

## COURSE INFORMATION

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### The City-State: From Sumer to Singapore

NHIS 3123A

Thursdays, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.

Johnson/Kaplan 66 West 12th Street, Room 410

Spring 2011, Jan. 27 to May 12

**Course Description:** In modern times the terms *state* and *nation* almost completely overlap; but this has not always been the case. When civilization emerged millennia ago its basic unit was the city-state, a peculiar amalgam of commercial locus, defensive fastness, social monument, and ethnic nucleus. In this course we'll use case studies of city-states both famous and obscure to investigate the factors that created an age of city-states in the ancient Mediterranean world, and the circumstances under which the form emerged in places and times far removed from its archaic origins.

**Goals and Objectives:** A closer understanding of our relationship to the past, and how we can better understand the people who live there; of the role of primary sources; of the ideas and movements that help to create and shape the modern era; of the variety of societies and peoples throughout time and space, and how the relationships between societies create change; of the transforming events that change social structures, and how those transformations affect us in the present day.

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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### Mark B. Wilson

email: [wilsonmb@newschool.edu](mailto:wilsonmb@newschool.edu)

website: <http://markbwilson.com>

**Please use me as a resource:** Talk to me after class, or send me emails with any questions you have—whether they relate to the requirements of the course or ideas we're reading about or discussing in class.

## READING LIST

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### Optional Texts

The readings for this course are selections from various sources, and will be provided online. However, you may choose to find library or bookstore copies of books from which several selections are taken. These include:

- ▶ Griffeth, Robert, and Carol G. Thomas. *The City-State in Five Cultures*. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1981.
- ▶ Parker, Geoffrey. *Sovereign City: The City-State Through History*. London: Reaktion, 2004.

These books may be available from online retailers (see the links on my website, <http://markbwilson.com>).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### Participation and Attendance

Attendance and preparation are crucial for this course. Students are expected to attend all meetings, and to attend them prepared and on time. Preparation includes reading the assigned readings and spending some times considering their meanings and implications, and so coming to class equipped with questions about and critical reactions to the material. Lack of preparation and tardiness affect the quality of the course not only for you but for everyone else as well.

Students who miss two meetings will forfeit the participation portion of their grade. Students who miss more than three meetings will not pass the course.

### Assignments

- ▶ **Reading Presentation (2):** Each student will choose two readings, one from the seven classes before spring break and another from the seven classes after spring break, and prepare a 5–10-minute presentation for the class about the content, meaning, intent, and context of the document in question.
- ▶ **Short Essays (2):** For each of the two presentations, each student will also do a short follow-up essay building on the presentation and subsequent in-class discussion. The student will write a 4–6 page essay analyzing the document in the context of its time. This paper is due two weeks after the presentation is made.
- ▶ **Take-Home Midterm:** A midterm exam will be distributed in class on March 10 and will be due March 24.
- ▶ **Position Paper:** Each student will also write a 10–13 page research-based position paper on a topic agreed upon with the instructor. More details on how this will be approached will be provided in class.
  - A proposal, consisting of a thesis statement, preliminary outline, and preliminary bibliography, is due March 3.
  - An optional draft may be submitted to get feedback and guidance. This draft is worth 5 points extra on the project and is due April 28.
  - The final version of the paper is due on the last class, May 12. For this class meeting, we'll discuss what each student discovered in turn and see what ideas and conclusions result.

All written assignments are to be typed and formatted normally (double-spaced, in a standard font, with one-inch margins, and with a cover page giving the paper's title, author, date, course, and instructor). Written assignments are due in class; however, they may be submitted electronically by email. You must get a reply back from me indicating I got your emailed submission in order for it to count as being submitted on time.

### Grading

The final grade for the course will be based on the following breakdown:

- ▶ In-class participation (10%)
- ▶ The two presentations and two short essays (30% total)
- ▶ The midterm (30%)
- ▶ The position paper (30%).

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & RESOURCES

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### Disabilities

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. Students requesting any accommodations will need to meet with Jason Luchs, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. All conversations will be kept confidential. Mr. Luchs's office is located at 79 5th Avenue on the 5th floor (luchsj@newschool.edu, 212.229.5626 x3135). You may also access more information at <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/disability/>.

### Incompletes

A grade of Incomplete ("I") indicates that your instructor has granted you an extension to complete outstanding work for a course. The grade of Incomplete will not be assigned automatically. It will only be assigned at the request of the student by the last day of class. Incomplete grades cannot be granted for students who are graduating seniors.

If circumstances require you to request a grade of Incomplete—and the instructor approves your request—the terms of the Incomplete should be agreed upon in writing, using the "Request for a Grade of Incomplete" form ([http://www.newschool.edu/forms/registrar\\_incomplete\\_grade.pdf](http://www.newschool.edu/forms/registrar_incomplete_grade.pdf)). This ensures that both the student and the instructor understand the exact nature of the required work, the manner in which it is to be submitted, and the date by which it must be submitted.

Students with a grade of Incomplete who do not complete their work by the agreed-upon deadline will receive a grade of Withdrawal/Failure ("WF"). Students who complete outstanding work according to the terms of the Incomplete will receive a letter grade. (The "I" will be converted to a letter grade after the instructor submits a Change of Grade form.)

### Libraries

The New School Library offers frequent research workshops for students, the day, time, and location of which are posted to the Library webpage (<http://library.newschool.edu/events/>) each semester. The library also provides one-on-one support for students who in conducting research for a paper or project require additional assistance. Students can contact the library about scheduling a one-on-one appointment with a reference librarian at the following link: <http://library.newschool.edu/reference/request.php>.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas in any academic work. (This could be using books, journals, internet postings, or other students' papers.) For further information on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (2nd edition), Chapter 6, on documentation. The Bachelor's Program provides useful online resources to inform students of correct forms of research and writing. To access these resources, go to <http://www.newschool.edu/ba/> and click on the link "Resources for Current Students."

The New School Writing Center also provides online resources about avoiding plagiarism. (See <http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/index.html>.)

Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

### Writing Center

Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the university writing center, located at 65 5th Avenue, room 105. To make an appointment, you can e-mail the writing center at [writingcenter@newschool.edu](mailto:writingcenter@newschool.edu) or call 212.229.5121. For further information, please visit the Writing Center web site: [www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/](http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/).