Early Cultures

The Program in Early Cultures is an interdisciplinary concentration that integrates the cultures, religions, and histories of ancient civilizations. Geographically, the “ancient world” includes early China and India, West Asia (Mesopotamia, Iran, Anatolia, and Israel), Egypt, the Mediterranean (especially Greece and Italy), the early Islamic and Byzantine worlds, and the Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican civilizations. Students in Early Cultures gain in-depth knowledge of the history, religions, languages, and literatures of two or more ancient civilizations. In consultation with a concentration advisor, students design their own areas of study. Examples of possible topics include: cultural contacts between Greece and Egypt/West Asia; animal sacrifice in Greece and Israel; comparative legal studies: Israel, Hatti, and Mesopotamia; gender roles in Rome and Egypt; Wisdom literature in Egypt, Israel, and Mesopotamia; and the historiography of the exact sciences in India and Greece.

Faculty from a variety of academic units (Anthropology, Classics, Comparative Literature, Egyptology, History, History of Art and Architecture, the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Judaic Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies) offer courses relevant to Early Cultures.

Concentration patterns:
1. Ancient History (standard and honors)
2. Ancient Religions (standard and honors)
3. Languages and Literatures of Greece, Rome, North Africa, pre-Islamic West and South Asia (honors only)

General Requirements
Each nonhonors concentrator will choose to focus on either ancient history or ancient religions and will complete the Concentrators Seminar (ERLY 1000) in both the junior and the senior years, and eight other courses, four in each of two civilizations, or eight in a variety of civilizations.

Honors Requirements:
1. Ancient History or Ancient Religions (total of up to 12 courses)
   a. The Concentrators Seminar (ERLY 1000) in both the junior and senior years
   b. Two courses on the history or religions of two civilizations (four courses)
   c. Two courses in one ancient language
   d. Two related courses
   e. The honors thesis (one or two courses)
2. Languages and Literatures of Greece, Rome, North Africa, pre-Islamic West and South Asia (total of up to 12 courses)
   a. The Concentrators’ Seminar (two courses)
   b. Two 1000-level courses requiring knowledge of Greek or Latin, and two courses requiring knowledge of Egyptian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Sanskrit, or Phoenician (Four courses: two of each of two languages)
   c. Two courses in the literature or culture associated with each of the two languages (For one of these languages, the two courses must be at the advanced level)
   d. The honors thesis (one or two courses)
   e. Languages and Literatures of North Africa and pre-Islamic West, South, or East Asia (total of up to 12 courses)
      a. The Concentrator’s Seminar (two courses)
      b. Two courses requiring knowledge of two different North African, West or South Asian languages: Egyptian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Phoenician, Sanskrit or Chinese. For one of these languages, the two courses must be at the advanced level. (Four courses: two of each of two languages.)
      c. Two courses in the literature or culture associated with each of the two languages (four courses: two each for two languages).
      d. The honors thesis (one or two courses)