

GNHU/HIST 332-01
Selected Topics in Ancient History:
ALEXANDER

Tuesday 2:30-3:45 PM 12191
Dr. ASIRVATHAM



This course uses the figure of Alexander the Great to explore larger problems in ancient history: how do we interpret the historical and archaeological record of events that happened so long ago? What can we trust of our sources? In the case of Alexander—who by his mid-20s had conquered the vast Persian empire—these questions are particularly interesting. Even in his lifetime, nearly every aspect of Alexander’s life, character and actions became instantly mythologized, embellished, exaggerated, and critiqued by historians, philosophers and artists. Alexander-history is therefore not a collection of facts that leads us to the “unvarnished truth”, but a conglomeration of fascinating historical problems that often arise from the biases of our sources. So you will learn in this course when Alexander lived and died; the conditions under which the backwater kingdom of Macedon came to overpower Greece and then the vast Persian empire; his strategy in battle and the logistics of his army; and what became of his empire after his death. But you will also try to determine why Alexander was seen by so many people in so many different ways over time, and how (and if) we can get around these visions of Alexander to see the man himself.

Course is open to all. Fills Early History requirement of the General Humanities Major as well as electives for the Classics and Latin majors