

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana Course Syllabi, 2021-2025

Spring 2-1-2022

HSTR 303.01: Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World

Scott Lawin Arcenas

University of Montana, Missoula, scott.arcenas@umontana.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi2021-2025>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Arcenas, Scott Lawin, "HSTR 303.01: Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World" (2022). *University of Montana Course Syllabi, 2021-2025*. 679.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi2021-2025/679>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi, 2021-2025 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

HSTR 303: Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World

Instructor: Scott Lawin Arcenas (scott.arcenas@umontana.edu)

Time: MWF, 12:00 - 12:50

Location: LA 204

Office hours: MW, 11:00 - 11:50; and by appointment

Introduction

In 336 BCE, a twenty-year-old youth named Alexander ascended the throne of Macedon, in Northern Greece. Over the next ten years, he conquered a vast swathe of territory that stretched from the Balkans, to Egypt, to India. Alexander died before his thirty-third birthday, and his empire disintegrated soon after his death. His legacy, however, has nonetheless continued to shape the course of history up through the present day. In this course, we will explore the world into which Alexander was born, the arc of his life, the changes he helped set in motion, and the varying ways he has been understood in the centuries since his death.

Learning Outcomes

By taking this course, you will:

- Acquire and retain specific knowledge about a crucial period in human history. You will, for example, learn how Alexander conquered the largest empire the world had ever seen; why that empire dissolved so quickly after his death; and why the Greco-Macedonian world he left behind has had—and, moreover, continues to have—such a profound impact on the way we think about politics, literature, engineering, and a whole range of other topics.
- Use your knowledge of ancient history and historiography to better understand both current events and other periods of history.
- Recognize the importance of understanding historical events in context.
- Develop the ability to find, evaluate, and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop the ability to effectively communicate in both oral and written formats.

Graded Coursework: Overview and Expectations

Expectations:

This course comprises four parts: readings, lectures, written assignments, and discussion. Each of the four parts is integral to the course as a whole. Accordingly, you will need to engage with all of them both throughout the semester and on the exams. As lectures, discussion, and written assignments all presuppose familiarity with the readings, please be sure to complete *all* readings *prior to* the relevant class.

Participation (in class):

Your attendance and thoughtful, engaged participation are mandatory. There are many ways to participate in a history class. Please reflect on your current approach and challenge yourself to experiment with alternatives. Some possibilities are listed below:

- Show up for class prepared (i.e., having done the required reading and/or assignment, with a copy of the relevant text(s) in hand).
- Offer your opinion of the readings.
- Respond to someone else's opinion (e.g., agreeing/supporting, elaborating, asking for clarification, or expressing a different point of view).
- Ask a question – either a discussion question or merely something from the readings that confused/perplexed/fascinated you.
- Help get the discussion back on track.
- Play devil's advocate.
- Listen– yes, this is also participating! Above all, you must be an active listener.
- Finally, respect your classmates. Discussions thrive on a diversity of viewpoints, but they must be offered, criticized, and debated respectfully.

Participation (exercises):

Occasional before- and in-class exercises will also contribute to your participation grade, and you will not be able to turn in these exercises after the end of the relevant class. Accordingly, repeated absences will have a substantial impact on your overall grade for the course.

Reading responses:

Roughly once a week, you will complete a short reading response designed to help solidify your understanding of the events under consideration and promote engagement with interpretive issues. Unless otherwise indicated, these reading responses will take the form of what I call a “**3-2-1 exercise**.” To elaborate, I will ask you to identify and briefly (c. 500 words) discuss **three** of the most important things you learned from the readings, **two** of the most important questions that the reading raised, and **one** of the discussion questions I've asked you to consider as you read. Unless otherwise indicated, 3-2-1 responses will be **due before class, on Friday**. Over the course of the term, you may skip **up to four reading responses**. If you complete more than the required number of assignments, I will drop your lowest score(s).

Take-home quizzes:

You will complete three take-home quizzes over the course of the term. The provisional due dates for these quizzes are February 5, February 26, and April 16 (all Saturdays). We will discuss expectations for the quizzes in the week leading up to the first quiz.

Map and timeline quiz:

You will take a map and timeline quiz in class on Friday, April 8. This quiz will cover a list of significant events and locations that we will develop together over the course of the term.

Take-home tests:

You will complete two take-home tests over the course of the term. The provisional due dates are Friday, March 18, and Wednesday, May 11. We will discuss the tests at greater length 1-2 weeks before they are due, and a study guide will be provided.

Guiding questions:

I will provide you with comprehension and/or discussion questions to accompany most reading assignments. Answering these questions well and taking good notes will be an essential component of the course. Doing so will boost your grade substantially, as these questions will often appear on in-class exercises, take-home quizzes, and take-home tests (all of which, crucially, will be open-note). More importantly, doing so will also help you learn to read, think, write, and talk like a historian. We will discuss these questions at greater length throughout the term.

Late Work:

Quizzes, tests, and in-class exercises will not be accepted late. Late reading responses will be subject to a 5% penalty for each 24-hour period that passes after the deadline. For example, a perfect (5/5) reading response due Friday, April 8, but submitted Saturday, April 9, becomes a 4.75; the same response submitted Sunday, April 10, becomes a 4.5; et cetera, up to a maximum penalty of 50%). If you have extenuating circumstances that require an extension for any assignment, you must contact me via email well before the due date. Otherwise, you risk receiving a zero for the relevant portion of your grade.

Moodle Gradebook:

Please do not pay any attention whatsoever to your overall grade on Moodle. I will not enter quiz or test grades, and the 5-point scales I use to evaluate reading responses do not translate directly to standard, percentage-based grades. Accordingly, your apparent grade on Moodle will be misleading.

Approximate grading breakdown:

Participation: 20%

Reading responses: 24%

Quizzes: 28%

Tests: 28%

Other Important Information

Required Texts (available at the bookstore):

James Romm (ed.) *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander*, (Anchor Books, 2012).
Peter Thonemann, *The Hellenistic Age* (Oxford UP, 2016).

Communications:

All electronic communications will be via University email accounts or Moodle.

Accommodations:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with ODE, please contact them in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and ODE to provide appropriate accommodation. If you are already registered with ODE and wish to request reasonable accommodations for this course, please contact me privately to discuss the specifics.