

Anthropology 8: The Rise and Fall of Prehistoric Civilizations

Winter 2020

Professor Ryan Collins

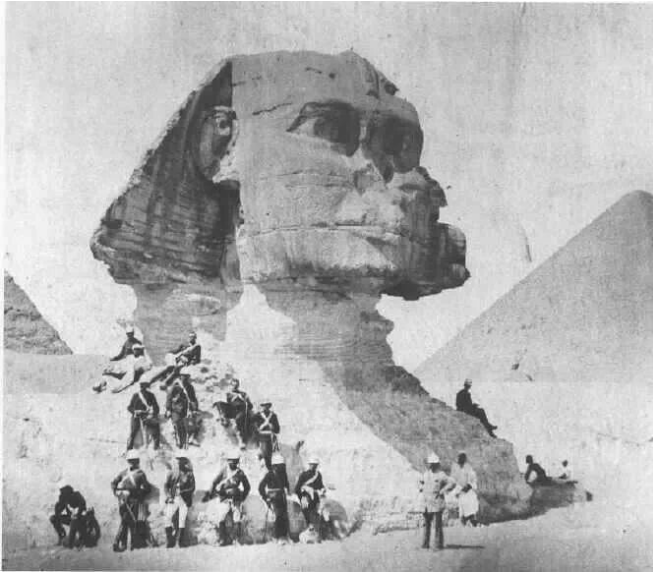
M, W, F 11:30am - 12:35pm

X-Hour T: 12:15-1:05

104 Black Family VAC

Ryan.H.Collins@dartmouth.edu

Office Hours: M & W 12:35-1:40pm,
and by appointment.



I met a traveler from an antique land Who said: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, and wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command, Tell that its sculptor well those passions read, Which yet survive, stamp on these lifeless things, the hand that mockt them and the heart that fed: And on the pedestal these words appear: ‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’ Nothing beside remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away.” - “Ozymandias,” Percy Bysshe Shelley (1817)

I should like to see—and this will be the last and most ardent of my desires—I should like to see the last king strangled with the guts of the last priest. – J. Messelier (a clause in a will, Paris, 1733)

One of the most intriguing questions in the study of human societies is the origins of cities and states or the transformation from small kinship-based societies to large societies that are internally differentiated based on wealth, political power, and economic specialization. Most of our knowledge of early civilizations comes from archaeology. This course examines the explanations proposed by archaeologists for the development of the first cities and state societies through a comparative study of early civilizations in both the Old World and the Americas.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| M | 01/06 | Introductions: Archaeological Approaches to Ancient Civilizations |
| W | 01/08 | Putting the “Art” in Artifact: Human Societies Before Civilization
Discussion Sign Up
In-Class Exercise |
| F | 01/10 | Small-scale societies: From foragers to (and sometimes from) villagers
Reading: S. A. Gregg 1988, Ch 2 in Foragers and Farmers |

PART II: THE SEEDS OF CIVILIZATIONS: VILLAGE LIFEWAYS

- | | | |
|---|-------|---|
| M | 01/13 | From Food-Collecting to Food-Producing: Starvation versus the Garden of Eden?
Reading: J. Diamond Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, Ch1. |
| T | 01/14 | Power, Prestige, and Wealth in Complex Societies: What Is *and is not* “Civilization.”
Reading: M. E. Smith 2009, V Gordon Childe and The Urban Revolution
In-Class Exercise |

W 01/15 The First Farmers: Mesopotamia vs. Mesoamerica
Reading: A. W. Johnson and T. Earle 2000, Ch. 9, the Regional Polity, in “The Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State”
[Discussion](#)

F 01/17 No Class

PART III: OLD WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

M 01/20 No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

T 01/21 Why Do Societies Become More Complex: "Blood and Iron" versus “Sweetness and Light”
Reading: T. Earle, 1997, “The Nature of Political Power.”

W 01/22 The Cradles of Civilization: Mesopotamia and Egypt
Reading: J. Baines and N. Yoffee 1998, “Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia”
In-Class Exercise

F 01/24 The Collapse of the First City-States: Sumerian Civilization
Reading: N. Yoffee 2005, “Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations”
[Discussion](#)

M 01/27 Why Build Big: Egypt’s Pyramids
Reading: C. Scarre and B. Fagan 2008, Egyptian Civilization

W 01/29 Engineering Ancient Cities: Harappan Civilization of the Indus Valley
Reading: G. Possehl, 1998, “Sociocultural Complexity without the State: The Indus Civilization.”
In-Class Exercise

F 01/31 Civilization to Empire: The Unification of Ancient China
Reading: C. Maisels, 2010, Ch. 6, China (Selections)
[Discussion](#)

M 02/03 **EXAM 1**

PART IV: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

W 02/05 Sedentism, Maize, Community, and Religion: A Model for Early Mesoamerica
Reading: A. Joyce and S. Barber 2015, Ensoulment, Entrapment, and Political Centralization
In-Class Exercise

F 02/07 Colossal Heads, Jade, and Chiefdoms: The Olmec
Reading: C. Pool 2007, Ch 2., “Great Stone Faces in the Mexican Jungle.”
[Discussion](#)

M 02/10 Formative Origins and the First Collapse: The Maya
Reading: R. J. Sharer and L. P. Traxler 2016, The Origin of Maya States: Problems and Prospects.

W 02/12 Teotihuacan: Lost Kings and “Where Divinity comes into Being” Work Hard?
Reading: S. Sugiyama 2004, Governance and Polity at Teotihuacan
In-Class Exercise

F 02/14 Ashes to Ashes: Teotihuacan’s Political and Cultural Collapse
Reading: Santley and Alexander 1996, Teotihuacan as a World System
[Discussion](#)

- M 02/17 The Opulence of Classic Maya Civilization
Reading: Chase and Chase, “Complex Societies in the Southern Lowlands”
- W 02/19 The Complicated Maya Collapse: Demographic, Political, and Cultural Transformation
Reading: CHOOSE (1) Cowgill, “Concepts of Collapse and Regeneration in Human History”
 Or (2) Diamond, Chapter 5 – The Maya Collapse
 In-Class Exercise

PART V: EARLY EMPIRES

- F 02/21 Empire versus State: Social Order from Greece to Rome
Reading: Zanker 2000, Roman City as Symbol
[Discussion](#)
- M 02/24 The Aztecs: Ideology, Warfare, Imperialism, and Human Sacrifice
Reading: D. Nichols 2004, The Rural and Urban Landscape of the Aztec State
- W 02/26 Inka Imperial Expansion
Reading: Morris 1998, Inka Strategies of Incorporation and Governance
 In-Class Exercise
- F 02/28 Conquest and the Collapse of Empires: Myths and Misconceptions
Reading: W. Restall 2003, Introduction and Ch.6, The Indians are Coming to an End, The Myth of Native Desolation, in “Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest.”
[Discussion](#)
- M 03/02 **EXAM 2**

PART VI: LEGACIES AND CONCLUSIONS

- W 03/04 Rebellions and Resilience: Continuity of Culture:
Reading: A. Magnoni, T. Ardren, and S. Hutson 2007, Tourism in the Mundo Maya: Inventions and (Mis)Representations of Maya Identities and Heritage
- F 03/06 What was Old is New Again: The Memory and Symbolism of Ancient Civilizations
Reading: C. T. Morehart 2012, What If the Aztec Empire Never Existed? The Prerequisites of Empire and the Politics of Plausible Alternative Histories
[Discussion](#)

Take-Home Essay Due Friday Mar. 13th Noon

READINGS: ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Baines, John and Norman Yoffee
 1998 Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In Archaic States, edited by Gary M. Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 199-260. School of American Research (SAR) Press, Houston, TX.

Cowgill, George
 2012 Concepts of Collapse and Regeneration in Human History. In Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology, edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Christopher Pool, pp. 301–307. Oxford University Press, New York. F1219 .O94 2012

Chase, Arlen F., and Diane Z. Chase
 2012 Complex Societies in the Southern Maya Lowlands. In Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology, edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Christopher Pool, pp. 255–267. Oxford University Press, New York. F1219.O94 2012

- Diamond, Jared
1997 *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. Chapter 1 “Up to the Starting Line,” Norton, New York.
- 2005 *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. “Prologue,” pp. 1–24. Viking, New York.
- Earle, Timothy
1997 *How Chiefs Come to Power*, Chapter 1, “Introduction the Nature of Political Power.” Stanford University Press, Stanford. Pp.1–16.pdf
- Flannery, Kent and Joyce Marcus
2012 *Genesis and Exodus*. In *The Creation of Inequality: How Our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire*, pp. 3-18. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Gregg, Susan Alling
1988 *Foragers and Farmers*, Chapter 2, “Mobility, Subsistence, and Social Organization.” Chicago University Press, Chicago. Pp.21–35.pdf
- Johnson, Allen W., and Timothy Earle
2000 Ch. 9, the Regional Polity, in “The Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State.” Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Joyce, Arthur A. and Sarah B. Barber
2015 *Enslavement, Entrapment, and Political Centralization: A Comparative Study of Religion and Politics in Later Formative Oaxaca*. *Current Anthropology*, vol. 56, number 6, pp. 819-847.
- Magnoni, Aline, Traci Ardren and Scott Hutson
2007 *Tourism in the Mundo Maya: Inventions and (Mis)Representations of Maya Identities and Heritage*. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress*, vol. 3, number 3, pp. 353-383.
- Maisels, Charles
2010 Ch. 6 China. In *The Archaeology of Politics and Power: Where, When, and Why the First States Formed*. Oxbow Books, Oxford.
- McAnany, Patricia and Norman Yoffee
2010 *Why We Question Collapse and Study Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*. In *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, edited by Patricia A. McAnany and Norman Yoffee, pp. 1–20. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Morehart, Christopher T.
2012 *What If the Aztec Empire Never Existed? The Prerequisites of Empire and the Politics of Plausible Alternative Histories*. *American Anthropologist*, vol. 114, number 2, pp. 267-281.
- Morris, Craig
1998 *Inka Strategies of Incorporation and Governance*. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary M. Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 293-309. School of American Research (SAR) Press, Houston, TX.
- Nichols, Deborah L.
2004 *The Rural and Urban Landscapes of the Aztec State*. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, edited by Julia A. Hendon and Rosemary Joyce, pp. 265-295. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA.
- Pool, Christopher A.
2007 Ch. 2 “Great Stone Faces of the Mexican Jungle.” In *Olmec Archaeology and Early Mesoamerica*, pp. 34-65. Cambridge Press, Cambridge.
- Possehl, Gregory L.
1998 *Sociocultural Complexity Without the State: The Indus Civilization*. In *Archaic States*, edited by Gary M. Feinman and Joyce Marcus, pp. 261-291. School of American Research (SAR) Press, Houston, TX.

Restall, Matthew

2003 Ch. 6, The Indians are Coming to an End: Myth of Native Desolation. In *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, pp. 100-130. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Santley, Robert S. and Rani T. Alexander

1996 Teotihuacan and Middle Classic Mesoamerica: A Pre-Columbian World System? In *Arqueologia Mesoamericana: homenaje a William T Sanders*, Coleccion Cientifica. Edited by A. G. Mastache, J. R. Parsons, R. S. Santley, and M. C. Serra Puche, pp. 173-94. Mexico, DF: Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia

Scarre, Christopher and Brian M. Fagan

2008 Ch. 4 Egyptian Civilization. In *Ancient Civilizations*, pp. 103-145. Pearson, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle, NJ.

Sharer, Robert J. and Loa P. Traxler

2016 The Origins of Maya States: Problems and Prospects. In *The Origin of Maya States*, edited by Loa P. Traxler and Robert J. Sharer, pp. 1-32. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.

Smith, Michael E.

2009 V. Gordon Childe and the Urban Revolution: a historical perspective on a revolution in urban studies. *Town and Planning Review (TPR)*, vol. 80, number 1, pp. 3-29.

Sugiyama, Saburo

2004 Governance and Polity at Classic Teotihuacan. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, edited by Julia A. Hendon and Rosemary Joyce, pp. 97-147. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA.

Yoffee, Norman

2005 Ch. 6. The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations. In *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*, pp. 131-160. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Zanker, Paul

2000 The City as Symbol: Rome and the Creation of an Urban Image. In E. Fentress, ed. *Romanization and the City. Creation, Transformations, and Failures*. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, supplementary series 38:25-41.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION – THESE LOOK COOL but did not make the final cut.

Boardman, John

2002, *The Archaeology of Nostalgia*, Thames and Hudson, London.

Butzer, Karl

2012 Collapse, Environment, Society. *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences-US* 109: 3632–3639.

Harris, Marvin

1989 Life Without Chiefs. *New Age Journal* Nov/Dec pp. 42–45. On line <http://windward.hawaii.edu/facstaff/dagrossa-p/articles/LifeWithoutChiefs.pdf>

Hendon, Julia A. and Rosemary A. Joyce (eds.)

2004 *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA

Storey, Rebecca, and Glenn R. Storey

2017 Rome and the Classic Maya: Comparing the Slow Collapse of Civilization. Ch. 8, “Validity of the Concept,” pp. 204-231. Routledge, New York. DG78.S85.

Tuner II, B. L., and Jeremy A. Sabloff

2012 Classic Period Collapse of the Central Lowlands: Insights about Human Environmental Relationships for Sustainability. *PNAS* 109: 13908-13914. [org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1210106109](http://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1210106109)

Tainter, Joseph A.

2006 Archaeology of Overshoot and Collapse. *Annual Review of Archaeology* 35: 59–74.

REQUIREMENTS

Lectures and assigned readings are listed on the preceding schedule. Readings should be completed by the dates for which they are listed. The content in our readings is an integral part of the course and will be covered on exams. Some videos may be shown in class at the instructor's discretion.

OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce you to comparative anthropological perspectives on the origins of ancient cities and states. We will discuss current ideas for why these developments occurred, and explore different facets (e.g., economics, politics and warfare, urbanism, monumental architecture, and religion) of ancient cities and states by looking at examples from both the Old World and the Americas. We will consider the development of early empires and reasons for the fragmentation, collapse, and regeneration of ancient states.

EVALUATION

Exam 1 – 25%
Exam 2 – 25%
Essay (Exam 3) – 25%
Weekly Reflection – 15%
Exercises/Discussion (Participation and Preparedness) – 10%

Grading will be based on three exams, weekly reflections (beginning at the end of the second week), and class exercises/in-class discussions (credit/no credit). The first and second exams will consist of identifications and essays. The third exam will be a take-home essay. If you receive an 85% or higher on the first exam, you have the option of substituting a library research paper for the final exam. The research paper must be on a topic related to the course and be approved in advance by no later than the last week of the term by submitting a one - paragraph proposed paper topic and five scholarly references. The paper should be approximately 10 pages in length, 12-point font.

Exams, essays, and papers are evaluated on the basis of clarity, the accuracy of information, appropriate use of examples, and understanding of concepts. The final exam will emphasize material from the second half of the course, but you are expected to maintain knowledge of material introduced during the first half of the course

ASSIGNED READING EXPECTATIONS

Readings assigned are critical for the course, and content from them will be used on exams. As such, reflecting critically on readings is a responsibility shared by each student. Students should come to each class prepared to answer these questions during our routine discussions.

Questions on the readings for each class include:

1. What is the central argument, or thesis, of today's reading?
2. Why is this reading important?
3. How does this reading relate to ideas presented in class discussion or lecture?
4. What is one term you do not recognize in the text or needed to look up to understand?

EXERCISES & DISCUSSION

Each week class exercises will take place on Wednesday. Our exercises will involve student groups thinking critically, taking positions on different debates, and exploring concepts relevant to our lessons. If you miss a class exercise (for excusable reasons), you will be able to submit a short critical write up instead. Discussion of the readings will happen in most classes and will entail critical reflection of the assigned reading for the day. While there is nothing to turn in, participation is expected and noted. Students are expected to have a basic understanding of the reading for each class and be able to answer the four readings questions detailed above.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Reflections are exercises intended to help you prepare for the essay part of exams and guide your studying and reading. The first reflection prompt is listed below as an example. Using Canvas Discussion, reflections prompt will distribute to the class by no later than 48 hours before the assigned date. You are allowed to submit one response late. Your responses will not be graded, but one point will be deducted from your final grade for each missed discussion/exercise. The discussion prompts and responses will help you keep on schedule with readings and cover topics similar to essay questions on exams.

HONOR PRINCIPLE

You are reminded that the Honor Principle applies to all work done outside of class, as well as in-class exams. Research papers and take home-essays, if applicable, should contain citations to the work of others used in preparing your paper/essay following the guidelines laid out in Sources. You are encouraged to discuss the course material with other students outside of class, but the work you submit for exams, essays, and papers must be written by you and reflect your ideas and conclusions and contain citations to other sources where appropriate. In the case take-home essays and papers, you are not to collaborate with anyone else in preparing this work.

I encourage students with disabilities to discuss with me after class or during office hours by the end of the second week of the term accommodations that might be helpful to them. Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please speak with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend class regularly. If you need to miss class because of a scheduling conflict, such as an athletic competition, interview, etc. it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. If you have a conflict with a scheduled exam, you should notify me as soon as you are aware of the problem and by no later than one week before the exam so alternate arrangements can be made.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

Remember Reflection prompts are posted each week and detailed in class by the instructor. Prompts are based on the themes for each week.

01/15: Topic: Origins of Agriculture

Older ideas about the origins of agriculture were based on the notion that farming provided a better alternative to a precarious existence as foragers that gave people more time to develop art, literature, technology, etc., hallmarks of “civilization.” Today many scholars would characterize the development of agriculture as a “devil’s bargain.” Evaluate the merits of the claim that the origins of agriculture were “devil’s bargains” using examples from readings or class lectures. Finally, do you think agriculture today, still relevant in modern state societies, is also modern “devil’s bargain”?

Prompts will be due on the following days in addition to 01/15:

- a. 01/24
- b. 01/31
- c. 02/07
- d. 02/14
- e. 02/21
- f. 02/28