**Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World**

**Instructor: Katerina Panagopoulou**

**Summary**

This course offers an overview of the c.300 years between the conquest of the Persian kingdom by Alexander the Great and his expansion to India (334-324 BC) and the subjugation of the last Hellenistic state, Ptolemaic Egypt, to Rome (31 BC). The emergence by 275 BC of Hellenistic kingdoms from the extended Macedonian kingdom established by Alexander the Great opened up a new era, during which it was kings who pulled the strings of political entities around the Mediterranean. The present course aims to outline the administrative, economic, social and cultural profile of each of the main kingdoms, in order to highlight their respective similarities and major divergences. Our ultimate aim is not only to reveal the reasons that led to the Hellenistic states’ gradual subjugation to Rome and to the transformation of the Mediterranean into a Roman “mare nostrum”, but also to offer a glimpse of the diverse, distinct features which emerged and flourished within the cosmopolitan environment thus formed and which may be considered peculiar to this exceptionally stimulating, and strikingly similar to the modern, period.

**Weekly Schedule:**

Week 1 **Setting the Scene: Alexander the Great’s Asia Minor Campaign.**

Week 2 **The new Macedonian kingdom (Balkans, Asia Minor, Egypt). The Diadochi Wars between Alexander III’s demise and the formation of Hellenistic kingdoms (323 - c. 275 BC). The appeal of Alexander the Great upon his peers and upon later rulers. Alexander the Great’s impact on a) the economy, b) society and culture, c) religion.**

Week 3 **The world of the Epigonoi and the genesis of international history: the formation of Hellenistic kingdoms and their clash with Rome (275-31 BC).**

**Hellenistic kingship. Kings and Hellenistic kingdoms. The Macedonian kingdom and mainland Greece.**

Week 4 **The Ptolemaic Kingdom: economy, society, religion.**

Week 5 **The Seleucid kingdom: economy, society, religion.**

Week 6 **The Attalid and minor kingdoms.**

Week 7 **Poleis and Confederacies. Greek poleis. Middle-range Poleis: Athens, Rhodes. Confederacies, Achaean and Aitolian.**

Week 9 **The *symploke:* Rome’s emergence into international affairs and the conquest of Hellenistic kingdoms. The conquest’s impact on finance, administration, society, religion. Mercenaries, *lestai*, piracy.**

Week 10 **The economic and administrative features of the Hellenistic period – ancient sources.**

Week 11 **Social, cultural and religious features (i.e. from ruler cults to “megatheism”) – ancient sources.**

Week 12 **Student Presentations.**

Week 13 **Student Presentations.**

**Evaluation:** Student evaluation will be based on the following three criteria:

* 20% of the final mark will depend on middle-term quizzes, to assess student progress and understanding of the course content. Quizzes will take place in weeks 4 and 8.
* 30% of the final mark will be based on a 15-min oral presentation of topics related to the course. Essay topics will be chosen by week 3 in consultation with the course convener, while presentations will take place in weeks 12 and 13.
* 50% of the final mark will be based on an end-of-term written essay of 3.500 words

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