

## First-Year Seminar 30g: Digging Egypt's Past: Harvard and Egyptian Archaeology

Harvard College/GSAS 108261 (Class Number: 20750)


<https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/125113>

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**Meeting Time: Tuesdays 12:45–2:45pm (14 class meetings + 1 off-campus field trip/dinner)**

**Classroom: Barker 114 (Kresge Foundation Room)**

Mysterious pyramids, colossal royal statues, tiny gold jewelry, decorated tomb chapels, temples, settlements, fortresses, and hieroglyphic inscriptions. This was the excavation legacy in Egypt and Sudan of the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Expedition. Led by Egyptologist George Reisner (1867–1942; new biography just published), this expedition revolutionized archaeological method, and put Harvard Egyptology on the world stage, all during British control of the Egyptian government, French control of Egyptian antiquities, and Egyptian yearning for independence. This course explores 20th century and modern archaeology and Egyptology, racism and decolonization in cultural heritage, Harvard and MFA history, museology and artifact repatriation. Students will visit museum collections, access unpublished archival documents at Harvard and elsewhere, and research archaeological ethics, important expedition sites, staff members, and momentous discoveries.

PHOTO	NAME	DEPT. AFFILIATION	EMAIL & PHONE	OFFICE HOURS
	Peter Der Manuelian	NELC Anthropology Director, Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East	<a href="mailto:peter_manuelian@harvard.edu">peter_manuelian@harvard.edu</a> 617-496-8558	By Zoom video by appointment

## Course Requirements and Final Sat/Unsat Grade Percentages

Weekly readings, field trips & class participation	20%
Several very short writing/looking assignments	20%

Short in-class feedback presentation on your final project topic	20%
8 page final research paper, OR 8-minute iMovie	35%
Possible archival document work; a real-world project!	5%

(iMovie is easy to learn and fun to use. Equipment, training workshops, and experts are ready to help you in Lamont Media Lab. Podcasts improve your writing skills.)

Students must successfully complete all requirements to pass the course. Late Submissions: Without approved arrangements with course instructor *prior* to due date, late submissions will be marked down one-half grade (i.e. A to A-) per day late.

The rules of academic integrity apply to all exams and assignments for this course, as outlined in the Handbook for students:

<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/student-handbook/book/academic-integrity>

### **Collaboration Policy**

You are encouraged to consult with one another on the choice of paper, podcast, or iMovie topics, and you may also share library resources. But you should ensure that the projects you submit for evaluation are the result of your own research and reflect your own approach to the topic.

### **The Harvard College Honor Code**

Certain assignments in this course may permit or even encourage the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT. The default is that such use is disallowed unless otherwise stated. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity—that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing, or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs. For more on academic integrity and dishonesty, see:

<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/student-handbook/book/academic-integrity>

On using sources, see <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/>

Harvard University values inclusive excellence and providing equal educational opportunities for all students. Our goal is to remove barriers for disabled students related to inaccessible elements of instruction or design in this course. If reasonable accommodations are necessary to provide access, please contact the [Disability Access Office \(DAO\)](#). Accommodations do not alter fundamental requirements of the course and are not retroactive. Students should request accommodations as early as possible since they may take time to implement. Students should notify DAO at any time during the semester if adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Peter Der Manuelian, *Walking Among Pharaohs. George Reisner and The Dawn of Modern Egyptology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023 (no need to purchase). Abbreviated below as *Walking*. **See the file on Canvas called “Walking Among Pharaohs\_Chapter Summaries.pdf” for summary abstracts of all 26 chapters.**
- PDF files; free; uploaded to Canvas course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/125113>

#### COURSE SCHEDULE:

UNIT	WEEK	CLASS TOPIC	KEY QUESTIONS / OBJECTIVES	READINGS DUE	ASSIGNMENT
What is Egyptology?	1—Tu Sept. 5	Introductions	Class meet-and-greet. Key themes: <b>Egyptomania vs Egyptology</b> <b>Archaeological method, then and now</b> <b>George Reisner’s legacy</b> <b>Running expeditions</b> <b>Mounting exhibitions</b> <b>Colonialism</b> <b>Racism</b> <b>Repatriation</b> <b>Case studies (sites or people)</b> Short intro on history of Egypt (part 1)	---	---

	<b>Week 2— Tu Sept. 12</b>	Egyptology ca. 1800–1950. Egyptomania versus Egyptology	Continued: short intro on history of Egypt (part 2) How did Egyptology develop in the century immediately prior to Reisner’s career?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peter Lacovara, “United States of America,” in <i>History of World Egyptology</i>, pp. 406–429 (22pp)</li> <li>● <i>Walking</i> “Introduction” (7pp)</li> <li>● Dows Dunham, <i>Recollections of an Egyptologist</i> (entire; 55pp).</li> </ul>	Due on Canvas Monday, Sept. 11, 12 noon: How has archaeology changed since the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century (1 paragraph).
<b>I. THE EARLY YEARS (1867– 99)</b>	<b>Week 3— Tu Sept. 19</b>	Harvard history	Early career choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Walking</i> Ch. 1, “Midwestern Beginnings and Endings” (10pp)</li> <li>● <i>Walking</i>, Ch. 2, “Go East, Young Man” (17pp)</li> <li>● Reid, <i>Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I</i>, pp. 172–212 (40pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Sept. 18, 12 noon: What’s similar to or different from Reisner about your arrival at Harvard?
	<b>Week 4— Tu Sept. 26</b>	Semitics vs Egyptology; museums; the Hearst Expedition	Unpredictable career twists and turns. Archaeological innovations; relations with locals (Hearst papyrus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Walking</i> Ch. 3, “Conversion in Germany” (18pp)</li> <li>● <i>Walking</i> Ch. 4, “Somebody Needed an Archaeologist” (21pp)</li> <li>● <i>Walking</i> Ch. 5, “The Road Taken” (32pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Sept. 25, 12 noon: What was the Expedition’s new contribution to archaeological method?

<b>II. THE PATH TO THE PYRAMIDS (1899– 1905)</b>	<b>Week 5— Tu Oct. 3</b>	Value of archives; the famous Giza Pyramids	Giza begins! The Big Three divide the site. <b>Role play 1905.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 6, “Chance of a Lifetime: Giza” (19pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 7, “Devastation and Realignment: The Birth of the HU– MFA Expedition” (27pp)</li> <li>• Lehner–Hawass, <i>Giza and the Pyramids</i>, Chapter 3 “Giza in Context,” pp. 35–45 (10pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Oct. 2, 12 noon: How would you have dealt with the money problem in 1904–5?
<b>III. EGYPT, PALESTINE, NUBIA, AMERICA (1905– 13)</b> <b>Class meets in Pusey Archives</b>	<b>Week 6— Tu Oct. 10</b>		Internal strife (Lythgoe); significance of the Menkaure statuary; Oric Bates; Arch. Survey of Nubia; craniometry & racism; lessons of Samaria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 8, “Multitasking across Cultures” (37pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 9, “King Menkaure versus the ‘Pestiferous Sheikhs’ of Palestine” (40pp)</li> <li>• SKIM: Manuelian, <i>Digital Giza: Visualizing the Pyramids</i>, Chapter 2, pp. 28–79 (51pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Oct. 9, 12 noon: Did Albert Lythgoe have a point? Assess the situation.
<b>Class meets in Viz Lab for Giza 3D</b>	<b>Week 7— Tu Oct. 17</b>	VR, AR, new visualization technologies in archaeology	The partage system. Racism; Dows Dunham. Sphinx and popular press; politics of Menkaure statue (1912); racism; FIP stelae; Henry Wellcome; Kerma; reserve heads–Egyptian art/portraiture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 10, “Back to the Classroom” (27pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 11, “Giza Politics, Giza Discoveries” (19pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 12, “Focus on Nubia: The Kerma Kingdom” (32pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Oct. 16, 12 noon: Is E. Minor spot on or too harsh about Kerma?

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. Minor, “Decolonizing Reisner; Kerma Female Burial,” pp. 251–260 (9pp)</li> </ul>	
<b>IV. WAR YEARS (1913– 18)</b>	<b>Week 8— Tu Oct. 24</b>		Nubia; Gebel Barkal; disaster at Nuri. Deir el-Bersha (trouble with locals); broken friendships with German colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Walking</i> Ch. 13, “Archaeology in Wartime: Kerma, Gammai, Deir el-Bersha” (32pp)</li> <li><i>Walking</i> Ch. 14, “A Mystery Solved: The Nubian Pyramids of Gebel Barkal and Nuri” (32pp)</li> <li>Freed et al., <i>Secrets of Tomb 10A</i>, pp. 91– 103, 183–188 (17pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Oct. 23, 12 noon: Should people even do archaeology in wartime? Why or why not?
<b>V. ARCHAEOLOGY AND POLITICS (1919– 26)</b> Case Studies	<b>Week 9— Tu Oct. 31</b>	Modern and ancient racism; biases in Nubian archaeology	Labor relations; Reisner versus Fisher; Gammai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Walking</i> Ch. 15, “The Near-Destruction of Two American Expeditions” (20pp)</li> <li><i>Walking</i> Ch. 16, “The Work is his God”: Gebel Barkal, el-Kurru, and Meroe” (44pp)</li> <li>SKIM: Selected readings (gathered in 1 pdf) from Fisher, Lacovara, Ikram, D’Auria <i>Ancient Nubia. African Kingdoms on the Nile</i> (94pp, with lots of pictures, maps, chronologies, and a glossary); Nubian history essay, then short entries</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Oct. 30, 12 noon: Who was “right”? Fisher or Reisner?

				on HU MFA sites	
Class meets in HMANE (incl. Samaria, Hetepheres throne, Tut throne)	Week 10— Tu Nov. 7	3 in-class presentations on a site or person from HU-MFA Expedition	Hansberry; archaeological photography. Were Nubians actually Libyans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 17, “(Mis)interpreting the Nubians in the Shadow of Tutankhamun” (60pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 18, “Secrets of a Giza Queen” (57pp)</li> <li>• Riggs, “Reborn Digital Tutankhamun” blog (5pp)</li> <li>• T. Kendall, “Racism and the Rediscovery of Ancient Africa,” (3pp.)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Nov. 6, 12 noon: Beyond just the finds, what is Tutankhamun’s overall significance for our story?
VI. NUBIAN FORTRESSES AND GIZA TOMBS (1927– 37) Additional Field Trip and Dinner at MFA on a Thursday or Friday evening	Week 11— Tu Nov. 14	3 in-class presentations on a site or person from HU-MFA Expedition	Breasted vs Reisner (ROLE PLAY?); Mortland & fundraising in archaeology; Nefertiti & repatriation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 19, “Excursus: Showdown with Breasted over Egyptian Archaeology,” (10pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 20, “Fiction, Fundraising, and Hoisting Sarcophagi” (63pp)</li> <li>• Goode, <i>Negotiating for the Past</i>, chapter 5, pp. 99–125 (26pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Nov. 13, 12 noon: Are there arguments to be made for both Breasted and Reisner’s positions?
	Week 12— Tu Nov. 21	3 in-class presentations on a site or person from HU-MFA Expedition	Joseph Lindon Smith and visualization? Reisner’s HU honorary degree; MFA objects overload, museum display issues (what to do?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 21, “Looking Back and Taking Stock” (41pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 22, “Septuagenarian Archaeology” (26pp)</li> <li>• U. Matic, “Decolonizing historiography and</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Nov. 20, 12 noon: What would someone preparing to join Reisner’s expedition need to know about navigating the different situations

				archaeology of ancient Egypt and Nubia,” pp. 19–40 (21pp)	and stakeholders involved?
<b>VII. LEGACIES AT HOME AND ABROAD (1938– 47)</b>	<b>Week 13— Tu Nov. 28</b>	3 in-class presentations on a site or person from HU-MFA Expedition	NBC Broadcast (racism & the red-haired queen?); WWII and archaeology (Borchardt, Steindorff); GAR death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 23, “Virtual and Actual Homecomings” (35pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 24, “Finale” (24pp)</li> <li>• Donald Reid, <i>Contesting Antiquity in Egypt. Archaeologists, Museums &amp; the Struggle for Identities from World War I to Nasser</i>, chapter 9, “Contesting Egyptology in the 1930s,” pp. 263–294 (31pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Nov. 27, 12 noon: How had the political / archaeological climate changed in Egypt by the late 1930s, compared to 1910–1930?
	<b>Week 14— Tu Dec. 5</b>	Concluding discussion	Giza in wartime; what to do with a dig? Assessing Reisner and his legacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 25, “Endgame: Transforming The HU– MFA Expedition” (19pp)</li> <li>• <i>Walking</i> Ch. 26, “Epilogue: Revered or Reviled? Reisner and His Archaeological Impact” (26pp)</li> </ul>	Due Monday, Dec. 4, 12 noon: How would YOU write the Reisner biography differently? What would you choose focus on? <b>Final papers or iMovies due Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023, 5:00pm</b>