

BASIC PROGRAM of LIBERAL EDUCATION for ADULTS

Summer Quarter 2024

Indo-Iranians from Herodotus

INSTRUCTOR	DATES AND TIMES	LOCATION
Kendall Sharp	COURSE LENGTH: Three Weeks DATES: September 4 - 18	Remote Course
EMAIL: krsharp@uchicago.edu Instructor can be contacted through Canvas message	DAY OF THE WEEK: Wednesday TIMES: 9:30am – 12:45pm	COURSE CODE and SECTION: BASC 80041 24U1 PREREQUISITES: None

Remote courses require you to login to Canvas to access the Zoom Classroom. **You will receive an invitation to join Canvas about a week before your course begins.** Please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts> to find Canvas login instructions, Zoom instructions, and student training sessions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended as a prologue to the alumni sequence, Asian Classical Traditions, especially the autumn and winter quarters, when readings will be drawn from the Indian and Persian or Iranian traditions. Around 2000 BCE, Indo-Iranian speakers emerged in the central Eurasian steppes, invented the chariot, lived the lifestyle of warrior-aristocrats and called themselves Aryans. In time they spread south and west of the Ural Mountains. Some became the predecessors of Indian languages by moving into India, where their descendants composed the Rigveda and other works read in Asian Classical Traditions. The rest became the predecessors of the Iranian languages, by moving into Iran and the western half of the central Eurasian steppes. Several groups of these Iranians are known to us from Herodotus, especially the Persians, but also the Scythians, Thracians, and Cimmerians. Another ancient source for the Persians are the *Gathas*, hymns composed by Zoroaster, who founded the main pre-Islamic religion of Persia, and whom some ancient Greeks credited with inventing philosophy. In the *Gathas*, readers will glimpse a society hardly different from the Indian Rigveda. Reading across all these cultures will reveal similar themes persisting among Indic- and Iranian-speakers centuries after their ancestral languages diverged. These themes include horse sacrifice, cattle raiding, kingship, patriarchy, feasting, ritual drug use, and speculation about the soul and *karma*.

REQUIRED TEXTS: **PDFs of all readings** will be provided on Canvas site for the course.

1. Herodotus, *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*. Penguin Random House, ISBN 978-1400031146.
2. West, Martin, *The Hymns of Zoroaster: A New Translation of the Most Ancient Sacred Texts of Iran*. I.B. Tauris, ISBN 978-1848855052. E-text available [here](#).

Students can purchase books at the Gleacher Center Bookstore online at <https://chicagobooth.bncollege.com/shop/chicagobooth/page/find-textbooks> using the Textbook order form, or by using the ISBN number to order the correct edition elsewhere.

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

DAY	AUTHOR	READING ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 1 September 4	Herodotus	Book 1. 95-140 (pp. 56-74) Book 1. 201-216 (pp. 107-114)
WEEK 2 September 11	Zoroaster	<i>Gathas</i> selected hymns
WEEK 3 September 18	Herodotus	Book 4. 1-144 (pp. 281-339) Book 5. 1-16 (pp. 367-373)

Students will receive an invitation to join the Graham School Student Community Canvas Site, a place to read announcements, have discussions, ask questions, and find resources.

DISABILITY INFORMATION

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class meeting at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.