Introduction

This course will introduce you to the ways that archaeologists use material remains, including artifacts, “ecofacts”, and features, to reconstruct how people lived in the past and how human cultures have changed through time. The course will survey world prehistory from the earliest use of stone tools (about 2.6 million years ago) to the present. Major issues that will be addressed include the evolution of modern human behavior, the beginnings of agriculture and animal husbandry, and the development of cities and states.

Textbook:


Course Requirements:

The course will include three in-class exams, as well as a short (2000-2500 word) research paper on a topic of your choice related to the course material. The paper is due on December 3. The three exams and the paper are each worth 20% of your grade. In addition, the lab is a required part of the course, and your participation in the lab is also worth 20% of your grade. There is no final exam.

Syllabus

9/3 Introduction: The Nature of the Archaeological Record

9/8 Introduction to archaeological methods: finding and excavating sites, Reading: Chapter 1

9/10 The discovery of prehistory: A short history of archaeology, Reading: Chapter 2

9/15 The beginnings of the archaeological record, Reading: Chapter 3.
9/17  The Lower Paleolithic in Africa and Out of Africa I
9/22  The Lower Paleolithic in Europe and Asia
9/24  Visit to the AMNH Hall of Human Origins
9/29  The Middle Paleolithic and the archaeology of the Neanderthals, Reading: Chapter 4.
10/1  Origins of modern humans, Reading: Chapter 5.
10/6  Paleolithic Art
10/8  Exam 1, covering Chapters 1-5
10/13 Fall Break—no class
10/15 The initial human settlement of Australia Reading: Chapter 6.
10/20 Peopling of the Americas
10/22 Post-Pleistocene adaptations--Mesolithic Europe, Reading: Mesolithic chapter on Classes
10/27 Agricultural origins--theories
10/29 The Natufians and agricultural origins in the Near East, Reading: Chapter 7
11/3  Agricultural origins in the Americas, Reading Chapter 8
11/5  Agricultural origins in elsewhere; consequences and spread of farming, Reading Chapter 9
11/10 The rise of complex urban societies
11/12 Complex societies in Mesopotamia, Reading: Chapter 11
11/17 Complex societies in Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa
11/19 Exam 2, covering Chapters 6-9; Chapter 11 is not on the exam!
11/24 Urbanism in South Asia: the Indus Civilization. Reading: Chapter 12
11/26 Later Prehistoric Europe: social complexity before the Greeks and Romans, Reading: Chapter 10
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>The beginnings of Urbanism in Mesoamerica, Reading: Chapter 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Complex societies in Peru and the Andes, Text: Chapter 14; your paper is DUE TODAY</td>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td>Archaeology in the Pacific, Polynesian migrations, the settlement of Hawai‘i, the emergence of complex societies and state formation in Hawai‘i</td>
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<td>12/10</td>
<td>Exam 3 covering chapters 10-14</td>
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