



ARTS

SEMESTER 1, 2020 **Course Information**

- **Course Coordinator**

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Office HSB 853, office hour Thursday 12-1 pm or by appointment

- **Course delivery format**

2 hours of lectures (Thursday 10am-12pm) and a 1 hour tutorial, including the weekly quiz (Friday 9-10am). See course schedule for more details on the class locations.

Summary of Course Description

The Origins of Civilisation is a course about changes in the late Pleistocene and Holocene (approximately the last 20 000 years) that had a profound impact on humanity. During this time, some communities shifted from a hunter-gather way of life to village based agricultural one. Popular accounts see this transition as a revolution, an inevitable progression from simple to complex societies. However, as we shall learn in the course, no such unilineal progression occurred. The notion of a 'transition' implies two clearly defined categories – simple societies before and complex societies afterward perhaps with an 'intermediate' form in the middle. The aim of this course is to deconstruct this simple linear view. We will consider what socio-cultural changes were involved as Holocene societies developed North Africa and southwest Asia. A second aim is to consider the nature of the relationship between humans and the environment. The transition from the Late Pleistocene to the Holocene was a period of marked environmental change. Modern climatic patterns were established but also the nature of human impact on the environment shifted, including their interaction with different plants and animals. We will consider what practices were sustainable and which led to substantial changes in the relationship between people and the environment.

Course outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will have the opportunity to:

- acquire knowledge of archaeological concepts relating to human environment interrelationships, including changes in subsistence patterns
- acquire knowledge of archaeological concepts of state formation

- understand and carry out critical evaluation of different theories of the origins of food production and the origins of 'civilisation'
- acquire skills in writing, critical thinking, and academic literacy

Readings:

The course readings will be available on Talis via Canvas.

Assignments:

This paper has a two hour exam at a date to be announced (40% of the final grade).

Reading quizzes (the best 5 grades will be counted (10%).

The other 50% of the course assessment consists of two assignments each worth the same mark (25% each). Both are research assignments, they ask you to search for literature yourselves using the library resources rather to rely on the material provided to you in class. The assignments are a chance for you to develop your investigative skills. Your grade will reflect the effort you put in to the research process.

Faculty guidelines indicate that undergraduate course assessment should total 5,000 (2nd year) words for a 15 point course. Each hour of examination is counted as 1,000 words. Therefore the two written assignments should be 1,500 words each.

Assignment 1 (25%)

- Discuss one of the major theories for the domestication of plants and/or animals. How has this theory been applied to archaeological assemblages? What are some critiques/limitations to applying this theory?
 - E.g. Gordon Childe's Oasis Hypothesis, Kent Flannery's Broad Spectrum Revolution, Lewis Binford's Edge Zone Hypothesis, David Rindos' Selective Coevolution, Optimal Foraging Theory, Niche Construction Theory

Due, Monday 6th April (Week 6) 11.59pm on Canvas only.

Assignment 2 (25%)

- Discuss one of the major theories for the origins of complex states or civilisations. How has this theory been applied to archaeological assemblages? What are some critiques/limitations to applying this theory?

- E.g. Karl Wittfogel's Hydraulic Hypothesis, Robert Caneiro's Circumscription Hypothesis, Marvin Harris' Cultural Materialism, Cultural Evolution

Due, Monday 11th May (Week 9), 11.59pm on Canvas only.

Final Exam (40%)

The final exam is two hours long and will consist of essay questions relating to lecture content and readings discussed in the course.

Workload:

The University of Auckland's expectation on 15-point courses, is that students spend 10 hours per week on the course. Students manage their academic workload and other commitments accordingly. Students attend two hours of lectures each week and a one-hour tutorial from week 2 of semester. This leaves seven hours per week outside the classroom to complete readings (3 hours approx.), prepare for discussions, assignments and the exam (4 hours approx.).

Deadlines and submission of coursework:

There are many reasons why we sometimes don't get work finished on time. If you need help or more time to complete your assignment, please don't hesitate to approach us to work with you to figure out a plan to get your work submitted. Please see Canvas for detailed policy on late work.

Course Schedule:

Please see Canvas for more detail each week including readings.

Week 1

This week we cover an introduction to the course including an overview of content and assessments, and key concepts for the course.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: No class

Week 2

This week we examine the archaeological background to Northeast Africa and the southwest Asia and palaeoclimate of the end of the Pleistocene and Early to middle Holocene.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 3

This week we examine the domestication of plant and animals in southwest Asia during the Neolithic, including different species domesticated, processes involved, and how archaeologists' document this phenomenon.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Assignment tutorial

Week 4

This week we examine different theories on the development of food production and changes in subsistence.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 5

This week we examine how archaeologists' document past settlement pattern and the changes associated with the domestication of plants and animals and the rise of food production.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 6

This week we examine the evidence for religion and ideology in the Neolithic period of southwest Asia and Northeast Africa.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: No class

Assignment 1 due Monday 6th April

MID SEMESTER BREAK

Week 7

This week we examine the archaeological background to Northeast Africa and the southwest Asia and palaeoclimate during the periods of state formation.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 8

This week we examine the archaeological evidence for agricultural intensification and sustainability during the period of state formation.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 9

This week we examine the archaeological evidence for urbanisation and possible social and environmental impacts of communities living in concentrated groups during the period of state formation.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Assignment 2 due on Monday 11 May

Week 10

This week we examine the ways archaeologists' document social organisation in the past and examine the evidence for changes in social organisation during the period of state formation.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 11

Economic change is often considered critical to the rise of complex states. This week we examine the archaeological evidence for changes in craft production and trade during the period of state formation.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

Week 12

This week we review the course and prepare for the final exam.

Thursday: Lecture

Friday: Tutorial

In the classroom

Discussion and Decorum: Some of themes in this course can provoke debate and sometimes be a difficult to talk about sensitively and meaningfully. However, we (the teaching staff) believe that speaking and listening to others is an important part of learning, so we will encourage discussion and expect participation.

Our expectation is that in class we will each think, discuss and debate as anthropologists. That is, we use concepts that are scholarly, are conscious of the language we use, as well as the way that our personal values and experiences are reflected in our views. Please be careful and sensitive when you talk about race, gender, class, faith, sexuality etc. Avoid inflammatory or exclusionary language. We reserve the right to ask you to reframe or refrain if, in our opinion, your contribution does not meet these criteria.

Honesty in coursework

Plagiarism can involve direct copying, paraphrasing, or not acknowledging your indebtedness to 'books, articles, the Internet, and other students' work. This specifically includes essays from previous years or essays purchased from online sources. Using work from either of these sources is academic cheating. You also may not submit work you have produced for another course (self-plagiarism).

Wherever you make use of the work or ideas of other people, published or unpublished, you must properly acknowledge and cite it. You would usually acknowledge material by providing a reference, in brackets in the text to the source and then providing a list of references at the end of the essay.

The University views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence, and will not tolerate cheating, or helping others to cheat. Any instance of cheating will be dealt with through the University of Auckland disciplinary process. The work you submit for grading must be your own work. Where you have used work from other sources, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This also applies to sources on the Internet.

The following chart gives a useful indication of the grading system used for your exam and assignments.

Assesment of Student Learning

Example of a Grading System and descriptors relating to student attainment

GRADE	% VALUE	DESCRIPTION
A + A A -	90 – 100 85 – 89 80 - 84	Work of high to exceptionally high quality showing excellent knowledge and understanding of subject matter and appreciation of issues; well formulated arguments based on strong and sustained evidence; maps and diagrams, graphs and tables, etc included where appropriate; relevant literature referenced; high level of creative ability, originality and critical thinking; excellent communication and presentation skills.
B + B B -	75 – 79 70 – 74 65 - 69	Work showing good to strong grasp of subject matter and understanding of major issues though not necessarily of the finer points; arguments clearly developed and based on convincing evidence; relevant literature referenced; evidence of creative ability, originality and critical thinking; good communication and presentation skills.
C + C C -	60 – 64 55 – 59 50 - 54	Work showing a knowledge of subject matter and appreciation of main issues though possibly with some lapses and inadequacies; arguments developed and supported by some evidence and references; creative ability, originality and critical thinking present but limited; adequate communication and presentation skills.
D + D	45 – 49 40 - 44	Work lacking breadth and depth. Work generally has gaps. Frequently work of this grade takes a simple factual approach and understanding and coverage of material is inadequate; does not attempt to interpret the material; at the lower end, indicates a need for considerable effort to achieve improvement; communication and presentation skills are poor.
D-	0 - 39	Highly unsatisfactory. Work shows a lack of knowledge about and understanding of the topic. Inadequate in degree of relevance, sometimes completeness, sometimes both. Communication and presentation skills are weak.