



## The concept of time in ancient Egypt

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<b>Start date</b>	13 July 2018	<b>End date</b>	15 July 2018
<b>Venue</b>	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
<b>Tutor</b>	Dr Sarah Symons	<b>Course code</b>	1718NRX069

**Director of Programmes** Emma Jennings  
Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
**For further information on this course, please contact** [clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Sarah Symons is a member of the School of Interdisciplinary Science at McMaster University in Ontario. She teaches aspects of history of science, science communication, mathematics, and astronomy. She is interested in innovative teaching methods and is an instructor in Integrated Science, an undergraduate degree programme taught by research. Her own main field of research is ancient Egyptian astronomy. She is also Director of the William J. McCallion Planetarium in Hamilton, Ontario.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	<b>Long time in ancient Egypt</b>
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	<b>Years and months: the Egyptian calendars</b>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	<b>Archaeological dating: a puzzle for the ages</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	<b>The hour-watchers: water clocks and sundials</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	<b>Cycles in the sky: time in texts</b>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	<b>Cycles in the sky: time in tables</b>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	<b>Temples and tombs: a tour of time</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

The course aims to

- discuss the concept of “time” in ancient Egypt
- outline what we know and can support with evidence
- illustrate some problematic areas and gaps in our knowledge
- add context to our understanding of ancient Egyptian society and culture

### Content:

How did the ancient Egyptians describe and measure time? This course examines the evidence for ancient Egyptian time and date measurement. We will investigate calendars, ways times and dates were recorded, time measuring instruments and tables, and texts concerning timekeeping. We also will look at ways we can piece together “who did what when” in ancient Egypt.

### Presentation of the course:

The course will be a mixture of lectures and activities, with each session having active components. Where possible, timekeeping methods will be modelled or demonstrated using software, cardboard, or wooden models, giving students the opportunity of trying out timekeeping methods themselves. We will also look at texts from ancient Egypt and learn to read and write dates.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- understand the structure of the Kingdom/Dynasty chronology
- describe some methods used for dating materials and sites
- identify and read dates written in hieroglyphic script
- list and describe the major timekeeping methods used in ancient Egypt

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
Clagett, M	<i>Ancient Egyptian Science vol. 2: Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy.</i>	American Philosophical Society 1995

Browsing through this book (particularly the plates) gives an overview of the types of texts and objects we will be discussing. The book by Clagett (above) is available for reading online in full at <https://books.google.ca/books?id=xKKPUpDOTKAC>

Symons, S.L., Cockcroft, R., Bettencourt, J. and Koykka, C.,	<i>Ancient Egyptian astronomy.</i>	2013.
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[Online database] Ancient Egyptian astronomy. Available at: <<http://aea.physics.mcmaster.ca/>>.

Hornung, E., Krauss, R. and Warburton, D.A. eds.,	<i>Ancient Egyptian chronology</i> illustrated edition ed Handbook of Oriental Studies	Brill Academic Publishers.2006
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**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 05 October 2017