

Kara Cooney, Associate Professor of Egyptian Art and Architecture and Chair, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

Office: 393 Kaplan Hall
Email: cooney@ucla.edu
Office Hours: by appointment only
Mailbox: 378 Kaplan Hall
Phone: 310.825.4165 (NELC office)

Class Website: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/167902>

NOTE: Syllabus subject to change

Course Overview

Almost no evidence of successful, long-term female leaders exists from the ancient world – in the Mediterranean, Near East, Africa, Central Asia, or East Asia. Strangely, more women were able to rule as leader of state in ancient Egypt than in any other place on the planet. The female king of Egypt, Hatshepsut, was able to take the throne for a considerable length of time, but she could only do so by sharing power with a male ruler. China was the only other place to allow women great positions of power on a semi-consistent basis, but it still did not approach Egypt. Empress Lü ruled China for sixteen years. In other parts of the ancient world, women usually served behind the throne. Not until the development of the modern nation-state were European women like Elizabeth I or Catherine the Great allowed to rule as legitimate and supreme office holders, and even they suffered intervention from husbands, fathers, lovers or other male supporters.

But some ancient women still gained the throne, using a variety of methods to gain power: Cleopatra attempted to use her sexuality and money to build alliances with warlords of the Roman empire and keep its imperial exploitation at bay; Boudicca, a noble elite of Britain led her people against Roman legions; Like Hatshepsut of Egypt, Wu Zetian of China began as regent for her young son, but she went further than the Egyptian monarch and ruthlessly expelled both her sons from power before they came of age, ruling alone. These women were exceptions, and, for the most part, served as mere placeholders for their male relatives. Complex societies are inherently bound to masculine dominance, forcing female rulers to resort to familiar methods to gain power. It was a rare occurrence, but some women did gain political power in the ancient world. How? Some female rulers used their sexuality to gain access to important men. Other women gained their position as the regent and helper of a masculine king who was too young to rule. And many of these women only ruled at the end of a dynasty, after the male line had run out, or in the midst of civil war when able bodied males were busy fighting complicated and drawn-out military contests. Sometimes, a woman was chosen to lead because she was the only

educated and elite member of her society left standing, after all of the male leaders had been dispatched in drawn-out battles against imperial or civil aggression. A woman's power in the ancient world (and perhaps even today) was compromised from the outset, and this class will address the root causes of this social inequality.

Given this social reality in the ancient world, how then did women negotiate their limited leadership roles? Were they able to rule "behind the throne" so to speak? How are we to find a woman's power when it was so habitually cloaked by a man's dominance? This class will address those questions and ask how much of this ancient reality still touches us today.

Learning Outcomes

1. By the end of this course students should be able to:
 1. Synthesize complex ideas and theories presented by various scholars on the origins and perpetuation of gender inequality in different social systems.
 2. Apply course concepts to primary source materials.

Required Books

- ☐ Cooney, Kara. 2018. *When Women Ruled the World*
- ☐ Other required articles and book sections will be available online through the course website.

How Class Works

- ☐ This course is asynchronous.
- ☐ There are separate sites for the main course and your TA section-- make sure you have access to both.
- ☐ Students will watch Professor Cooney's video lectures via their web browser on the course website. Readings, articles, and video assignments accompany each lecture. Students are assigned to a Teaching Assistant (TA) who will provide weekly guidance on completing all assignments through their section videos and emails.
- ☐ Each week after students have completed all videos and readings, they will take a quiz that will assess their comprehension of the material. The quiz can be only taken once so it is suggested you complete it after you have completed everything and taken notes. See "Assignments" for more information. The quizzes are due Friday, 11:59 pm PST each week.
- ☐ There will also be a midterm and a final for the course asking students to work with primary source materials connecting larger course themes to specific material evidence.

Grade Breakdown

Participation	20%
Quizzes (x10) 100 points (10 points each)	20%
Ancient x Modern Reflections (x2) (100 points each)	15%
Midterm (100 points)	20%
Final (100 points)	25%

Participation 20%

Given that the course is asynchronous participation will not take a “normal” form. It is expected that student watch and complete all videos and readings each week. Watching of both the professor's and TA's video are analyzed through BruinLearn and count towards the Participation grade. Additionally, this will be assessed via the weekly quizzes (see below). Students are also expected to keep in touch with their TA and sign-up for office hours to discuss course questions or concerns.

It is advised to stay in good communication with your TA. Given the quick pace of the quarter system and the asynchronicity of the course, it is easy to let this fall to the side. It is much easier for TAs to make accommodations and help when alerted to an issue either prior to it happening (i.e. you need more time on an assignment) or as soon as you can. Waiting until the last minute or the end of the quarter to ask for help is ill advised.

Live Events

- Twice throughout the quarter the Professor will hold a live event via Zoom to address any student questions on both course content and assignments. Before each event, students will have to send in **one (1) question** to their TA.
 - Live Event #1 - Week 4, Oct. 25 @ 1pm PST
 - Live Event #2 - Week 8, Nov. 21 @ 1pm PST

Assignments 80%

Quizzes (20%)

Each week students are to complete a quiz that tests their competency of the readings and videos for that week. The quizzes have 10 questions with each question worth 1 pt. Types of questions include true/false, multiple choice, matching, etc. Quizzes will be made available every Monday morning at 9am PST and are due every Friday at 11:59 pm PST. Quizzes are to be done completely alone and students found to be sharing answers or working together will fail the course.

Ancient x Modern Reflections (15%)

Students will submit two (2) short 500-word reflections on the following prompt:

Reflection #1: due by Friday of Week 5, 11:59 pm PST

Reflection #2: due Friday of Week 10, 11:59 pm PST

How does the course content connect with contemporary society? What insights can be gained by studying women in the ancient world when looking at present societal conditions? Has the course content changed how you perceive something in the modern world? As we are going through course content, you might find yourself relating certain ancient systems with a present-day situation-- be it personal to the nightly news cycle. Write a **500-word** response delving into these questions further.

If you are referencing modern events, please cite those news articles. If you are making a personal connection, be specific with how the ancient woman or situation relates citing course readings. Using

the first person is expected, but please keep tone formal. No need to include images, but you can if you feel they are needed. Provide link citations for those as well. Think of this as a blog post similar to Prof. Cooney's-- [Ancient/Now--Links to an external site.](#)

Midterm (20%)

The midterm prompts will be released Monday of Week 4. Students are to select two of the three prompts and write 500-word responses for each question and upload via Assignments on BruinLearn by Friday, 11:59 pm PST of Week 4.

Final (25%)

The finals prompts will be released Monday of Week 10. Students are to select two of the three prompts and write 500-word responses for each question and upload via Assignments by Monday, 11:59 pm PST Finals Week.

Course Policies

Late Assignment

If students foresee any issue completing the assigned work by the due date, please contact your TA **PRIOR** to the assignment being due—the earlier the better. Little to nothing can be done after an assignment deadline passes.

Classroom Conduct and Course Content

Bruins conduct themselves with integrity and understand that the quality of their educational experience is predicated on the quality of their academic work and service to the community Bruins hold themselves accountable to the commitments they make and for their conduct. When faced with adversity, Bruins engage in thoughtful reflection and exhibit superior ethical decision-making skills. They respect the rights and dignity of all members of our community by listening attentively, communicating clearly, and remaining open to understanding others and their diverse points of view. Bruins embrace these values, for these are the values of a TRUE BRUIN.

This course covers serious topics that may be difficult to some to listen to or discuss, including violence, sexual assault, and the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. When discussing womens' experience in the ancient world topics such as these sometimes must be discussed. Students should be respectful of their colleagues and discrimination of any type **will not** be tolerated. Additionally, if at any time you are uncomfortable or upset by course content, please feel free to reach out to your TA, TA coordinator, and/or the professor to discuss the situation.

For further information on UCLA's policies on Equity, Diversity and Inclusions see [LINK](#).
Mental health Support: <https://counseling.ucla.edu/>

Student Conduct Code:

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of another person's work (including words, ideas, designs, or data) without giving appropriate attribution or citation. This includes, but is not limited to, representing, with or without the intent to deceive, part or all of an entire work obtained by purchase or otherwise, as the student's original work; the omission of or failure to acknowledge the true source of the work; or representing an altered but identifiable work of another person or the student's own

previous work as if it were the student's original or new work. The use of ChatGPT or other AI tools to generate responses to course assignments is akin to copying an outside source and is considered plagiarism.

This class uses Turnitin. Submissions are screened for improper citations and potential plagiarism. You are expected to turn in original work for this course. Quotes or ideas paraphrased from other work(s) must be properly cited. Taking credit for another's idea or writing is plagiarism and is a violation of the University's Code of Academic Integrity. If you are unsure of how to credit your sources, please ask for clarification. Remember that self-plagiarism is an infraction of the student conduct code. You may not use material you have used in papers for other classes without discussing the matter with your TA. All submitted assignments must be your own original work. Any cases of suspected plagiarism, including AI generation, will be forwarded to UCLA's Dean of Students office for their review.

UCLA's policies on academic integrity and student conduct may be found here:

<http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct-Code>

Center for Accessible Education:

The CAE facilitates academic accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). The ADA stipulates those postsecondary institutions are responsible for providing necessary accommodations when a student discloses a disability. The CAE is tasked with determining the necessary accommodations to facilitate a student's access to instruction and participation in the college academic experience. Faculty members and TAs are important disabilities office partners, as they can help ensure that students have access to the accommodations for which they are approved.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction- Women and Power in the Ancient World

Lecture Videos:

- ☐ Female Inequality Today, Parts I and II – 24 minutes
- ☐ Zeitgeist and Sexual Power, Parts I and II – 53 minutes
- ☐ What is Feminine Power: Case Studies – 31 minutes
- ☐ Analysis of Nature vs. Nurture" readings – 29 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Mann, Michael 1986. The Sources of Social Power, 1-33.
- ☐ Jackson, Robert Max. (unpublished). Chapter 2, Down SO Long
- ☐ Eliot, Lise 2019. Bad Science and the Unisex Brain. *Nature* 566, 453-454.
- ☐ Fuentes, Agustín 2012. Myths about Sex. in *Race, Monogamy and Other Lies They Told You*, 156- 206.

Optional:

- ☐ Masters and de Waal. 1989. Gender and Political Cognition: Integrating Evolutionary Biology and Political Science. *Politics and Life Science* 8:1, 3-39.
- ☐ Ingahalikar *et al.* 2013. Sex Differences in the structural connectome of the human brain.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 1 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 2: Women and Power in Agricultural Communities

Lecture Videos:

- ☐ Women and Power in Prehistory, Part I – 36 minutes
- ☐ Women and Power in Prehistory, Part II – 30 minutes
- ☐ Women and Power in Prehistory, Part III – 28 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Kelly, Robert 2013. Men, Women, and Foraging, In *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: the Foraging Spectrum*.
- ☐ Ember, Carol 1983. The Relative Decline in Women's Contribution to Agriculture. *American Anthropologist* 85:2, 285-304.
- ☐ Friedl, Ernestine 1978. Society and Sex Roles. *Human Nature Magazine*.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 2 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 3: Establishing the Patriarchy- Power in the Context of City-states in Mesopotamia and the Levant

Lecture Videos:

- ☐ Patriarchy and Private Property – 20 minutes
- ☐ Mesopotamia – 30 minutes
- ☐ Text Analysis Video: Mesopotamia and Textual Evidence Part I – 25 minutes
- ☐ Text Analysis Video: Mesopotamia and Textual Evidence Part II – 26 minutes
- ☐ Text Analysis Video: Levant and Textual Evidence – 17 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Gaines, Janet Howe 2013. How Bad was Jezebel. *Bible Review*.
- ☐ Gruber, Mayer DATE. Women in the ancient Levant. In Vivante, ed. *Women's Roles*.
- ☐ Nemet-Nejat, Karen DATE. Women in ancient Mesopotamia. In Vivante, ed. *Women's Roles*.

Primary Source Texts:

- ☐ Athaliah and Jezebel: 2 Kings 8:16 – 11:16; 2 Chronicles 22:10 – 23:15
- ☐ Deborah: Judges 4 and 5

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 3 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 4: Female Rule in the Context of a Regional State- Egypt

Lecture Videos:

- ☐ Ancient Egypt, Part I – 22 minutes
- ☐ Ancient Egypt, Part II – 31 minutes
- ☐ Royal Women, Part I – 22 minutes
- ☐ Royal Women, Part II – 16 minutes
- ☐ Royal Women, Part III – 34 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Cooney, Kara 2018, Chapter 3: Hatshepsut, *When Women Ruled the World*.
- ☐ Bryan, Betsy 1996. In Women Good and Bad Fortune are on Earth: Status and Role of Women in Egyptian Culture. In Capel and Markoe, eds. *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven*, 25-46.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 4 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST
- ☐ Submit Midterm Exam by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 5: Female Rule in the Context of Empire- Persia

Lecture Video:

- ☐ Women and Power in Ancient Persia—35 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Briant, Pierre, 2012. "The Women's Side." In *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*
- ☐ Brosius, Maria, "Royal Women and the Achaemenid Court," *Women in Ancient Persia 559-331 BC* (1996), 83-122 (Chapter 4).

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 5 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 6: Female Rule in the Context of Cities- Greece

Lecture Video:

- ☐ Ancient Greece, Part I – 25 minutes
- ☐ Ancient Greece, Part II – 27 minutes
- ☐ Ancient Greece, Part III – 22 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Vivante, Bella, “Women in Ancient Greece,” in: Vivante, *Women’s Roles*, 219-256.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 6 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 7: Female Rule in the Context of Empire- Rome

Lecture Video:

- ☐ The Roman System, Part I – 23 minutes
- ☐ The Roman System, Part II – 25 minutes
- ☐ Women Who Acted Against Rome – 16 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Hallett, Judith P., “Women in the Ancient Roman World,” in: Vivante, *Women’s Roles*, 257-291.
- ☐ Vermeule, Cornelius C. III, “Livia to Helena: Women in Power, Women in the Provinces,” in: Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan Matheson, eds., *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (1996), 17-27.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 7 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 8: Comparing Power Strategies in Egypt- Hatshepsut vs. Cleopatra

Lecture Video:

- ☐ Hatshepsut, Part I – 29 minutes
- ☐ Hatshepsut, Part II – 26 minutes
- ☐ Hatshepsut, Part III– 22 minutes
- ☐ Cleopatra, Part I – 15 minutes
- ☐ Cleopatra, Part II – 23 minutes
- ☐ Cleopatra, Part III – 16 minutes
- ☐ Cleopatra, Part IV – 24 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Cooney, When Women Ruled the World (Chapters 3 and 6)

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 8 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 9: Female Rule in the Context of Empire- Ancient China

Lecture Video:

- ☐ Women and Power in Ancient China–18 minutes
- ☐ Lady Fu Ho–9 minutes
- ☐ Empress Lu–11 minutes

Readings:

- ☐ Kinney, Anne Behnke, “Women in Ancient China,” in: Vivante, *Women’s Roles*, 3-34.
- ☐ Dash, Mike, “Past Imperfect: The Demonization of Empress Wu,” in *Smithsonian*. <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/history/2012/08/the-demonization-of-empress-wu/>Links to an external site.
- ☐ Watson, Burton, *The Records of the Grand Historian of China* (1961), 321-340; 379-392.
- ☐ “Empress Lü Zhi: A Power Hungry Empress,” in *Cultural China*: <http://history.cultural-china.com/en/48History7817.html>Links to an external site.
- ☐ Bret Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China* (2010), chapter 5, 97-115.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 9 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST

Week 10: Female Rule in the Context of Empire- Ancient India

Lecture Video:

- ☐ Women and Power in Ancient India, Part I—25 *minutes*
- ☐ Women and Power in Ancient India, Part II—33 *minutes*

Readings:

- ☐ Karen Lang, “Women in Ancient India,” in: Vivante, *Women’s Roles*, 35-61.

Assignments:

- ☐ Complete Week 10 Quiz by Friday, 11:59 pm PST
- ☐ Submit Final Exam by Monday, Finals Week, 11:59 pm PST