



HPAH7015: Ancient Egyptian Religion

2025/26 (Semester 2)

**“They [the Egyptians] are religious to excess, beyond any nation in the world.”
(Herodotus)**

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We meet hybrid in class, both on campus and synchronously on TEAMS. Lectures will be recorded.



Syllabus

I am providing a lot of readings, simply to guide you and give you the opportunity to choose the one which correlates best with your interests and my idea what you have to know. You do not have to read all of that, these readings provide more a comprehensive overview to prepare you best for your coursework. I nevertheless expect you have read the **compulsory reading**.

Semester 2 has a Easter Break 30/03 – 19/04/2026, we therefore will have 7 sessions before the break and 3 after.

		Readings (chapters)
Pre-Requisites	If the student does not have pre-knowledge of Ancient Egypt, the following readings need to be studied before the module - Teeter, E. and Brewer, D. 1999. <i>Egypt and the Egyptians</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. - Lloyd, Alan Brian (Ed.). 2010. <i>A Companion to ancient Egypt</i>. Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. - Shaw, I. 2004. <i>The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt</i>. Oxford: OUP.	
Week 1 13/02/26	Introduction to the module The characteristics of Ancient Egyptian Religion Compulsory reading: Kemp. How religious were the ancient Egyptians?	Quirke.1992. 7-21. (introduction) Quirke. 2015. 38-79 (ch.2) Teeter. 2011. 3-15 (ch.1) + 197-200 (Afterword) Ikram. 2010a. 115-164 (ch.5) Johnston. 2007. 155-164 (Assmann and Frankfurter) Lloyd. 2010. 507-546 (Szpakowska and Frankfurter)
Week 2 20/02/26	Egyptian Religion and Ma'at: Concepts of the divine Compulsory reading: Goebis. 2011 This session will have a pre-recorded lecture and activities in the Forum due to annual leave.	Quirke. 2015. 1-37 (ch.1), 150-176 (ch.5) Teeter. 1997. Quirke.1992. 70-104 (ch. 3) Goebis: Kingship. 275-295 Ikram. 2010a. 115-164 (ch.5) Shafer. Religion. 7-30, 58-87 (part of ch.1)
Week 3 27/02/26	The pantheon: Concepts of God and Theology Compulsory reading: Roth. 2006. To be uploaded in Forum until 26/02: Write a 150 word biography of a god/deity/demon of your choice (will be discussed in class). See Redford.2002 for examples.	Quirke. 1992. 21-68. (ch.1+2) Quirke. 2001. (esp. 13-23) Teeter. 2011. 104-118 (ch.6) Assmann. 2001. 169-188 (ch.8) Hornung. 1982. Shafer. Religion. 30-58 (part of ch.1)
Week 4 06/03/26	Creation myths and cosmogonies: theology and belief systems Compulsory reading: Conman: It's about time	Quirke. 2015. 110-149 (ch.4) Pinch 2004. Pinch. 2002. Shafer. Religion.88-122 (ch.2).
Week 5 13/03/26	When cult meets economics: rituals, temples and priests	Teeter. 2011. 16-38 (ch.2), 39-55 (ch.3), 161-164 (part of ch.9) Quirke. 2015. 80-109 (ch.3), 177-200. (ch.6)

	Compulsory reading: Lloyd. 2010. 255-290 (Spencer and Clarysse)	David. 2002. 349-357. Eaton. 2013. 3-17 (ch. 1), 100-124 (ch. 6) Haring. 1997. Pinch. 1994. Rappaport. 23-68. (ch. 2) Sauneron. 2000. 29-50 (ch.2) Shafer. Religion. 7-57, 164-171 Shafer. Temples. 1-30 (ch.1) Sullivan. 2008. Zinn. Divine Cult. Zinn. Magic.
Week 6 20/03/2026	Personal piety and popular religion Compulsory reading: Baines / Frood. 2011. Bussmann. 2017.	Teeter. 2011. 56-75 (ch.4), 76-104 (ch.5) Quirke. 2015. 80-109 (ch.3) Assmann. 1999a. Assmann. 1999b. Baines. Practical Religion. Blackman. Oracles I and II. Darnell. Opet Festival. Exell. Ancestor Bust Falk. 2015. Pinch. Hathor Offerings Pinch Votive Practices Shafer. Religion. 172-186. Sullivan. Visualising Space Van Pelt / Staring. 2019
20/03/2026 Submission portfolio 1a – discussion paper		
25/03/2026 Submission portfolio 2 – Response to another research project		
Week 7 27/03/2026	Discussion workshop This will be based on your discussion paper and the introductory talk you will give about another one.	Discussion and peer review of your research topics
Week 8 24/04/2026	Solar Religion in AE A new time? Atenism as monotheism or personal cult? Compulsory Reading: Hoffmeier. 2016	Quirke. 1992. 21-51. (ch.1) Assmann. 1995. (get an overview) Quirke. 2001. (esp. 13-23) Teeter. 2011. 182-196 (part of ch.9) Additional bibliography will be uploaded on MOODLE
28/04/2026 Submission portfolio 3 – Prepare a case study for class (Turnitin), upload 1-2 readings for the Case Study of your choice available for the class to the FORUM		
Week 9 01/05/2026	The everlasting life: Osiris, mysteries and provisions Compulsory Reading: Nyord. 2021.	Teeter. 2011. 119-160 (ch.7+8) Quirke. 1992. 141-171. (ch.5) Quirke. 2015. 201-237. (ch.7) Hays. Funerary Rituals. Smith. Osiris and the Deceased. Stadler, Judgement after Death
Week 10 08/05/2026	Workshop Case studies	
10/05/2026 Submission portfolio 1b – research project thesis / report		

Assessments

Course work (100%): One research portfolio – equivalent of 7500 words

1. Your self-chosen research project about one phenomenon relating to ancient Egyptian religious beliefs – overall 5500 words (overall 70% of the module mark)

Develop

- a. One discussion paper proposing and outlining your topic as basis for the class discussion (1500 words, 20% of the module mark) → **to be submitted via Turnitin AND Forum (Discussion paper) latest by 20/03/2026 by 23:59 (class discussion will be on 27/03/2026, feedback will be released by 17/04/2026 @ 5pm)**
 - b. Write a project thesis / report on your research, expanding on your discussion paper (4000 words, 50% of the module mark) → **to be submitted via Turnitin latest by 10/05/2026 by 23:59 (feedback will be released by 07/06/2026 @ 5pm)**
2. Response to another research project (worth 500 words, 10% of the module mark) → **to be submitted via Turnitin AND Forum (Response) latest by 25/03/2026 by 23:59 (class discussion will be on 27/03/2026, feedback will be released by 22/04/2026 @ 5pm)**
Respond to one other research discussion paper. In the class discussion, introduce the project of your colleague with a 2-3 minute oral summary (as supplementary paper, co-paper) based on their discussion paper and chair the following 15-20 min discussion.
 3. Prepare a case study for class (worth 1500 words, 20% of the module mark). Choose one of the following → **to be submitted via Turnitin latest by 28/04/2026 by 23:59 (feedback will be released by 25/05/2026 @ 5pm)**
 - a. Thebes: Processions and Festivals
 - b. Abydos: Personal Cult, Performances and Pilgrimage
 - c. Exceptional setups – exceptional beliefs? The situation of Amarna and Deir el-Medina
 - d. Alexandria: religious interpretations of the Ptolemies

Provide one reading for the class also via the FORUM latest **by 29/04** PLUS either a 5-10 min introductory presentation or a 500 word handout for class discussion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Textbooks (I would recommend to buy them)

Teeter, E. 2011. *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*. Cambridge: CUP.

Quirke, S. 2015. *Exploring Religion in Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum.

Quirke, S. 1992. *Ancient Egyptian Religion*. London: British Museum.

Essential Readings

Assmann, J. 2001. *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca. (transl. of Assmann, J. 1984. *Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur*. Stuttgart. → even this is a very good translation, if you can read German, then use the original book)

Assmann, J. 2005. *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press.

Baines, J. and E. Frood. 2011. Piety, change and display in the New Kingdom. In: M. Collier and S. Snape (eds), *Ramesside studies in honour of K. A. Kitchen*, 1–18. Bolton: Rutherford Press. 1-17.

- Goebs, K. 2011. King as god and god as king, in: R. Gundlach (ed.), *Palace and Temple*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 57-101.
- Busmann, R. 2017. Personal piety: An archaeological response. In: G. Miniaci, M. Betrò, S. Quirke (eds.), *Company of images. Modelling the imaginary world of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1500 BC)*. Leuven; Paris; Bristol: Peters. 71-91 (available online here http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/4730/1/Busmann_Personal_piety_2017.pdf)
- David, R. 2002. *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt*. London.
- Hoffmeier, J. 2016. The Great Hymn of the Aten: The Ultimate Expression of Atenism? *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* (John Foster Memorial Volume) 42(2016), 43-55.
- Hornung, E. *Conceptions of god in ancient Egypt; the one and the many*. London: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1982.
- Nyord, R. 2021. Experiencing the dead in ancient Egyptian healing texts. In: U. Steinert (ed.). *Systems of Classification in Premodern Medical Cultures: Sickness, Health, and Local Epistemologies*. Abingdon: Routledge. 84-106.
- Roth, A.M. 2006. The Representation of the Divine in Ancient Egypt. In: *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, Gary Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis, ed. Brown Judaic Studies series (Providence: Brown University Press, 2006): 24-37.
- Zivie-Coche, C. and F. Dunand. 2013. *Die Religionen des Alten Ägypten*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Recommended Readings for certain sessions

- Assmann, J. 1995. *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re. Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Assmann, J. 1999a. Confession in Ancient Egypt. In: Assmann, J; Stroumsa, G. (eds.). *Transformation of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*. Leiden: Brill. 231-244.
- Assmann, J. 1999b. Conversion, Piety and Loyalism in Ancient Egypt. In: Assmann, J; Stroumsa, G. (eds.). *Transformation of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*. Leiden: Brill. 31-44.
- Baines, J. 1987. Practical Religion 'Practical religion and piety.' *JEA* 73 (1987): 88–93.
- Blackman, A.M. 1925. 'Oracles in ancient Egypt I' In: *JEA* 11 (1925): 249–55.
- Blackman, A.M. 1926. 'Oracles in ancient Egypt II' In: *JEA* 12 (1926): 176–85.
- Brewer, D. and E. Teeter. 1999 and 2007. *Egypt and the Egyptians*. First and Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Budde, D. 2010. Child Deities. In: J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles.
- Conman, J. 2003. It's about Time: Ancient Egyptian Cosmology. In: *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 31(2003). 33-71.
- Darnell, J.C. 2010. Opet Festival. In: J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles.
- DuQuesne, T. 1994. The raw and the half-baked: Approaches to Egyptian religion. In: *Discussions in Egyptology* 30(1994). 29-35.
- Eaton, K. 2013. *Ancient Egyptian Temple Ritual: Performance, Pattern, and Practice*. New York.
- Exell, K. 2008. Ancestor Bust. In W. Wendrich (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles.

- Falk, D. 2015. Ritual processional furniture: a material and religious phenomenon in Egypt. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Liverpool University. Available online <https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/2012561/>
- Frandsen, P. 2008. Aspects of kingship in Ancient Egypt. In: N. Brisch: Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and beyond. Chicago: Oriental Institute. 47-73.
- Haring, B. 1997. Divine Households: Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes. Leiden.
- Harrison, P. 2019. Profane Egyptologists: The Modern Revival of Ancient Egyptian Religion. Routledge
- Hays, H.M. 2010. Funerary Rituals (Pharaonic Period). In J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.), UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles.
- Ikram, S. 2010. Mummification. In: J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.), UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles
- Ikram, S. 2010a. Ancient Egypt: An Introduction. Cambridge. → especially chapter 5 (115-164): Maintaining Egypt: Religion
- Johnston, S.I. 2007. Ancient Religions. Cambridge, MA.
- Kemp, B. 1989. Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization. London: Routledge.
- Kemp, B. 1995. How religious were the ancient Egyptians? In: Cambridge Archaeological Journal 5 (1995)1. 25-54.
- Koltsida, A. 2006. Birth-Bed, Sitting Place, Erotic Corner or Domestic Altar? A Study of the So-Called "Elevated Bed" in Deir el-Medina Houses. In: Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur 35(2006). 165-174.
- Koltsida, A. 2007. Domestic Space and Gender Roles in Ancient Egyptian Village Households: A View from Amarna Workmen's Village and Deir el-Medina. In: Westgate R., Fisher N.R.E. and J. Whitley (eds.). Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and beyond. London.
- Lloyd, A.B. 2010. A Companion to Ancient Egypt. London: Wiley-Blackwell. (esp. Spencer / Clarysse. 255-290 and Szpakowska / Frankfurter. 507-546).
- Morenz, S. 1992 (or any other edition). Egyptian Religion. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Pinch, G. 2004. Egyptian Myth: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr.
- Pinch, G. 2006 (or any other edition). Magic in Ancient Egypt. London: British Museum.
- Pinch, G.; E.A. Waraksa (2009). Votive Practices. In J. Dieleman, W. Wendrich (eds.). UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles. <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz001nfbgg>
- Quirke, S. (2001). The Cult of Ra: Sun Worship in Ancient Egypt. London. → especially Introduction.
- Rappaport, R.A. 1999. Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity. Cambridge. → especially chapter 2: The ritual form.
- Redford, D.B. 2002. The ancient god speaks: A guide to Egyptian religion. Oxford: OUP.
- Sauneron, S. 2000. The priests of Ancient Egypt. Ithaca & London: Cornell Univ. Pr.
- Shafer, B. (Ed.) 1991. Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice. Ithaca & London: Cornell Univ. Pr.
- Shafer, B. (Ed.) 1997. Temples of Ancient Egypt. Ithaca & London: Cornell Univ. Pr.
- Smith, M. 2008, Osiris and the Deceased. In J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds.), UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, Los Angeles.

- Stadler, M. A. 2008, Judgement after Death (Negative Confession). In J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles.
- Sullivan, E. 2008. *Daily Ritual. On: Digital Karnak*, Los Angeles. <http://dlib.etc.ucla.edu/projects/Karnak>.
- Taylor, J. 2001. *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press.
- Teeter, E. 1997. *The Presentation of Maat: Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt*. Chicago. SAOC 57. --> available online: <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/saoc/saoc-57-presentation-maat-ritual-and-legitimacy-ancient-egypt> (here you can download the PDF)
- Van Pelt, W.P. and N. Staring. 2019. Interpreting Graffiti in the Saqqara New Kingdom Necropolis as Expressions of Popular Customs and Beliefs. *Rivista del Museo Egizio* 3(2019). DOI: 10.29353/rime.2019.2577
- Weiss, I. 2009. Personal Religious Practice: House Altars at Deir el-Medina. In: *JEA* 95(2009). pp. 193–208. → available via JSTOR
- Wilkinson, T. 2010. *Egyptian World*. London: Routledge. (Goeb's article on Blackboard)
- Zinn, K. 2012. Cults: Divine. In: *Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*. New York: Wiley.
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Further Recommended Readings

- Allen, J.P. 1988. *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts*. Yale Egyptological Seminar.
- Allen, J.P. 1989. *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*. Yale: Yale Egyptological Seminar, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Graduate School, Yale University.
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- Assmann, J. 2014. *Religio Duplex: How the Enlightenment reinvented Egyptian religion*. Cambridge: Politi Pr.
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- Ritner, R.K. 1993. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Chicago.
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