

# DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD CIVILIZATION (ANT 3141)

Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. Michael Heckenberger, Anthropology

T | Period 5-6 (11:45 - 1:40 AM), Turlington 2336

R | Period 6 (12:50 – 1:40), Turlington 2336

Online Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday (1:45 to 2:45 pm).

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## **I. Course Summary**

This is a survey course of the major world traditions and periods of pre-Industrial urban civilization from the earliest examples to recent times. The course considers the origin and development of preindustrial urban civilizations across the globe, how they are portrayed and compared in Western scholarship, and the influences that affected their trajectories, including collapse, such as environment, climate, commerce, and religion. Specific topics include the domestication of plants and animals, the consequences of agriculture, architecture and technology, politics and state formation, ideology and other key aspects of the transition and variation of urban life in the ancient world. It promotes the approach of anthropological archaeology, including Western and Indigenous histories. Throughout the course, you will gain knowledge and skills critical to understanding the processes and debates surrounding the emergence and variation of human civilization in pre-modern (non-Western) varieties from based on case materials from across the globe. This provides the point of departure to consider broader global forces and change, including climate, imperialism, pandemics, the Industrial Revolution, twentieth century globalization, and the future of human civilization.

## **II. Required Readings**

Required Texts:

David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2021.

Paul Bahn, ed. *Incredible Archaeology: Inspiring Places from Our Human Past*. Smithsonian Books, Washington, DC., 2020.

Additional required readings with assignments are listed below and posted on Canvas, as are all links to videos and other web-materials assigned throughout the semester.

### **III. Course Description:**

This class examines the development of preindustrial urban civilizations from the initial transition to settled town life, agricultural food production and subsequent urbanism in various parts of the world. It uses case studies from most major world areas to reflect on general characteristics of urban civilizations, including their form, social groups and relations, symbolic meaning, and historical ecology. Using the diverse case materials, the course will examine the nature of urban civilization and civil society, specifically asking: What forms do cities take, in terms of space and architecture, and the movement of human bodies and social groups? What is the ecology upon which urban societies grow and how is nature “domesticated” by human interventions? How do these societies compare across time and space? What does the diversity through time and space of cities – not only their rise and normal functioning but also decline, conflict, and dysfunction – tell us about what it means to be human or urban?

The course considers the development of scholarly thinking regarding the emergence and growth of urbanism in the ancient world, emphasizing socio-historical diversity and the conflicting views regarding non-Western peoples. The case studies begin with the earliest urban traditions of southwestern Asia, Egypt, Pakistan and India, and China. The Mediterranean and Europe are considered, notably Greece and Rome, and discussed in terms of classical definitions of preindustrial urbanism and the rise of imperialism and globalization. Against this backdrop, other non-Western cases in Africa, SE Asia, and the Pacific are then explored to consider the alternative form and content of pre-modern, non-Western cities in these less well-known regions of the global south. Native American low density urban civilizations and their precursors are the final examples of preindustrial complex societies. In some cases, these conform to Old World definitions of agricultural and urban “revolutions,” such as in the Andes and Mesoamerica, but others, such as North America and lowland South America present novel cases that challenge us to expand our conceptual toolkit to recognize alternative pathways of ancient civilization, like those in Africa, SE Asia and the Pacific discussed previously, as well as alternatives to modernity. Finally, these Native American civilizations will be the point of departure to consider changes in society and nature as these are tied to questions of climate, population growth, pandemics and social equality, including how these impact descendant communities and society at large.

### **IV. Course Weekly Outline & Assignments**

#### Introduction:

Week 1 (Jan 14/16): Introduction

Week 2 (Jan 21/23): Theories about Civilization

*Reading Questionnaire:* Graeber & Wengrow (G&W), skim Chapters 1-3 (due W weekly)

*Video Comment:* Orientalism & Civilization (due W each week)

## Part 1: The Old World

Week 3 (Jan 28/30): Classical Civilizations: Mesopotamia

*Reading Questionnaire: G&W-4, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

Week 4 (Feb 4/6): Field trip 1: the Central and northern Andes (guest lectures).

Week 5 (Feb 11/13): Classical Civilizations: Egypt

*Reading Questionnaire: G&W-5, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Video Comment: Egypt in time of Rameses II comment*

Week 6 (Feb 18/20): Indus and South Asia

*Reading Questionnaire: G&W-6, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Activity 1-Problem Statement*

Week 7 (Feb 25/27): China

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-7, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Activity 2: Project Abstract (Mid-semester Progress presentations).*

## Part 2: The Global South

Week 8 (Mar 4/6): SE Asia and Pacific

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-8, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

Week 9 (Mar 11/13): Sub-Saharan Africa

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-10, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Video Comment: Ghana and Mali Empires*

*Activity 3: Project Outline*

Week 10 (Mar 25/27Apr 1/3): Native North America

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-9, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Video Comment: Pauketat lecture on Cahokia and religion*

Week 11 (Apr 1/3): Mesoamerica/Andes Recap

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-11, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Activity 4: PowerPoint presentation draft*

Week 12 (Apr 8/10): Andes/Amazonia

*Reading Questionnaire: D&W-12, Incredible Archaeology readings (tba)*

*Video Comment: Lost Cities of the Amazon*

Final Presentations/Conclusions:

Week 13 (Apr 15/17): Final Presentations

*Activity 5: PowerPoint presentations.*

Week 14 (Apr 22): Final Presentations and Conclusions

## **VI. Evaluation**

Participation (18 points) is expected in classroom discussion, including conducting reading and video assignments on time. We will meet in class, unless synchronous Zoom attendance is announced for some classes. Attendance is required. Five unexcused absences are permitted before up to 2.5 points per/day may be deducted from the final grade (10 points).

Reading Questionnaires (25 points): There are also summary questionnaire responses required for 9 reading assignments (first is worth 1 point, other from textbook are worth 3 points each). At the end of each questionnaire, you will be asked to write an essay up to 500 words that describes five sites mentioned in chapter or otherwise exemplary of weekly case materials (to be assigned from *Incredible Archaeology*). These are generally due on Wednesdays for Thursday classroom discussion.

Commentaries (22 points): There are 5 comments on videos required (video 1 is worth 2 points, videos 2-5 are worth 5 points each). These are generally due on Wednesdays for Thursday classroom discussion.

Project (35 points): A final PowerPoint project will be developed by each student and presented in class with benchmark assignments for comment required. The project is divided into four assigned activities building toward the final PowerPoint presentation during the final full week of classes. A mid-semester presentation (with or without PowerPoint) will be given at the end of Part 1.

Note: There is a five-day grace period for all assignments but after that missed work or absences must be supported by documentation if not pre-arranged with instructor for full credit.

Evaluation Summary:

1. Attendance and Participation: 18%
2. Reading Questionnaires (8 x 3 points): 25%
3. Video Comments (5 x 4 points): 22%
4. Project: 35%
  - Assignment 1: Problem Statement (2 points)
  - Assignment 2: Abstract (4 points)
  - Assignment 3: Text of slide outline with two initial sources (4 points)
  - Assignment 4: Draft PowerPoint slides (draft for comment; no points)
  - Assignment 5: Final PowerPoint Presentation (25 points)

Overall Grades assigned as (total of 100 points):

A	95-100%	C	73-76.9%
A-	90-94.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B+	87-89.9%	D+	67-69.9%
B	83-86.9%	D	63-66.9%
B-	80-82.9%	D-	60-62.9%
C+	77-79.9%	E	0-59.9%

Please note that policies for calculating grade point averages. See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> for details. Also note that a grade of C- does not count for credit in major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or college basic distribution credit (for further information regarding minus grades go to: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>).

Academic Honesty, Student Responsibilities, Student Conduct Code: Students are required to do their own work on exams. The penalty for cheating is to receive no points for that exam and the incident will be reported to the Student Honor Court. The student is responsible to review the UF Student Responsibilities Guidelines, available online.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to the instructor.