COURSE DETAIL

ASIA, THE AEGEAN, EUROPE: DIVIDING THE WORLD IN ANCIENT GREECE

Country
United Kingdom - England

Host Institution
University College London

Program(s)
University College London

UCEAP Course Level
Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)
History

UCEAP Course Number
162

UCEAP Course Suffix
B

UCEAP Official Title
ASIA, THE AEGEAN, EUROPE: DIVIDING THE WORLD IN ANCIENT GREECE

UCEAP Transcript Title
DIVIDING ANCIENT GR

UCEAP Quarter Units
6.00

UCEAP Semester Units
4.00

Course Description
Asia, Europe… Where do these terms come from, what did and do they mean? The binary opposition between ‘West’ and ‘East’, Europe and Asia, is a standard trope of world history. Usually traced back to Greek responses to the Persian Wars in the fifth-century BC, this geopolitical division (and its attending ideologies) is one of the most influential legacies of ancient Greek history. In this course, we shall explore when, how, and why the ideas of ‘Asia’ and ‘Europe’ (as well as related geographical entities such as ‘Hellas’) emerged – as part of a more general investigation of how the Greeks (and their neighbors) imagined, mapped, and divided their world. Reconstruction of these ‘spatial imaginaries’ from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period will yield insights into the interaction of (military) power, (geographical) knowledge, and the cultural construction of (geopolitical) space – and, not least, reveal the Europe–Asia divide as in various ways fluid and contingent. After an introductory seminar that will establish basic categories of analysis, we will pursue our theme in six units of three seminars each. To begin with, we shall survey some of the earliest attempts to map the world, comparing and contrasting Greek and Near Eastern perspectives (unit 1). Unit 2 explores the impact of the Persian Wars on Greek conceptions of space, with a focus on Ionia as ‘contact zone’ and the Aegean Sea as the ‘area in-between’ that gets crossed in both directions but does not lend itself to any straightforward division. We will then move on to the geopolitics of Athenian imperialism (unit 3), before considering ancient views on the correlation between space and (ethnic) identity, including population relocation (unit 4). Unit 5 focuses on Alexander’s conquest of Asia, as well as its (intellectual) antecedents and consequences, and the final unit 6 considers the proto-scientific and mythic ‘map-making’ of the Hellenistic Age.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
HIST0509

Host Institution Course Title ASIA, THE AEGEAN, EUROPE: DIVIDING THE WORLD IN ANCIENT GREECE
Host Institution Course Details
Host Institution Campus University College London
Host Institution Faculty
Host Institution Degree
Host Institution Department History
Course Last Reviewed

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