Th 2:30-3:30, or by appointment - nyoffee@umich.edu) GSI Nathan Ritter (Office hrs: M 12-1, W 10-11, 12-1 FB 182, rittern@umich.edu)

Lectures: T Th 11:30-1:00 Mason Hall 1401

Course description: Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian civilization from the first cuneiform documents (ca. 3100 BC) to the fall of the Neo-Babylonian empire (539 BC); special attention to issues of social and political organization.

Major topics: Rise of first city-states, writing systems and literacy, social and economic change, law, Mesopotamia and its neighbors, the collapse of Mesopotamian civilization.

Undergrad requirements: 2 mid-term exams (15% each), final exam (30%), 2 short essays (8 pages [2500 words] maximum, 20% each); twice weekly questions for instructor (1/3 letter grade credit). See below for term paper instructions.

Grad student requirements: 2 take-home essays/book reviews (20% each), term paper (20 page minimum, 60%)

Tentative lectures:
1. Introduction to course. Problem-orientation. The past and the present in Iraq
2. Geography, environment, peoples
3. The evolution of civilization. An overview of Mesopotamian prehistory through the Ubaid period.
4. The first cities and states. Uruk archaeology, writing, stratification, the Uruk expansion.
5. Early Dynastic period. City-states and Mesopotamian civilization.
7. The Third Dynasty of Ur. Bureaucracy and the state.
8. The best of times, the worst of times. Economics, politics, social organization in the Ur III period
9. Discussion (optional—Jewish holiday)
10. Level and trend in the 3rd millennium B.C.
11. In-class examination
12. No class (Jewish holiday)
13. No class (Fall study day)
14. Old Assyrian period: Politics
15. Old Assyrian period: Long-distance trade, merchants, and the state
16. Early Old Babylonian period. Isin-Larsa period
17. The first dynasty of Babylon. Hammurabi, nomads, and the state
18. Mesopotamian law. Law codes and legal cases.
20. Collapse of the Old Babylonian state
22. Middle Babylonian period (Kassites), Middle Assyrian period
24. International relations. End of the “old order”
25. Neo-Assyrian politics and economy
27. Neo-Babylonian state.
28. The collapse of Mesopotamian civilization.
Textbooks

Available for purchase in Shaman Drum bookstore is *A History of the Ancient Near East* by Marc Van De Mieroop (2004), which is the basic textbook for the class. (In the assigned readings, this is referred to as MVDM).

On physical reserve in the Shapiro Undergraduate Library are the following recent books, all of which contain useful information for this course. Books with *** contain excellent bibliographies that lead to more readings (and which are especially useful for gathering references for term papers).

T. Bryce

T. Boiy
2004  *Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylonia*. Leuven: Peters

H.E.C. Crawford

B. Foster, K. Pollinger Foster, P. Gerstenblith
2005  *Iraq Beyond the Headlines: History, Archaeology, and the War*. World Scientific Publishing (I have not seen this book)

W.W. Hallo and W. Kelly Simpson

Amélie Kuhrt***

Marc Van de Mieroop

K. Nemet-Nejat

Joan Oates

J. N. Postgate

D.T. Potts

Michael Roaf
Jack Sasson and others, editors***
1995  *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. New York: Scribners (4 volumes, many excellent essays)  
(on reserve in Hatcher Grad Library)

Daniel Snell

For German readers:


H.J. Nissen***
1999  *Geschichte Altvorderasiens*. München: R. Oldenbourg

D.O. Edzard

M. Jursa
2004  _Die Babylonier_. Munich. C.H. Beck

E. Cancik-Kirschbaum

For French readers:

J-J Glassner
(new translation by B. Foster, _Mesopotamian Chronicles_, 2005).

F. Joannès
2001  _Dictionnaire de la civilization mésopotamienne_. Bouquine

For Italian and Spanish readers:

Mario Liverani
[Spanish translation _El Antiguo Oriente_. Barcelona: Crítica]

Detailed studies with excellent bibliographies:

J. Bauer, R. Englund, M. Krebernik***
Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag
There are many other books on Mesopotamian history and culture. Please consult with instructor if you wish to read and rely upon any of them. There are many books that cannot be recommended.

A series of loose-leaf notebooks titled Ancient Mesopotamia Bibliographic Resources is available in the Near Eastern Studies resource room (Frieze Bldge room 2065). Please see GSI (Nathan Ritter) for access to this room.

Bibliographies of Mesopotamian history can be found in the journals Orientalia and Archiv für Orientforschung. A journal on Mesopotamia economy and environment is Bulletin of Sumerian Agriculture (last issue 1995) A recent series of four books on Mesopotamian economy are edited by Michael Hudson and various co-editors.

The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, maintains a web-site as a gateway to various on-line materials about Mesopotamia. See http://www.oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/ABZU.HTML
Undergraduate essays

Students will write two short essays, 8 pages maximum each (not including bibliography). Essay topics will be chosen in consultation with the instructor and gsi. This course can fulfill the undergraduate writing requirement. See gsi/Sweetland Center to receive credit for this course.

First essay. Students meet with the gsi/instructor before Oct. 10 to discuss a possible topic for the first essay. The topic of the first essay must be chosen (in writing) by Oct. 17. A list of sources and an outline for the essay must be submitted by Oct. 31. The outline of the first essay and the list of sources will be critiqued by the gsi/instructor both in meetings with students and in writing. The first essay is due (in hard copy) before Nov. 14. The first essay will be returned to students within one week of submission. Students may rewrite their essays in response to critiques, and grades may be adjusted on the basis of the revisions.

The second essay is due before the last day of class. The choice of topic is due before Nov. 14 but earlier is better. An outline and list of sources must be submitted for the second essay before Nov. 21. Critiques of the outline and sources will be returned to students before the Thanksgiving vacation.

Check-list of essay submission dates and procedures:

Oct 10 (or before) meet with instructor, gsi about topic
Oct 17 submit topic
Oct 31 submit outline of first essay and list of sources
Nov 7 (or before) receive critique/feedback from instructor, gsi
Nov 14 submit first essay
Nov 14 (or before) meet with instructor/gsi about topic for second essay
Nov 21 (or before) receive 1st essay/grade from instructor/gsi; options for re-writing
Nov 21 (or before) outline of second essay and a list of sources
Before Thanksgiving receive critique/feedback from instructor, gsi
Dec 1 Re-written first essays due
Before last day of classes submit 2nd essay

Note on sources:
5 sources minimum are expected for each essay. Write 2-3 sentences in your bibliography about what you learned from each source.
No web sites can be considered as sources—unless they are approved by the instructor or gsi.
The gsi will provide instructions on how to find sources, how to write footnotes and bibliography.

Students are expected to abide by university policy not to copy in whole or in part essays from web sources or to receive assistance in the writing of their essays from anyone other than the instructor and gsi.
**Essay topics** fall within three categories: *persons, peoples, and themes*. Recommendations are given below, but students may suggest to the instructor and gsi their own topics within these categories. Students must choose their essay topics from two of these categories. Further, each category is divided into three time periods. Students must choose their topics from two different time periods. (For example: essay 1 = Naram-Sin (3rd millennium), essay 2 = women in the 2nd millennium B.C.).

Note: Prof. P. Michalowski teaches a course in ACABS on Mesopotamian literature and religion; consequently topics on Mesopotamian mythology, epics, and the like are not listed for this history course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
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<td>Sargon</td>
<td>Sumerians</td>
<td>origin of writing</td>
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<td>Naram-Sin</td>
<td>Akkadians</td>
<td>Uruk expansion</td>
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<td>Gilgamesh</td>
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<td>Shulgi</td>
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<td>Ur-Namma</td>
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<td>Akkadian empire</td>
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<td>Ur III state</td>
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<td>Agriculture, irrigation</td>
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<td>Hammurabi</td>
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<td>Shamshi-Adad</td>
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<td>Hurrians</td>
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<td>Hattushili III</td>
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<td>Nebuchadnezzar II</td>
<td>Urartians</td>
<td>Assyrian capitals</td>
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<td>Nabonidus</td>
<td>Persians</td>
<td>Israel and Assyria</td>
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<td>Cyrus</td>
<td>Chaldeans</td>
<td>collapse of</td>
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<td>Assyria/Babylonia</td>
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<td>Assyrian royal court</td>
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<td>Ashurbanipal</td>
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<td>mathematics/astronomy</td>
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Undergrad questions following each lecture:

It is important for our relatively large class that I can gauge what interests or troubles you have about the lectures. Your feedback will help me design better lectures and tie up loose ends. Your engagement with the lecture material is also enhanced by this exercise. Consequently, comments and questions are now required by every student after every lecture. They are due before midnight the day on the day the lecture is given. Send the comments/questions to Nathan Ritter via c-tools.

Nathan Ritter will record your compliance with the assignment and note particularly useful comments/questions. For those who submit at least 20 sets of comments/questions, at least 6 of which are considered appropriate and useful (by Nathan's reasonably liberal standard), a rise of 1/3 letter grade for the course will be applied. (This should be a powerful incentive for doing this assignment well). For those who do not submit 20 comments/questions, or whose questions are not considered relevant/useful a subtraction of 1/3 letter grade will be considered.

Section attendance

Attendance in sections is mandatory. Not only is Nathan going to discuss matters raised in readings and lectures, but he will also bring translations of various texts (literary texts, royal inscriptions, contracts, law suits, etc) for discussion. Poor attendance in sections will result in subtraction of 1/3 letter grade.

Meetings with students

I shall meet all students in my office early in the term in order to get to know your interests and backgrounds a bit, and perhaps to begin thinking of appropriate essay topics. I shall pass around a sign-up sheet with times in 10-minute intervals for my office hours (T and Th 2:30-3:30, W 11-12). As many as 3 students can sign up for one time. Think about what times will be convenient for you.

Lecture outlines

I shall send via email or c-tools a lecture outline the night before the lecture. Please check your email the night before the lecture or early in the day before the hour of the lecture to get this lecture outline. Print the outline and bring it to class so that you will be able to follow the lecture and also have a spelling guide to the names discussed in the lecture.
Graduate students (in ACABS 513)

I shall organize a discussion section bi-weekly for grad students in which we shall discuss aspects of the required and extended readings.


The second mid-term will consist of a take-home essay in response to a question provided by the instructor.

The term-paper topic will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Minimum 5000 words, due on or before last day of class.
Provisional lecture schedule and reading list

Note: required readings in the textbook are listed for each lecture and should be read before the lecture. Other, extended readings are found in the Shapiro library’s electronic reserve facility. Students can download these readings or read them online. Some books are on physical reserve in the Shapiro’s reserve book room.

Extended readings are provided in smaller font. These readings are mainly in English, but key essays in German and French are also provided. Even the extended readings are not intended to be exhaustive on the lecture topics, but as guides to the literature for those who wish to read further on a given subject/time period. Grad students are expected to read many of the extended readings. Some notable readings are also provided for each topic.

1. T, Sept. 6  Introduction to course. Problem orientation. The past and the present in Iraq

2. Th, Sept 8  Geography, environment, peoples

   MVDM (= textbook), pp. 1-16

   A.L. Oppenheim

   S. Pollock

   (Extended readings)
   J.N. Postgate
   1992  *Early Mesopotamia*, pp. 3-21

   D.T. Potts

   M. Roaf
   1990  *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* (for good pictures)

3. T, Sept. 13  The evolution of civilization. An overview of Mesopotamian prehistory through the Ubaid period

   R. Matthews
4. Th, Sept. 15 **The first cities and states. Uruk archaeology, writing, stratification, the Uruk expansion**

MVDM, pp. 19-38

S. Pollock  
1999 *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden that Never Was*, pp. 93-116, 149-172

J. Cooper  

(Extended readings)  
P. Michalowski  

D. Schmandt-Besserat  

G. Stein  

(Notable recent books)  
M. Rothman, editor  

R. Englund  

H. Nissen, P. Damerow, and R. Englund  

J.-J. Glassner  
2003 (translation of French) *The Invention of Cuneiform*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins  

5. T, Sept. 20 **Early Dynastic period. City-states and Mesopotamian civilization**

MVDM, pp. 39-58  

P Michalowski

(Extended readings)
J. Cooper
1983 *Reconstructing History from Inscriptions.* Malibu: Undena

R. Biggs


P. Steinkeller

A. Cohen


MVDNM, pp. 59-69

P. Michalowski

M. Van De Mieroop

(Extended readings)
A. Westenholz


L. Milano

(Notable recent publications)
See other essays in M. Liverani, ed, 1993 (cited above), especially

B. Foster Management and Administration in the Sargonic Period, pp. 11-24
B. Foster Select Bibliography of the Sargonic Period, pp. 171-181
M. Liverani Model and Actualization: The Kings of Akkad in the Historical Tradition, pp. 41-68
7. T, Sept. 27  **Third Dynasty of Ur. Bureaucracy and the State.**

MVDM, pp. 69-79

8. Th, Sept 29  **The best of times the worst of times. Economics and social organization in the Ur III period**

T. Jones

P. Steinkeller

(Extended readings)
P. Michalowski
1987  *Charisma and Control: On Continuity and Change in Early Mesopotamian Bureaucractic Systems.* In Gibson and Biggs (cited above), pp. 55-67

P. Steinkeller

(Notable readings)
T. Gomi

T. Maeda
1992  *The Defense Zone During the Rule of the Ur III Dynasty.* *Acta Sumerologica* 14: 135-172
H. Waetzoldt

M. Sigrist

Other essays in Gibson and Biggs, eds. Bureaucracy include
M. Civil Ur III Bureaucracy: Quantitative Aspects, pp. 43-53
I. Winter Legitimation of Authority through Image and Legend, pp. 69-115
R. Zettler Administration of the Temple of Inanna under the Third Dynasty of Ur: Archaeological and Documentary Evidence, pp. 117-131

K. Maekawa

W. Sallaberger***

9. T, Oct. 4 Discussion (Jewish holiday—attendance optional)

10. Th, Oct. 6 Level and trend in the 3rd mill. B.C.

I. J. Gelb

I. M. Diakonoff

(Extended readings)
T. Jacobsen

P. Steinkeller
1993 In M. Liverani, Akkad (cited above), pp. 107-130

(Notable readings)
H. Neumann

More Gelb articles:


More Diakonoff articles:
1972 Socio-economic Classes in Babylonia and the Babylonian Concept of Social Stratification. In *Gesellschaftsklassen* (see above), pp. 41-52

11. T, Oct. 11 **In-class mid-term exam**

12. Th, Oct 13 **No class** (Jewish holiday)

13. T, Oct. 18 **No class** (Fall study day)

14. Th, Oct. 20 **Old Assyrian period. Politics**
   MVDM, pp. 89-104

   M.T. Larsen
   1977 *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag
   (read pp. 27-84)

   K.R. Veenhof

Reference:
C. Michel
2003 *Old Assyrian Bibliography*. Leiden: NINO

15. T, Oct. 25 **Old Assyrian Trade**

Marc Van De Mieroop
1999 *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History*. (See above), pp. 92-98

(Extended readings)

M. T. Larsen
1977 Partnerships in Old Assyrian Trade. *Iraq* 39: 119-145


K.R. Veenhof


(Notable recent publication)
J.G. Dercksen
1996 The Old Assyrian Copper Trade in Anatolia. Amsterdam: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul (contains good Old Assyrian bibliography)

2004 (ed.) Old Assyrian Institutions. Leiden: NINO


16. Th, Oct. 27 Early Old Babylonian period. Isin-Larsa period

MVDM, pp. 81-89

M. Van de Mieroop

V. Donbaz and N. Yoffee

(Extended readings)
A.Goddeeris

A.L. Oppenheim

W.F. Leemans

Wu, Yohong
1994 A Political History of Eshnunna, Mari, and Assyria during the Old Babylonian Period (From the End of Ur III to the Death of Shamshi-Adad. Institute of the History of Ancient Civilizations

(Notable reading for lists of goods)
17. T, Nov. 1 **Hammurabi and the first dynasty of Babylon. Mari. Nomads and OB states**

MVDM, pp. 104-112

J. Sasson

J. Margueron
1995  Mari: A Portrait in Art of a Mesopotamian City-State. In J. Sasson and others, eds. (cited above), pp. 885-900

R. Whiting
1995  Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia. In Sasson and others, pp. 1231-1242

(Extended readings on Mari are too numerous to list. A knowledge of French is critical. If interested, see instructor. For translations of letters concerning political history, see W. Heimpel, 2003, *Letters to the King of Mari*).

D. Charpin
2003  *Hammu-rabi de Babylone*. Paris

M. Van De Mieroop

D. Fleming

18. Th, Nov. 3 **Mesopotamian law. Law codes and legal cases**

N. Yoffee

R. Westbrook

M. Roth
1995  *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. Atlanta: Scholars Press
(read pp. 1-10)

(Notable readings)
R. Westbrook, ed.

R. Westbrook
1988  *Old Babylonian Marriage Law*. Graz

M. Malul
1988  *Studies in Mesopotamian Legal Symbolism*. Neukirchen-Vluyn

J.J. Finkelstein

M. Roth

B. Foster

19. T, Nov. 8  **Remarkable Old Babylonian women. Economic, religious, and social behavior and status**

R. Harris

N. Yoffee
1998  The Economics of Ritual in Old Babylonian Kish. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41: 310-343

R. Harris

(Notable readings)
J. Assante

E. Stone
1982  The Social Role of the Naditu Woman in Old Babylonian Sippar. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 25: 50-70

I.M. Diakonoff
1986  Women in Old Babylonia Not Under Patriarchal Authority. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 29: 225-238

C. Janssen
1991  Samsuiluna and the Hungry Naditums. *Mesopotamian History and Environment Series I, Northern*
U. Jeyes

R. Henshaw

S. Dalley
1980 Old Babylonian Dowries. *Iraq* 42: 53-74

S. Greengus

J. Renger
1973 Who are all those People? *Orientalia* 42: 259-273

*Other sources on women in Mesopotamia (from various periods)*

S. Parpola and R. Whiting, editors
2002 *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*. 2 volumes. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus
(These two volumes contain a variety of essays on women from various periods)

K. Maekawa

S. Pollock

J. Bottéro

J-M Durand, ed.
1987 *La femme dans le proche orient antique*. Paris (Several articles in English)

K. Grosz

J.N. Postgate
1979 On Some Assyrian Ladies. *Iraq* 41: 89-103

M. Stol
1995 Women in Mesopotamia. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38: 123-144

Z. Bahrani

20. Th, Nov. 10 *Collapse of the Old Babylonian State*
N. Yoffee


(Extended reading)
S. Richardson

21. T, Nov. 15 Discussion. *Take-home examination question distributed. Due Friday, Nov. 18*

22. Th, Nov. 17 *Mesopotamia and the North: Hurrians, Mittannians, Hittites*

MVDM, pp. 112-160

(Notable readings)
T. Bryce

There are a number of essays on Hittites in Sasson, *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*:
G. Beckman, Royal Ideology and State Administration in Hittite Anatolia, pp. 529-544
R. Beal Hittite Military Organization, pp. 545-554
H. Hoffner, Law and Social Institutions of Hittite Anatolia, pp. 555-570
F. Imparatti, Private Life Among the Hittites, pp. 571-586
T.P.J. van den Hout, Khattushili III, King of the Hittites, pp. 1107-1120
G. Wilhelm, The Kingdom of Mittanni in Second-Millennium Western Asia, pp. 1243-1254

See new reference books on Hittites:
V. Haas

H. Klengel et al.

V. Soucek and J. Siegelova

21. T, Nov. 22 *Middle Babylonian period (Kassites) and Middle Assyrian periods.*

MVDM, pp. 161-178

W. Sommerfeld
(Extended readings)
J.A. Brinkman
1972 Foreign Relations of Babylonia from 1600-625 B.C. American Journal of Archaeology 76: 270-281

A. K. Grayson

P. Machinist
1976 Literature as Politics: The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta and the Bible. Catholic Biblical Quarterly 38: 455-482

J. A. Brinkman

M. Maidman

Th, Nov. 24 Thanksgiving vacation

24. T, Nov. 29 International relations. End of the Old Order

MVDM, pp. 179-194

W. van Soldt
1996 Ugarit: A Second Millennium Kingdom on the Mediterranean Coast: Thirteenth To Tenth Centuries BCE. In J. Sasson and others, eds., pp. 1255-1266

(Extended readings)
Amarna period:
N. Na=aman

“Sea-peoples”
T. Dothan
1995 “Sea-Peoples” and the Philistines of Ancient Palestine. In J. Sasson and others, eds. Pp 1267-1280

N. Na’amān

(Notable publications)
S. Gitin, A. Mazar, E. Stern, editors
1998 Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to early Tenth Centuries BCE. Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem

W. van Soldt
2005 The Topography of the City-State of Ugarit. AOAT 324.
23. Th, Dec. 1 Neo-Assyrian Politics and Economy

MVDM, pp. 197-252

(Extended readings)
J.N. Postgate


M. Liverani

(Notable publications)
See Helsinki University Press series of books on Assyria, *State Archives of Assyria* (12 volumes to date), *State Archives of Assyria Studies* (6 volumes to date), *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* (=journal 1983--to date)

In J. Sasson and others, eds.
E. Leichty, Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, pp. 949-958
A.K. Grayson, Assyrian Rule of Conquered Territory in Ancient Western Asia, pp. 959-968

J.A. Brinkman
1984 *Prelude to Empire*. Philadelphia: University Museum

A.K. Grayson

K. Radner
1999 Traders in the Neo-Assyrian Period, pp. 101-126

26. T, Dec. 6 Israel and the Assyrians. Collapse of the Neo-Assyrian state

N. Yoffee

M.T. Larsen

P. Machinist

(Extended reading)
B. Otzen
1979 Israel under the Assyrians. In *Power and Propaganda*, ed. M.T. Larsen, pp. 351-261

Notable new reading:
N. Na’aman

O. Lipschits
2005 *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Jerusalem under Babylonian Rule*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns

27. Th, Dec. 8 **Neo-Babylonian state**

MVDM, pp. 253-256

P-A Beaulieu
1995 King Nabonidus and the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In J. Sasson and others, eds., pp. 969-980

(Notable readings)
D. Wiseman


R. Sack

M. Dandamayev
1991 Neo-Babylonian Society and Economy. *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 3, pt. 2, Ch. 28a

M. Roth

G. Barjamovic

(There are many new studies of the economy in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. See instructor if interested. Here are a few)

M. Jursa
2005 *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents, and Archives*. Ugarit
Verlag

F. Joannès

P. Briant

M. Dandamayev

A. Kuhrt


S. Sherwin-White

In J. Sasson and others, eds., H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Darius the First and the Persian Empire, pp. 1035-1050

P. Vallat Susa and Susiana in Second-Millennium B.C. Iran, pp. 1023-1035

D. Snell

C. Wunsch

A.C.V.M. Bongenaar

F. Joannès

28. T, Dec. 13 The end of Mesopotamian states and civilization

MVDM, pp. 267-280

(Extended readings)
P. Zimansky

J. Rempel and N. Yoffee

D.T. Potts
1999 Elam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

FINAL EXAM, Friday, Dec. 16, 1:30-3:30