Ten Great Battles of Antiquity

Tuesdays, 7-9:05 pm  March 31 to June 2 -  Syllabus and Course Outline - Online

Course Aims:

This course takes a close and engaging look at ten battles that shaped the ancient world and the imperial ambitions of ancient civilizations, including the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Greeks, Persians, and Romans. The memorable, if not always decisive, battles include: Qadesh (1274 BCE), Nineveh (612 BCE), Marathon (490 BCE), Thermopylae (480 BCE), Issus (333 BCE), Cannae (216 BCE), Cartagena (209 BCE), Alesia (52 BCE), Actium (31 BCE), and Masada (73 CE). Placing these battles in the larger contexts of the surrounding wars in which they were fought, the course focuses on the strategy and tactics of the military commanders who led these legendary battles, showing how they outwitted their enemies and innovated within the framework of ancient warfare. The course also explores the propaganda campaigns waged by the various sides, which created dramatic narratives and cultural myths. These narratives and myths shaped perceptions of these battles during ancient times. But, in some cases, they continue to shape the cultural memory of these great battles up to the modern day.

Some of the battles covered in this course are better understood in military history as successful sieges where actual battle was irrelevant, anticlimactic or even a non-event — such as Masada — and others like Nineveh and Alesia were the practical outcomes of siege. They are nonetheless more than merely symbolic because of the perception of outcome in the larger frame of reference or far beyond again in the case of Masada in terms of how they shaped far-reaching modern statehood despite the contemporary facts. Regardless of their terms of engagement, the continuing legacy of such conflicts is examined in detail.

Course Requirements:

Students attend the ten live online lectures and complete assigned readings from assigned texts, and supplemental texts as provided. If taken for credit (as undergraduate students, graduate students or MLA prospective students must fulfill), students complete a brief 10 page critical paper with topic having instructor consent.

Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Credit/No Credit or Letter Grade option. Courses taken for NGR (“No Grade Requested”) will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.
CLA 131  Ten Ancient Battles  -  Course Outline

3/31  **Battle of Qadesh**  (1274 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, Preface and ch. 1
(http://www.languageandlaw.org/TEXTS/CONST/KADESH.HTM)

4/7  **Battle of Nineveh**  (612 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 2; *Book of Nahum*, chs. 2-3
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nahum+3&version=NIV
(https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nahum+2&version=NIV)

4/14  **Battle of Marathon**  (490 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 3

4/21  **Battle of Thermopylae**  (480 BCE)

*Reading:*  Herodotus, *History* VII.201-34 on Battle of Thermopylae on Livius.org
(https://www.livius.org/sources/content/herodotus/herodotus-on-thermopylae/)

4/28  **Battle of Issus**  (333 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 4
Josho Brouwers, “Alexander Mosaic”, *Ancient World Magazine*
(https://www.ancientworldmagazine.com/articles/alexander-mosaic-experiencing-masterpiece/)

5/6  **Battle of Cannae**  (216 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, chs. 5-6, Hunt, *Hannibal*, chs. 11-15;
P. Hunt, “Battle of Cannae” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*
(http://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Cannae)

5/13  **Battle of Cartagena**  (209 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 7; Hunt, *Hannibal*, 19;
Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, *The Latin Library*
(https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/imperialism/notes/scipio.html)

5/20  **Battle of Alesia**  (52 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 8
Mark Cartwright, “Roman Fort”, *Ancient History Encyclopedia*
(https://www.ancient.eu/Roman_Fort/)
5/27  **Battle of Actium**  (31 BCE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 9
Heather Whipps, “How the Battle of Actium Changed the World”
*Live Science: Archaeology / Military*  

6/2  **Battle Siege of Masada**  (73 CE)

*Reading:*  Hunt, *Clash of Empires*, ch. 10
Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book 7, ch. 9, Fall of Masada

(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/josephusmasada.html)

*Note: Instructor reserves right to amend or adapt schedule as circumstances require.*