

Anthropology 1544: Ancient Civilizations

An Archaeological Perspective

Spring, 2025

Instructor

Tao Shi

Office

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Email

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Office Hour

Tuesday 12:00-14:00

Thursday 12:00-14:00

Or by appointment

Lectures

Humanity Building, Third District, 101, Thursday 19:20 – 21:55

Recitation

N/A

Textbook:

Price, Douglas T. and Gary M. Feinman. 1993. *Image of the Past*. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Renfrew, Colin, Paul Bahn and Elizabeth DeMarrais. 2024. *Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. [fifth Edition]. London: Thames & Hudson.

Teaching Assistant

N/A

Prerequisite

This course is designed to introduce the basic knowledge of ancient civilizations under the perspectives of archaeology. No prerequisite knowledge is required for students.

Course Description

This course explores ancient civilizations through the lens of archaeology. We will examine the rise and fall of major civilizations across the world, investigating their material remains, cultural practices, technological innovations, and social structures. The course emphasizes archaeological methods and interpretations that allow scholars to reconstruct the past. Civilizations covered may include Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, and American civilizations. Class readings and lectures will provide a basic understanding of ancient civilizations during which time ancient culture and traditions were invented and re-invented.

Course Objectives

This course aims to first introduce the fundamental theories and methods of archaeology, and second, to introduce key archaeological findings and their roles in understanding ancient civilizations. I will introduce the key archaeological findings in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, and American civilizations, trying to provide a comparative analysis of different societies and their developments. I will also engage students in critical discussions about archaeological reasonings by providing topics about cultural heritage. Students are expected to analyze the development of ancient civilizations based on lines of archaeological evidence.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will be able to understand ancient societies through the lens of archaeology.
- 2) Students will be able to make a comparative analysis of the social, political, and technological developments of ancient civilizations.
- 3) Students will be able to evaluate the importance of archaeological evidence and its roles in understandings of ancient societies beyond text.

Grade Determination

Participation: 10%
Attendance: 10%
Quizzes: 20%
Presentation: 30%
Final Exam: 30%

Exams:

June 26th, 19:20 – 21:20, Humanity Building, Third District, 101

Quizzes:

Students will have two quizzes, which will test students' basic knowledge that is taught in classes.

Attendance:

It is mandatory that students attend and participate in all classes. If students cannot attend the classes, they must submit a written request for leave signed by the college.

Make-Up Policy:

N/A

Material Covered: The sequence of the sections covered in this class is:

Week	Contents	Descriptions
1 (02/27)	Course introduction, basic	Introduce the basic requirements and contents of this course. Introduce basic theory and methods of archaeology.

	theory and methods of archaeology	Reading Materials: Renfrew, Colin, Paul Bahn and Elizabeth DeMarrais. 2024. <i>Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice</i> . [fifth Edition]. London: Thames & Hudson.	
2 (03/06)	Basic theory and methods of archaeology	Continue to introduce the basic theory and methods of archaeology Reading Materials: Renfrew, Colin, Paul Bahn and Elizabeth DeMarrais. 2024. <i>Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice</i> . [fifth Edition]. London: Thames & Hudson.	
3 (03/13)	Chinese civilization	The origin of Agriculture to the evolution of complex societies in China Reading Materials: Liu, Li and Xingcan Chen. <i>The Archaeology of China: from the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3-6.	
4(03/20)	Chinese civilization	The state formation in Neolithic China Reading Materials: Liu, Li and Xingcan Chen. <i>The Archaeology of China: from the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.	
5 (03/27)	Chinese civilization	The Bronze Age in China Reading materials: Liu, Li and Xingcan Chen. <i>The Archaeology of China: from the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 8-10.	
6 (04/03)	American civilization	North American Civilization Reading materials: Pauketat, Timothy R (Ed.). 2012. <i>The Oxford Handbook of North American Archaeology</i> . Oxford: the Oxford University Press.	Quiz 1: At the beginning of this class
7 (04/10)	American civilization	Mesoamerican Civilization. Reading materials: Nichols, Deborah L. and Christopher A. Pool (Eds.). 2012. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology</i> . Oxford: the Oxford University Press.	
8 (04/17)	American civilization	South American Civilization Reading materials: Silverman, Helaine and William H. Isbell (Eds.). 2012. <i>Handbook of South American Archaeology</i> . Springer.	
9 (04/24)	Near East civilization	Origin of agriculture to Ubaid period Reading materials: Roux, Georges. <i>Ancient Iraq</i> . London: Penguin Books. Chapter 1-4.	
10 (05/1)	Labor Day Holiday	None	

11 (05/08)	Near East civilization	Sumerian Civilization to Hittite Empire Reading materials: Roux, Georges. <i>Ancient Iraq</i> . London: Penguin Books. Chapter 5 – 17.	
12 (05/15)	Near East civilization	Assyrian empire to Alexander the Great Reading Materials: Roux, Georges. <i>Ancient Iraq</i> . London: Penguin Books. Chapter 18-25.	
13 (05/22)	Egyptian civilization	The introduction of agriculture to the Middle Kingdoms Reading Materials: Bard, Kathryn A. 2015. <i>An Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt</i> . Oxford: Wiley Blackwell. Chapter 4-7.	Quiz 2: At the beginning of this class
14 (05/29)	Egyptian civilization	The New Kingdom to Ptolemaic dynasty Reading Materials: Bard, Kathryn A. 2015. <i>An Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt</i> . Oxford: Wiley Blackwell. Chapter 8-10.	
15 (06/05)	Indus civilization	Origin of Agriculture and the Neolithic Age Reading Materials: Possehl, Gregory L. 2002. <i>The Indus Civilization: A contemporary Perspective</i> . Lanham: Altamira Press. Chapter 1-2.	
16 (06/12)	Indus civilization	Harappan Civilization and Mohenjo-daro Reading Materials: Possehl, Gregory L. 2002. <i>The Indus Civilization: A contemporary Perspective</i> . Lanham: Altamira Press. Chapter 3, 8, 11, 13.	
17 (06/19)	Students' activities	Students' presentation	
18 (06/26)	Final Exam	Humanity Building, Third District, 101, Thursday 19:20 – 21:55	