

## General Studies Gold Request Form

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Consult the [General Studies Request FAQ](#) for more information and quick answers.

New permanent numbered courses must be submitted to the workflow in [Kuali CM](#) before a General Studies request is submitted here. The General Studies Council will not review requests ahead of a new course proposal being reviewed by the Senate.

### Submission Information

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College/School

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The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLA)

Department/School

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School of Historical, Philosophical & Religious Studies (CHSTCRIT)

Submission Type

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New Request

Requested Effective Date

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Spring 2025

ASU Request

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Is this request for a permanent course or a topic?

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Topic

Subject Code

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HST

Course Number

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302

Units/Credit Hours

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3

Topic Information

If your request is approved:

1. Topics on [omnibus courses](#) only carry designations for three consecutive semesters (excluding summer), whether or not they are scheduled. Once expired, a new request must be submitted.
2. Topics on permanent courses require mandatory review every five years.

Topic Title

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Gods and Kings: Ancient Mesopotamia

List all other undergraduate courses where this topic exists and the sections will be combined in the schedule.

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Topic Description

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Ancient Mesopotamia—a region including modern Iraq as well as parts of parts of Turkey, Iran, and Syria—gave rise to the world's first cities, writing systems, managed agriculture, and mathematics. This course centers the story of this pivotal region in global history, tracing 4000 years of its history from the rise of the world's first cities in the fourth millennium before the Common Era to the

destruction of the Sasanian Persian Empire by Arab forces in the seventh century of the Common Era.

Secondary source readings will introduce students to the overarching narrative of Mesopotamian history. Class sessions and primary sources will focus primarily on the complex and dynamic relationships between religion (by which I mean the nexus of rituals, practitioners, symbols, ideas, and myths) and the public institutions and ideologies of ancient Mesopotamian states—hence “gods and kings”!

If this course or topic already carries a General Studies Gold (not Maroon) designation, please check this box.

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### General Studies Gold Designation Request

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#### Requested Designation

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Global Communities, Societies, and Individuals (GCSI)

Attach a representative syllabus for the course, including course learning outcomes and descriptions of assignments and assessments.

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[HST 302 Ancient Mesopotamia Syllabus \(Fall 2024\).docx \(2\).pdf](#)

Global Communities, Societies, and Individuals (GCSI)

Courses in the Global Communities, Societies, and Individuals knowledge area explore the world from multiple vantage points. They consider historical, ongoing or transforming global issues across multiple scales and types of human experiences. Students will analyze ways that geographical and historical contexts influence communities, societies, and individuals. In addition to courses focused entirely on non-US American issues, courses structured to include comparative or transnational connections between the United States and other countries, i.e., courses that consider a global issue in multiple locations one of which is the United States, fall into this knowledge area. Courses focused mostly or only on US American issues or populations, however, even across diverse communities, are not included in this knowledge area. This knowledge area develops students' skills in global awareness, and the analysis of social, political, economic, or cultural systems, skills essential to participating more fully in communities.

**Please note: Courses primarily focused on the acquisition of a language (e.g., Elementary Spanish II) are not eligible for the GCSI designation. A majority of the course content must cover the GCSI learning outcomes.**

**Instructions: In the fields below, state the assignment, project, or assessment that will measure each learning outcome, and provide a description. The description should provide enough detail to show how it measures the learning outcome. If needed, more than one can be identified.**

The proposal does not need to include all course assessments that measure a given learning outcome. The provided assessment should include sufficient detail to allow the subcommittee to

make their evaluation. When appropriate, the same assessment can be listed for more than one learning outcome (e.g., a culminating project).

You may provide links to a document (Google Drive or Dropbox) that includes the relevant details for the assessment. Do not provide links to Canvas shells.

GCSI Learning Outcome 1: Describe historical, contemporary, or transforming global issues through the perspective of specific individuals, communities, or societies.

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Students will be able to describe long-term environmental, social, and cultural issues by exploring one region of the world over a very long historical period. This course particularly focuses on the global issue of how religious ideologies, rituals, and institutions relate to political powers. It centers these questions: How did the origins and development of writing systems and scribal cultures support the development of organized societies and lend authority to religious and political officials? What roles did religious rituals, devotion to the gods, and composition of sacred texts play in the social and political lives of Mesopotamian cities and kingdoms? This is a consistent theme of the lectures, primary source readings, and Perusall assignments (comprise 20% of the grade).

I have chosen the primary sources with these questions in mind. For each primary source reading, students will be expected to make annotations on the text using Perusall. Perusall is an annotation tool designed to help students engage collectively with texts. Effective annotations on Perusall will deeply engage points in the readings, stimulate discussion, offer informative questions or comments, and help other students by addressing their questions or confusions.

GCSI Learning Outcome 2: Analyze the interactions among social, political, economic, or cultural systems across local, regional, and global scales or spaces.

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Students will analyze interactions of ancient states with one another across the Mesopotamia region. This course will also highlight the development of and engagement between ancient religio-cultural movements. For example, a large portion of the final two units of the course will deal with the contacts and parallel development of Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism within the Sasanian Persian Empire in late antiquity. Primary source readings and Perusall assignments will provide opportunities to measure student understanding of this learning outcome, as will the final exam and (potentially) the Research Project.

GCSI Learning Outcome 3: Articulate ways in which dimensions of difference such as race, gender, socio-economic status, religion, language, or citizenship separately and together affect individuals and communities.

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This course will provide students with opportunities to articulate how social status, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation affected the standing of individuals and communities over the course of ancient Mesopotamian history. One of the primary transformations we explore in the second half of this course is how “religion” became a major dimension of difference in late antiquity. The textbook, by Amanda Podany, emphasizes social history, highlighting the lives of women, lower-class workers, and enslaved people in ancient Mesopotamia. This reading and related in-class assessments will give students an opportunity to show how such differences structured the lives of ordinary people (not just rulers and elites). Occasional short iClicker pop quizzes will quiz students on the secondary source reading (Podany, etc.). Other small in-class group activities focused on these questions will be graded on the basis of completion.

I give students the freedom to choose the primary source they consider in their research project (which comprises 35% of the grade and includes a project proposal and annotated bibliography in addition to a final paper). As a result, students have chosen to analyze a diverse assortment of texts and thus engaged with a wide range of questions. Among these questions studied by students in previous semesters were: the laws related to the status of enslaved people in Hammurabi's law code, prescribed treatments for pregnant women in ancient Assyrian medical texts, and the portrayal of humans and monsters in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Due to the flexibility of the topics and sources involved in this project, students could be assessed with regard to any of the learning outcomes listed in the GSCI label.

GCSI Learning Outcome 4: Communicate coherent arguments using evidence drawn from qualitative or quantitative sources.

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For the Pseudo-History essay (or video/podcast), I ask students to watch an episode of "Ancient Aliens" related to Mesopotamia and respond to this popular "historical" program. Students are to identify a few specific epistemological red flags/features of pseudoscience, pseudo-history, and/or pseudo-archaeology found in the episode, and demonstrate how they lead to unjustified and implausible conclusions about ancient Mesopotamia. Drawing on class materials, they are to explain how real history and archaeology make and support their truth claims, in contrast with how the episode does so. The project places a strong emphasis on how we know what we know about the past. Students who receive high marks on this project do not simply assert that claims in the episode are wrong; they demonstrate that the logic behind the claim is faulty and/or the evidence is insufficient. I ask students to conclude the paper with a reflection on the contemporary appeal of pseudo-historical and pseudo-scientific ideas. That final aspect of the project touches on GSCI learning objective #1.

The final Research Project, in which students are to develop their own in-depth analysis of a primary source relevant to the subject matter of this class, also measures this learning outcome, as it is focused on interpreting a primary source text in its proper context.

List all course-specific learning outcomes. Where appropriate, identify the associated GCSI learning outcome(s) in brackets (see below for example). Note: It is expected that a majority of course-specific learning outcomes will be associated with a GCSI learning outcome.

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1. Students will be able to describe the major political and cultural transformations, and the remarkable social and economic stability, that characterized the history of Mesopotamia between ca. 3500 BCE and 650 CE. [GCSI LO1]
2. Students will be able to evaluate how the unique environmental conditions of the region of Mesopotamia gave rise to the first urbanized human societies and contributed to the further development of states and economies in the region.
3. Drawing on what they learn of the history of this region, students will be able to analyze how religious cultures (such as traditional religious cults, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Manichaeism, and Christianity) interacted with one another in the premodern world. [GCSI LO2]

4. Students will be able to examine the roles played by religious rituals, public acts of devotion to the gods, and the composition of sacred texts in the social and political lives of Mesopotamian cities and kingdoms. [GCSI LO1]
5. Students will be able to actively read ancient texts by posing questions and analyzing their contents and purposes. [GCSI LO4]
6. Students will be able to appreciate the complex and contested nature of the discipline of history and historical argumentation. [GCSI LO4]

## Form Submission - Proposer

Submitted for Approval | Proposer

Blake Hartung - May 16, 2024 at 11:49 AM (America/Phoenix)

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## Department Approval

Approved

Richard Amesbury - May 31, 2024 at 8:45 AM (America/Phoenix)

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## GSC Coordinator Review

Approved

Kaitlyn Dorson

April Randall - June 3, 2024 at 1:42 PM (America/Phoenix)

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## Assistant Vice Provost Review

Approved

Tamiko Azuma - June 25, 2024 at 1:40 PM (America/Phoenix)

Required elements confirmed.

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## Pre-GSC Meeting

Approved

Kaitlyn Dorson

April Randall - August 12, 2024 at 1:46 PM (America/Phoenix)

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## Global Communities, Societies and Individuals (GCSI) Subcommittee

Acknowledgement Requested

Susan Harmeling

Greg Wise

Annapurna Ganesh

Natalie Heywood - September 3, 2024 at 3:44 PM (America/Phoenix)

Revise and Resubmit. Further details and information is needed on the assessments for LO1 and LO2. It would help if discussion board prompts, essay prompts, sample questions or a

summary/overview of the specific readings used in Perusall could be included so the committee can better understand the assessment of these LOs.

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## General Studies Council Meeting

Waiting for Approval

Alicia Alfonso

April Randall

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## Registrar Notification

Notification

Courses Implementation

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## Implementation

Approval

Rebecca Flores

Lauren Bates

Alisha Von Kampen

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## Proposer Notification

Notification

Blake Hartung

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## College Notification

Notification

Amanda Smith

Jenny Smith

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## DARS Notification

Notification

Leticia Mayer

Peggy Boivin

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