

Language and Culture in the Ancient Near East

Code: 104218
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Ancient Studies	OT	4

Contact

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Teachers

Agustín Alemany Vilamajo

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

It is recommended to have taken the subject of "History and Civilization of the Ancient Near East"

Objectives and Contextualisation

Acquire a specialized lexicon on the main languages and cultures of the Ancient Near East.

Achieve a global understanding of the subject.

Acquire work methodology that allows identifying characteristics of the literary texts of the Near East.

Acquire basic notions about the grammar of the main languages of the Ancient Near East.

Competences

- Be able to express oneself orally and in writing in the specific language of history, archaeology and philology, both in one's own languages and a third language.
- Extract and interpret data from texts written in an ancient language in different formats applying knowledge of the auxiliary sciences of history (epigraphy, numismatics, codicology, palaeography, etc.).
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.

- Understand and interpret the evolution of ancient societies in the Mediterranean from Egyptian civilisation to the disbanding of Western imperial Rome through analysis of the political, historical, social, economic and linguistic factors.

Learning Outcomes

1. Autonomously searching, selecting and processing information both from structured sources (databases, bibliographies, specialized magazines) and from across the network.
2. Describe the main historical and social features of the Egyptian, Sumerian, Acadian, Persian and Mycenaean cultures.
3. Draw historical-social conclusions based on a reading of simple documents written in the ancient non-Indo-European languages.
4. Preparing an oral and written discourse in the corresponding language in a proper and organized way.
5. Relate the history and culture of the non-Indo-European ancient civilisations to the Greek civilisation and the Roman civilisation.
6. Submitting works in accordance with both individual and small group demands and personal styles.

Content

Unit 1. Sumerian language: Origin and disappearance of the Sumerian Language; Grammatical sketch of Sumerian

Unit 2. Akkadian language: History of the Akkadian Language; Grammatical sketch of Akkadian

Unit 3. Sumero-Akkadian literature: The mythological cycles; The royal epic; Hymns, praises, lamentations and curses; Wisdom texts; Humorous texts; Other compositions

Unit 4. Hittite language: Periodization and monuments of Hittite; Grammatical sketch of Hittite

Unit 5. Persian language: History of the Persian language in the pre-Islamic period; Grammatical sketch of Old Persian

Unit 6. Indo-European literatures of the Ancient Near East: the nature of Hittite cuneiform texts (Myths, Epics, Annals, Hymns and Wisdom literature); the Achaemenid royal inscriptions; the Avestan corpus and Pahlavi literature

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	87	3.48	1, 3, 2, 5
Type: Supervised			
Classroom practices, resolution of exercises	30	1.2	3, 2, 5
Type: Autonomous			
Readings	10	0.4	1, 3, 2, 4, 5

The teaching methodology will consist of the combination of lectures, reading of specialized bibliography, classroom practices and resolution of exercises.

The teaching methodology and the evaluation proposed in the guide may undergo some modification subject to the onsite teaching restrictions imposed by health authorities.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Exam of the first section of the subject (Sumerian & Akkadian)	40%	1.5	0.06	1, 3, 2, 4, 6, 5
Exam of the second section of the subject (Hittite & Persian)	40%	1.5	0.06	1, 3, 2, 4, 6, 5
Micro-research on Hittite/Persian sources	10%	10	0.4	1, 4, 6
Paper's review on Mesopotamian literature	10%	10	0.4	1, 2, 4, 6

The evaluation of the subject will consist of three activities.

- (1) Exam of the first part (40%)
- (2) Paper's review on Akkadian literature (10%)
- (3) Exam of the second part (40%).
- (4) Micro-research on Hittite/Persian sources related to the creation of a historical game (10%)

In order to make an average between the three activities it will be necessary to have obtained a minimum qualification of 4 in every exam.

On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students (on Moodle) of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

In the event that tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

Re-evaluation

To participate in the re-evaluation, the student must have been previously assessed in a set of activities, the weight of which is equivalent to a minimum of 2/3 parts of the total qualification.

Single evaluation

No single evaluation

NOT ASSESSED

Students will obtain a Not assessed/Not submitted course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items.

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AI

This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as explicitly required exercises by the teachers.

The student must clearly (i) identify which parts have been generated using AI technology; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and final outcome of the activity.

Lack of transparency regarding the use of AI in the assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade may be lowered, or the work may even be awarded a zero. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Bibliography

Sumerian and Akkadian Languages

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Huehnergard, John, 2000: *A Grammar of Akkadian*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Jiménez Zamudio, Rafael, 2017: *Nueva gramática de sumerio*, Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá.

Malbran-Labat, Florence / Vita, Juan Pablo, 2005: *Manual de lengua acadia*, Zaragoza: CSIC.

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Von Soden, Wolfram, 1995: *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico.

Sumerian and Akkadian Literature

Bottéro, Jean / Kramer, Samuel Noah, 2004: *Cuando los dioses hacían de hombres*, Madrid: Akal.

Ehrlich, Carl S. (ed.), 2009: *From an Antique Land. An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

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Michałowski, Piotr / Veldhuis, Niek (ed.), 2006: *Approaches to Sumerian Literature*, Leiden: Brill.

The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk

Verderame, Lorenzo, 2016: *Letterature dell'antica Mesopotamia*, Firenze: Le Monnier Università.

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Hittite and Persian languages

Brandenstein, Wilhelm / Mayrhofer, Manfred, 1964: *Handbuch des Altpersischen*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (Spanish trans. A. Tovar, Madrid: CSIC 1958).

Carruba, Onofrio (ed.), 1992: *Per una grammatica ittita. Towards a Hittite Grammar*. Pavia: Gianni Iuculano.

Friedrich, Johannes, 1952: *Kurzgefasstes hethitisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter (reprint 1991).

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Held, Warren H. / Schmalstieg, William R. / Gertz, Janet E., 1988. *Beginning Hittite*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers.

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Hinz, Walter, 1975: *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

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Lecoq, Pierre, 1997: *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide*. Paris: Gallimard.

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Software

PDF

PowerPoint

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed