



AHIS8213

Egypt: Alexander to Augustus

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

School of Humanities

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General Information

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|---|
| Unit convenor and teaching staff Paul McKechnie paul.mckechnie@mq.edu.au |
| Credit points 10 |
| Prerequisites Admission to MAnchHist or GradCertAncHist or MA in (Ancient History or Coptic Studies) |
| Corequisites |
| Co-badged status |
| Unit description Theocritus wrote: '... there's no country so fruitful as the low-country of Egypt when Nile comes gushing up to soak the soil and break it, nor no country, neither, possessed of so many cities of men learned in labour ... and in them the lord and master of all is proud Ptolemy.' In this unit this powerful empire is studied. Its kings, fifteen of them, all had the name of Ptolemy. In their capital city of Alexandria, founded by and named after Alexander the Great, the kings of the Ptolemy family built the Museum and Library which made their empire the beating heart of the Greek intellectual world. Theirs was the longest-lasting of the successor kingdoms which took over the lands conquered by Alexander, lasting until Octavian (later known as Caesar Augustus) defeated Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony in a sea-battle at Actium in 31 BC. |

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Apply and assimilate information in a context appropriate to postgraduate study.

ULO2: Demonstrate understanding orally and in writing, by deduction and argumentation.

ULO3: Develop and apply techniques of understanding ancient sources of differing kinds.

ULO4: Relate understanding of the ancient world to broad conceptual frameworks and modern contexts.

ULO5: Show in writing critical understanding of factual questions and judgements of likelihood and value.

ULO6: Create texts which reason persuasively from a historical question to a provisional answer, citing relevant evidence.

General Assessment Information

How to submit your work

Written work must be submitted through Turnitin in the iLearn website for the unit.

Extensions

Please submit your work on time.

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted.

Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Results

Marks given are indicative only: final marks will be determined after moderation. Grading decisions for each assessment task will be moderated against the set criteria and standards before task results are released. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent.

For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|---|-----------|--------|------------|
| <u>Minor essay</u> | 20% | No | 07/03/2025 |
| <u>Major essay</u> | 40% | No | 18/04/2025 |
| <u>Short-answer summaries</u> | 40% | No | 15/06/2025 |

Minor essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **07/03/2025**

Weighting: **20%**

Students will write an essay (word-limit 1000 words including footnotes but not including bibliography list) on one of the titles given in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply and assimilate information in a context appropriate to postgraduate study.
- Demonstrate understanding orally and in writing, by deduction and argumentation.
- Develop and apply techniques of understanding ancient sources of differing kinds.
- Create texts which reason persuasively from a historical question to a provisional answer, citing relevant evidence.

Major essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **18/04/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will write an essay (word-limit 2000 words including footnotes but not including bibliography list) on one of the titles given in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply and assimilate information in a context appropriate to postgraduate study.
- Demonstrate understanding orally and in writing, by deduction and argumentation.
- Develop and apply techniques of understanding ancient sources of differing kinds.
- Create texts which reason persuasively from a historical question to a provisional answer, citing relevant evidence.

Short-answer summaries

Assessment Type ¹: Summary

Indicative Time on Task ²: 4 hours

Due: **15/06/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

A choice of short-answer summaries will be set. Four summaries must be given. The word-length for the short-answer summaries document as a whole is 2,500 words, so that each summary should be approximately 625 words long. Some leeway is allowed on length, but there will be no extra marks for long answers. These summaries are not another essay. Footnoting should not be used, and bibliographies should not be given. What is required is a set of well thought out but relatively brief answers to analytical questions drawn from across the ideas and events dealt with

in the unit. The idea is that it should be possible to write the full set of summaries in three hours, although there is no way of checking that a student does not spend four or five hours writing: note again that there will be no credit for extra length. The questions for the short-answer summaries will be made available in the iLearn unit during Weeks 13 and 14. Answers must be submitted at the end of Week 14.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply and assimilate information in a context appropriate to postgraduate study.
- Demonstrate understanding orally and in writing, by deduction and argumentation.
- Develop and apply techniques of understanding ancient sources of differing kinds.
- Relate understanding of the ancient world to broad conceptual frameworks and modern contexts.
- Show in writing critical understanding of factual questions and judgements of likelihood and value.
- Create texts which reason persuasively from a historical question to a provisional answer, citing relevant evidence.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Required Reading

Günther Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (London and New York, 2001)

J.G. Manning, *The Last Pharaohs: Egypt under the Ptolemies 305-30 BC* (Princeton, 2010)

Recommended Reading

Please read widely from the bibliographies given in Leganto. Please don't draw a strong distinction between 'required' and 'recommended' reading. In general, don't aim to do the minimum in this unit.

Unit webpage and technology used and required

Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/> PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are required. With computer problems, teaching staff cannot help you. Go to Macquarie University IT support

Phone 02 98504357, or email onehelp@mq.edu.au.

University policy on grading

University Grading Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

The grade a student receives will signify their overall performance in meeting the learning outcomes of a unit of study. Grades will not be awarded by reference to the achievement of other students nor allocated to fit a predetermined distribution. In determining a grade, due weight will be given to the learning outcomes and level of a unit (ie 1000, 2000, 3000, 8000 etc). Graded units will use the following grades: HD High Distinction 85-100 D Distinction 75-84 Cr Credit 65-74 P Pass 50-64 F Fail 0-49

Extensions

Please hand your work in on time. On special consideration and on work submitted late, see under General Assessment Information.

Unit Schedule

| Week no. | Theme for the week | Lecture no. | Lecture topic |
|----------|--|-------------|--|
| 1 | Egypt and the Mediterranean world | 1 | Egypt 405-332 BC |
| | | 2 | Alexander the Great and Egypt |
| 2 | New kingdoms in the post-Alexander generation | 3 | General Ptolemy takes over in Egypt. The 'funeral games' of Alexander. |
| | | 4 | King Ptolemy I builds an empire. Manetho. |
| 3 | 'In Athens you can go half way; in Alexandria you can go all the way.' | 5 | Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II: the sibling monarchs |
| | | 6 | Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the library of Alexandria, and Greek culture. Posidippus. |
| 4 | City and country in Egypt | 7 | Alexandria, the greatest city in the world. Apollonius of Rhodes. |
| | | 8 | Ptolemy II and the Revenue Papyrus |
| 5 | Egypt, the Holy Land, and Syria | 9 | Ptolemy II and the Bible |
| | | 10 | Ptolemy III: a bid for world domination. The Alexandrian court. Callimachus. |

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| 6 | The princesses and courtesans of Egypt and Syria | 11 | Women in court and city, 323-223 BC. |
| | | 12 | Egypt and Africa: the kingdom of Meroe. |
| 7 | Greek, Jews and Egyptians fight side by side for Egypt and King Ptolemy | 13 | Alexandrian science. Eratosthenes. Herophilus. |
| | | 14 | Ptolemies IV and V. A Seleucid takeover bid. |
| 8 | The sacred canopy and the temple gateways | 15 | Religions of the Ptolemaic kingdom. |
| | | 16 | Egyptian temples in the Ptolemaic era. |
| 9 | Threats to Ptolemaic power | 17 | The revolt of the Thebaid. |
| | | 18 | Ptolemy VI. The takeover bid turns hostile again. |
| 10 | Waste paper city | 19 | Ptolemies VI and VIII, Cleopatras II and III: when families go bad. |
| | | 20 | Oxyrhynchus and papyrology. |
| 11 | A view from below | 21 | Kerkeosiris and village life. |
| | | 22 | The Egyptian economy and the Amnesty Decree (118 BC). |
| 12 | Egypt: Rome's worst client state? | 23 | Ptolemies IX to XI: when bad families get worse. Machinery. Hero. |
| | | 24 | Ptolemy XII Auletes: Egypt and the turmoil of the Roman republic. |
| 13 | 'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/ Her infinite variety' | 25 | Cleopatra VII and Julius Caesar. |
| | | 26 | Antony and Cleopatra. The Empire of the East. Cleopatra's death. Augustus takes over. |

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)

- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2025.01R of the [Handbook](#)