**ANCIENT DREAM INTERPRETATION**

**Arts and Sciences 113\*.\*\*, First-Year Seminar**

**1 Semester-hour Credit, Autumn 2022**

**Day/Time: TBA Room: TBA**

##### Professor J. Albert Harrill

##### Department of History Office Hours: TBA

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# Course Description

All people dream. But what do dreams tell? Do all dreams require interpretation? What light does professional dream interpretation shed on the history of social mores? This course tackles these big questions historically, from the perspective of the ancient world, by examining the only professional dream handbook to have survived from Greco-Roman antiquity: Artemidorus, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (early third century C.E.). Study of Artemidorus moves us across disciplines, thanks to its most notable admirer in modern times, Sigmund Freud, and Artemidorus today continues to find numerous enthusiastic readers––and even practical users. That is because the book presents a sort of beginner’s manual, in which Artemidorus collects dreams from a wide range of people––men and women, boys and girls, free and enslaved, rich and poor––in order to teach the tricks of the trade. This primary text is a fascinating entrée into the question of how to conceptualize slavery, gender, religion, social mores, and the family in the ancient world. It teaches us how to do history “from below,” beyond the standard textbook evidence produced by and for the aristocratic elite. We learn a great deal about the ordinary lives of Greeks living under the Roman Empire. A close reading of this primary text in its cultural context will characterize how this seminar will proceed. No prior knowledge of dream interpretation or ancient religion is required.

**Course Objectives**

* Interpretation of Texts. To explicate the meaning and significance of a primary text as a cultural product deviating from the ancient world, taking account of all relevant factors of language, genre, and context.
* Modes of Discussion and Argument. To become competent in the oral and written conventions (such as note-taking, giving a presentation, rewriting it into a paper) by which scholarship can most effectively be conducted and communicated.
* Disciplinary Approaches. To understand how ancient historians and other specialists of the classical world apply various methods to their research, our case study being a cutting-edge, niche area in the field.

**Texts**

Artemidorus, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, tr. M. Hammond, Oxford World’s Classics, 2020.

Peter Thonemann, *An Ancient Dream Manual*, Oxford University Press, 2020.

**Course Policies**

* Class Attendance. You are expected to attend each class, have all the assigned materials done, and participate in class discussions.
* Class participation. For each session, you are to bring to class one (1) page of notes on the homework reading. A student will be selected to initiate the seminar with their notes. Active contribution to the discussion thus counts. If you do not talk in class, you can’t receive participation credit.
* Written assignments. One short interpretative essay (5 pages), based on a series of four note-taking exercises that focus on close and careful reading of texts. The exercises are due during the course of the semester (see below), will be discussed in class, and may be collected (depending on a random system).
* Oral assignments. In addition to taking turns as a seminar leader, each student will give an oral presentation in class on a text of their choice from the “Suggested Readings” in Thonemann. This is an opportunity for you to make your own observations about one or more texts in their contexts, using the methods of critical analysis that you have been learning in this course.

# Grading

Courses is graded A–E, under a decimalized section of Arts and Sciences 1137

Participation: 30%

Note-taking exercises: 30%

Oral presentation, with final paper: 40%

**Academic Misconduct**

**It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct**[**http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/**](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/)**.**

**Students with Disabilities**

**Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307,**[**slds@osu.edu**](mailto:slds@osu.edu)**;**[**slds.osu.edu**](http://slds.osu.edu/)**.**

**Biographical Statement**

I am a historian of religion (Greco-Roman era) specializing in New Testament and early Christianity, and teach in the Department of History with an affiliate appointment in the Department of Classics. My research investigates the Greco-Roman and Jewish background of Christian origins in order to interpret the New Testament writings in their ancient context. Before coming to OSU, I taught for a decade at Indiana University Bloomington in the Department of Religious Studies, where I received a distinguished teaching award. At Ohio State I have also received recognition for my teaching: a Sphinx and Mortar Board Outstanding Faculty, the Honors Faculty Service Award in the Arts and Sciences, and a Clio Award for Distinguished Faculty Teaching in History. My current undergraduate courses include History 2221 (Introduction to the New Testament), 3219 (the Historical Jesus), 3218 (Paul and His Influence in Early Christianity), and 3213H Slavery in the Ancient World (Honors).

#### Weekly Schedule

### **Week 1 – The Principles of Dream Interpretation**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 1–15. Thonemann, pp. 33–49

DUE: the textbooks in hand.

### **Week 2 – Every Variety of Sexual Dream**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 60–69. Thonemann, pp. 71–85.

DUE: Note-taking exercise #1.

### **Week 3 – Real-life Examples of Dreams and Their Outcomes**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 165­–213.

### **Week 4 – Day-to-Day Street life of Ordinary Dreamers**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 214–229. Thonemann, pp. 51–69.

DUE: Note-taking exercise #2.

### **Week 5 – Placing Dreams in Categories.**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 16–60.

### **Week 6 – The Accuracy of Interpretations.**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 70–118.

DUE: Note-taking exercise #3.

### **Week 7 – Tricks of the Trade for the Trainee Dream Interpreter.**

READ: Artemidorus, pp. 118–164.

### **Week 8 – The Natural World and Cities.**

READ: Thonemann, pp. 87–123.

DUE: Note-taking exercise #4.

### **Week 9 – Books, Literary Culture, and the Gods.**

READ: Thonemann, pp. 125–142.

### **Week 10 – Festivals and Games, Status and Values.**

READ: Thonemann, pp. 159–189

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### **Week 11 – The Invisibility of Roman Empire. Artemidorus After Antiquity.**

READ: Thonemann, 191–218.

### **Week 12 – Student Oral Presentations.**

READ: the suggestions in Thonemann, “Further reading, chaps. 1–4,” pp. 219–221.

### **Week 13 – Student Oral Presentations.**

READ: the suggestions in Thonemann, “Further Reading, chaps 5–8,” pp. 221–224.

### **Week 14 – Student Oral Presentations.**

READ: the suggestions in Thonemann, “further Reading,” chs. 9–Epilogue,” pp. 224–227.

**Final Exam Week**

DUE: Final Paper (5-pages), a revision of your oral presentation (and note-taking exercises), at the beginning of the scheduled final examination period.