

World Prehistory Fall 2021 Syllabus

Code: 070:112

Credits: 3

Lectures—Mondays and Thursdays, 10:55 am to 12:15 pm Biological Sciences Building, room 205

Instructor

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Teaching assistant

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Pre or Co-requisites

none

Catalog description

An overview of world Prehistory from the first human made tools to the development of farming and herding.

Detailed description

Prehistory is the longest and most unknown period in Human History. Since the first hominin produced a stone tool until the first writing stamped in clay almost three million years of our history has been recorded only in the archaeological record. This course will focus on the early stages of World Prehistory, from the Lower Paleolithic to the Neolithic. In this class, we will explore the evolution of the first cultures in Africa and how the first hominin pioneers migrated Out of Africa. We will see what sort adaptative strategies they developed in Asia and Europe. We will discuss how other hominins evolved outside Africa and developed a distinctive culture, and how these groups were replaced and intermixed once

more with African populations: the modern humans. We will survey the conquest of new continents by the humans in Australia and America, and we will study the how humans have adapted to drastic climatic changes using culture. Finally, we will close the course by analyzing the factors that lead to one of the most fascinating transformations in human history: the Neolithic revolution.

Course-Specific Student Learning Outcome Goals

- To acquire basic knowledge on chronology, geographical location, and meaning of the processes that shaped World Prehistory [EA1 and EA3 see <http://anthro.rutgers.edu/undergrad-program/departement-learning-goals>].
- To be familiar with the current debates in World Prehistory.
- To understand the influence of the Prehistoric Archaeology on the fields of Human Evolution and Archaeology.
- To show written and oral proficiency in discussing the major issues regarding world prehistory. [EA4 and EA5 see <http://anthro.rutgers.edu/undergradprogram/departement-learning-goals>]
- To effectively locate and evaluate scientific sources and effectively use them when constructing arguments

Core Curriculum Goals

- i. Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.

Suggested Texts

1. Scarre, C. (2005). The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

The first part of this book is focused in the early stages of prehistory, whereas the second part deals with recent prehistory. In this course, we will use the first part of the book as a complementary source to classes. Please check the topic list below for further details.

2. The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is an extensive handbook from which only some chapters are selected. The average length of each chapter is around 14 pages plus references. Please check the topic list below for further details.

Grading Structure

Grading will be based on eight quizzes (5% each, 40% in total), three essays (10% each, 30% total), coursework (25%), and attendance/participation (5%). The exams can cover any material presented in the lectures and readings. The exams are non-cumulative, although the students should be familiar with the materials discussed in previous parts of the course.

Optional extra credit (5%) can be obtained by submitting a short essay.

Detailed grading structure

Quizzes

Eight quizzes (5% of the final grade each)

Non-cumulative

The course is broken down into 8 sections, shown in the Topic List portion of this syllabus. A short quiz will be given on the material covered in each section during the first class after the section is completed. Each quiz will have up to 20 multiple choice questions. Questions will be drawn from the PowerPoint slides and lecture content.

Essays

The objective of this assignment is to expand your knowledge on a recent archaeological discovery linked to World Prehistory. Along the course 5 readings will be uploaded in Canvas. You will have to choose 3 of the readings as a subject for your essay. The essay should go beyond the materials covered in class and you must expand them using recent scientific publications. If the reading is a piece of news, you must find, read, and use the original publication for your essay.

Length: Maximum 1,500 words. Minimum 1,000 words. Use word count tools to calculate the length. The maximum and minimum limits are not negotiable and failing to adjust to these limits will affect negatively your grading.

Essays deadlines:

First essay: October 1st

Second essay: November 1st

Third essay: December 1st

Essay structure: The following paper structure is highly recommended, although it is not mandatory:

1. *Introduction to the subject* (Why this subject is important for World Prehistory?)
2. *Materials and Methods used in the original publication* (How they discovered it?)
3. *Results* (What they found?)
4. *Discussion* (What is the significance of the discovery when compared to previous knowledge?)
5. *Conclusions* (What does it change in World Prehistory?)
6. *References*

Figures and tables: Figures and/or tables are expected to support the information provided in your paper. Figure and table captions will not be considered for the count word, but you should keep them as short as reasonably possible.

References: You must support your paper with at least 5 scientific references (Books, book chapters, journal papers, etc.). There is no maximum limit of references. **Wikipedia, personal blogs, or other unreviewed sources will NOT be accepted as valid references.** Every single reference cited in the text must appear in the final list of references, and conversely, all the references in the final list must be cited in the main text or figure captions. The final list of references does not add to the total word count.

These are the main aspects to be evaluated:

1. How you process information from others and translate this information into your ideas using your own words.
2. How updated are your sources?
3. Extend of your survey; how deep you have gone into the details and your bibliographic research
4. The quality of your figures and tables, and how significant are they for your discourse.
5. Paper organization and clarity.

Useful guidance on how to find materials can be found at the Rutgers Libraries "How Do I?" page: https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/how_do_i

Other specialized webs like Web of Science (https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/web_of_science), Scopus (www.scopus.com) or Scienedirect (www.sciencedirect.com) can be used to access journal papers online.

Additional outside resources to understand a scientific paper can be found here: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/09/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-a-guide-for-non-scientists/>

and here:

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/blog/eureka-lab/understand-scientific-paper-delve-its-parts>

Coursework

How can World Prehistory inform on today's challenges?

Five broad subjects in World Prehistory can inform about policy decision-making today:

1. Technology and human evolution
2. Environment-human interactions
3. Inequality
4. Migrations
5. Abrupt environmental changes

You are required to prepare a presentation of 10 to 20 slides discussing the subjects listed above. The presentation should be uploaded in canvas using a PowerPoint file or a PDF, and it has to be self-explanatory (no podium presentation is required). You can team up with your classmates to prepare the assignment. The maximum size of the group is five persons.

In case you decide to join a group for the assignment:

- a. Only one member of the group needs to upload the assignment.
- b. You **MUST** provide the complete list of team members in the first slide.
- c. Once the presentation is submitted, I will not allow for adding or removing team members. No exceptions.

You can find the deadlines for the coursework in Canvas.

Short essay (voluntary extra credit)

Subject: New challenges in World Prehistory

How to: Using the knowledge acquired during the course describe what are the new challenges that will affect World Prehistory in the near future.

Length: Maximum 1500 words

References: at least three references required

Attendance/participation

Attendance and participation will be routinely checked during the course via short surveys on random dates.

Course policies

Academic Integrity: Cheating lowers the value of a Rutgers degree and the learning experience for all students. No form of cheating, including plagiarism, will be tolerated. One commits plagiarism when one represents the text or ideas of others as one's own creation. Please visit the website of the Rutgers Office of

Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>) for a fuller explanation of plagiarism and of the penalties for it. Convicted plagiarists may receive a disciplinary F in the course and possibly face expulsion from the University.

Student Absences: **Students are expected to attend all classes**; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. For absence periods longer than one week you will be directed to see a Dean of Students for assistance to help verify these circumstances. For any other circumstances please contact me.

COVID-19 protocols

In order to protect the health and well-being of all members of the University community, masks must be worn by all persons on campus when in the presence of others (within six feet) and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks must be worn during class meetings; **any student not wearing a mask will be asked to leave.**

Masks should conform to CDC guidelines and should completely cover the nose and mouth:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app.

Topic list and suggested readings

Week 1

Introduction to the course and the history of Prehistory research

Readings: Chapter 1 in Scarre, Christopher. *The Human Past: World Prehistory & the Development of Human Societies*. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2005.

Reading workload: 20 pages

Week 2 and 3

Human origins and the First tool makers

Chapter 2 in Scarre, C. (2005). *The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies*. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

Stone Tool Technology Steven L. Kuhn and Amy E. Clark in Cummings, V. (2014). *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers* (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reading workload: 54 pages

Week 4

Out of Africa 1.0

Chapter 3 in Scarre, C. (2005). The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

Reading workload: 20 pages (40 pages between week 4 and weeks 5 and 6)

Week 5 and 6

The Early Stone Age in Africa, and the Lower Paleolithic in Europe and Asia

Chapter 3 in Scarre, C. (2005). The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

Reading workload: 20 pages (40 pages between week 4 and weeks 5 and 6)

Week 7 and 8

The Middle Paleolithic and Middle Stone Age

Chapter 4 in Scarre, C. (2005). The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

The Neanderthals: Evolution, Palaeoecology, and Extinction João Zilhão in Cummings, V. (2014). The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reading workload: 60 pages

Week 9 and 10

The emergence of Modern Humans and their expansion

Chapter 4 in Scarre, C. (2005). The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

From The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press:

- Modern Human Origins in Africa: A Review of the Fossil, Archaeological, and Genetic Perspectives on Early Homo sapiens Kevin L. Kuykendall and Isabelle S. Heyerdahl-King
- Upper Palaeolithic Hunter-Gatherers in Western Asia Ofer Bar-Yosef
- The European Upper Palaeolithic Paul Pettitt

Reading workload: 42 pages

Week 11 and 12

The Holocene, climatic changes and cultural adaptations

From Scarre, C. (2005). *The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies*. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

Chapter 5 from page 176 to 183
Chapter 6 from page 201 to 212
Chapter 8 from page 265 to 273
Chapter 9 from page 306 to 313
Chapter 10 from page 350 to 361
Chapter 12 from page 392 to 398

Hunter-Gatherers in the Post-Glacial World Vicki Cummings in *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers* (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press:

Reading workload: 51 pages

Week 13 and 14

A new solution: The Neolithic

From Scarre, C. (2005). *The human past: World prehistory & the development of human societies*. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson.

Chapter 6 from page 214 to 233
Chapter 7 from page 235 to 244
Chapter 9 from page 319 to 342
Chapter 10 from page 361 to 365

From *The Oxford handbook of the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherers* (First edition.). Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Plant Domestications David R. Harris
- Animal Domestications Alan K. Outram

Reading workload: 55 pages