

ARCHAEOLOGY 401

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE NEAR EAST

Fall 2008

Instructor: Mary McDonald
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Office hours: Wednesday 3:30-4:30 pm or by appointment
Lectures: TR 11:00 pm SS 006

Course description

This course is a survey of the prehistory of the Near East, starting with the earliest traces of human activity up to the Bronze Age. Geographically, the focus will be on the Levant and Greater Mesopotamia, although occasionally we will range from Egypt through Arabia to the Indus. We will examine current controversies such as the “Out of Africa” debate, and that surrounding the Middle-Upper Palaeolithic transition. For the latter part of the sequence, the emphasis will be on the beginnings of agriculture and village life, and the rise of cities and the state. Related topics to be touched upon include the history of archaeological research in the area, and the quality of evidence available for different times and places.

Course material will consist of formal lectures and assigned readings from a prepared reading package and from other sources. There will be two mid-terms, a take-home final, and a research paper.

Required text:

ARKY 401 Reading Package.

Course evaluation:

- 15% First mid-term exam (Tuesday October 7)
- 20% Second mid-term exam (Thursday November 6)
- 35% Research paper (due Thursday, November 20)
- 30% Take-home exam (due Friday, December 5)

Grading scheme (%):

A+, A	85-100	B+, B, B-	79-70	D+, D, D-	59-50
A-	80-84	C+, C, C-	69-60	F	<50

Research paper:

A 12-15 page research paper, worth 35 points, is required, on a topic approved by the instructor. It is due on Thursday November 20. A research paper should involve on average at least one source per page of text, so at least 12 different published sources, from scholarly journals, monographs or web sources. I suggest you use the referencing format found in *American Antiquity*, which you can find at www.saa.org/Publications/StyleGuide/styframe.html
No plastic binders or holders, please! Number your pages and staple them together. Also, of course, avoid plagiarism.

Suggested topic areas:

- A critical analysis of a major site that has been comprehensively published, such as ‘Ubeidiya, Tabun Cave, Boker Tachtit, Nabta Playa or Çatalhöyük.
- New approaches to the study of stone tools in Near Eastern Prehistory.
- Burials in the Middle Palaeolithic.
- Problems surrounding the Middle-Upper Palaeolithic transition.
- Role of environmental change in the switch to food production.
- Disease and/or dietary consequences of the Neolithic Revolution.

Outline of weekly topics and readings:

Week 1: Introduction. Modern climates and environments, time scales and frameworks.
Read: Reading package #1 (Sherratt in *Antiquity* 71 [1997]:271-87).

Week 2:

The Lower Palaeolithic and the initial spread out of Africa.
Read: #2 (Bar-Yosef in *Journal of World Prehistory* 8 [1994]:211-265.)

Week 3: The Middle Palaeolithic.

Read: #3 (Bar-Yosef et al. in *Current Anthropology* 33 [1992]:497-550)
Copeland in Wendorf, F. & A.E. Marks, *Problems in Prehistory: North Africa and the Levant*.

Week 4: The rise of *Homo sapiens sapiens* and the Neanderthal controversy.

Read: #4 (Shea in *Evolutionary Anthropology* 12 [2003]:173-187);
#5 (Marks in *Advances in World Archaeology* 2 [1982]:51-98)
Various items in *Current Anthropology* 39 (Supplement), June 1998.

Week 5: Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers: linear evolution or parallel cultures.

Read: #6 (Gilead in *Journal of World Prehistory* 5 [1991]:105-154)

Week 6: The Epipalaeolithic and the Natufian: precursors to agriculture.

Read: #7 (Neeley); #8 (Bar-Yosef)

Week 7: The Neolithic: definitions; explanations; methodology in its study.

Read: #9 (Rossignol-Stick); #10 (Watson).

Week 8: The Neolithic: the early stages.

Read: #11 (Bar-Yosef & Meadow); #12 (Curry); #13 (Schirmer)

Week 9: The Later Neolithic; Neolithic innovations: architecture; ritual; ceramics; pastoral nomadism.

Read: #14 (Kuijt); #15 (Voigt); #16 (Moore)

Week 10: Neolithic developments in the borderlands: Egypt, South East Europe, Arabia, India.

Read: #17 (Wendorf & Schild); #18 (Meadow)

Tosi, M. The emerging picture of Prehistoric Arabia. *Ann. Rev. Anthropol.* 15 (1986): 461-90.

Week 11: The Chalcolithic; the earliest metallurgy; moving towards complexity.

Read: #19 (Bernbeck); #20 (Levy et al.)

Week 12: Early Bronze Age. Mesopotamia: development of the earliest cities and states.

Read: #21 (Hole); #22 (Algaze); #23 (Oates et al.)

Week 13: Mesopotamia: features of the civilization.

Additional readings and sources:

Journals are good places to look for both paper topics and references. Some of the journals carrying Near Eastern Prehistory include *Anatolian Studies*, *Antiquity*, *Archaeologia*, *Archaeology*, *Biblical Archaeologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Expedition*, *Iran*, *Iraq*, *J. of Anthropological Archaeology*, *J. of Mediterranean Archaeology*, *J. of Near Eastern Studies*, *J. of World Prehistory*, *Levant*, *Paléorient*, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, *World Archaeology*.

A few search engines, web sites:

A good website for maps:

<http://www.wartoft.nu/software/seterra/exercises-2.aspx>

ArchAtlas [great visual discussions via satellite imagery & GIS, compiled by A. Sherratt & students; very good references].

<http://www.archatlas.dept.shef.ac.uk/>

EARTH [excellent resource for origins of agriculture 7 locations of early sites].

<http://acl.arts.usyd.edu.au/projects/earth/>

ETANA [Electronic Tools and Ancient Near Eastern Archives] www.etana.org/

EAWC, The Ancient Near East:

<http://eawc.evansville.edu/nepage.htm>

Çatalhöyük (Anatolia [Turkey])

<http://catal.arch.cam.ac.uk/Catal/catal.html>

Books on Reserve or in Reference: (the first three are in the reference section of the library).

Anchor Bible Dictionary, 6 vols. (1990)

Cambridge Ancient History

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East, vols 1-5 (1997)

Aurenche, O. et al. 1987 *Chronologies in the Near East 16,000 – 4000 BP*, BAR International Series 379 (i & ii).

Bar-Yosef, O. & A. Khazanov 1992 *Pastoralism in the Levant: archaeological materials in anthropological perspective*, Prehistory Press, Madison WI.

Cauvin, J. & P. Sanlaville 1981 *Préhistoire du Levant*, Éditions du CNRS, Paris.

Dibble, H. & A. Montet-White 1988 *Upper Pleistocene Prehistory of Western Eurasia*, U. of Penn. Press, Philadelphia.

Gebauer, A.B. & T.D. Price 1992 *Transitions to agriculture in Prehistory*, Prehistory Press, Madison WI.

Harris, D.R. 1996 *The origins and spread of agriculture and pastoralism in Eurasia*, Smithsonian, Washington.

Mellaart, J. 1975 *The Neolithic of the Near East*, Thames & Hudson, London.

Redman, C.E. 1978 *The rise of civilization*, W.H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco.

Struever, S. 1971 *Prehistoric Agriculture*, The Natural History Press, New York.

Wendorf, F. & R. Schild 1975 *Problems in Prehistory: North Africa and the Levant*, SMU Press, Dallas.