Whereas antiquarians let the sources set their agenda, historians start with questions. As a preparation for the serious study of Ancient History at honours level, his module aims to make students better historians through close study of a selection of challenging and innovative works of scholarship. Each week students will read a book or article that revolutionised its field. They will learn that major advances often involve posing entirely new questions or finding novel ways of approaching familiar problems. They will learn the value (and the limits) of models, theory and different types of evidence. They will finish with a clearer appreciation of the wide range of approaches open to ancient historians and the importance of choosing between them.
This module looks in detail at the history of the Achaemenid Persian empire, a looming presence in Greek history, from its beginnings under Cyrus the Great in the mid-sixth century until the conquests of Alexander the Great. Use will be made of all available sources of evidence including Persian art, architecture and royal inscriptions, but a particular focus will be placed on the difficulties in using Greek literary evidence in the reconstruction of Persian history. The module will focus on a number of key episodes: including Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, Darius' accession, the Persian wars, and Alexander's conquests, but will also look at themes including the royal court, imperial ideology, the role of women, and the response to empire of Persia's subject peoples.
Between 479 and 362 BCE Athens, Sparta and later Thebes and Thessaly contested the rule of Greece through imperial expansion and ideological dominance, leading to both constant warfare as the states struggled for power, and huge progress in philosophy and the arts brought about by the force of competition. This module studies the fifth- and fourth-century empires of Athens and Sparta and their effects on the Greek world at large. The period is exceptionally rich in sources - the histories of Thucydides and Xenophon, Athenian tragedy and comedy, inscriptions, coinage and art - and the module uses these to investigate themes such as political development and dissent, the relations between Greeks and outsiders, and the expression of ideological dominance.

Programme module type: Optional for all Ancient History Degrees, all Ancient History & Archaeology Degrees, Classical Studies, Classics, Greek and Latin (Single and Joint, but excluding Three subject) Degrees, History.

Pre-requisite(s): Permission of the Classics Honours Adviser.

Learning and teaching methods and delivery: Weekly contact: 1 x 2-hour seminar.

Scheduled learning: 20 hours  
Guided independent study: 280 hours

Assessment pattern: As defined by QAA:
Written Examinations = 50%, Practical Examinations = 0%, Coursework = 50%

As used by St Andrews:
3-hour Written Examination = 50%, Coursework = 50%

Re-Assessment pattern:

Module Co-ordinator: Dr S Lewis

Lecturer(s)/Tutor(s): Dr S Lewis

See also Classics, Greek and Latin