THE BRONZE AGE AND THE RISE OF CIVILIZATION

This course is concerned with the beginnings of civilization and the emergence of the earliest class-stratified societies and their interactions with their less socially developed or "barbarian" neighbors on their periphery. The course begins with a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the archaeological and the earliest historic record for understanding this period of cultural evolution and briefly reviews archaeological evidence documenting the beginnings of food production, settled life, and advances in metallurgy. The course then concentrates on developments in Southwest Asia and the eastern Mediterranean basin, particularly in Mesopotamia and Egypt, which lay the foundation for the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome. The course also examines developments on the northern and eastern peripheries of the Ancient Near East, reviewing the archaeological record for the development of social complexity in South Asia (the so-called Indus Valley civilization) and Central Asia (the so-called Oxus civilization). It also briefly discusses the beginnings of civilization in East Asia and considers the interconnections among complex polities in the eastern Mediterranean basin at the end of the Bronze Age. Finally, the course comparatively examines the rise of civilization in the New World, focussing in particular on developments among the Maya in Mesoamerica and the Inca and their ancestors in western South America. Archaeological evidence will be supplemented with textually derived or historical information wherever possible and comparisons will be made with ethnographically documented early state societies.

Readings assignments are presented thematically below and are extensive but divided into "required" and "suggested" categories. Class discussions will be based upon the former, while the latter may be presented by Mr. Kohl in class or occasionally assigned in advance or in place of another reading. Three quizzes will be given during the term (March 4th, April 15th, and possibly on May 6th), but there will be no final exam. Students should consult with Mr. Kohl about final papers (c. 12-16 pages), which are due at the end of Examination Period on May 17th. A 2 page outline of the paper (not graded) will be due after spring break on March 29th, and students will be asked to make short 10-15 minute oral presentations of what they are researching in April after the second quiz on April 15th. Students are encouraged to select topics of their choice, but these must be approved by the instructor. Grades for the course will be calculated roughly as follows: 1/6 per quiz; 2/6 for the final paper; and 1/6 for class participation and the oral presentation. If the final quiz is not given on May 6th, the grades will be calculated: 1/5/quiz; 2/5 for final paper; 1/5 for class participation and the oral presentation. Students are invited to meet with Mr. Kohl at any time in his office, Pendleton East 345, particularly during his office hours, which are Mondays and Wednesdays 2:45-4:00 P.M.

Books Available for Purchase in the Bookstore

MAS – *Myths of the Archaic State* by N. Yoffee, Cambridge University Press 2005
**MBAE - The Making of Bronze Age Eurasia** by P. Kohl, Cambridge University Press 2009

**AES - The Ancient Egyptian State** by R. Wenke, Cambridge University Press 2009


**EMAR - The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II** by M. Van De Mieroop, 2009

**AI - The Ancient Indus: Urbanism, Economy, and Society** by R. Wright, Cambridge University Press, 2010

**IA - The Incas and Their Ancestors** by M. Moseley, 2nd edition

**AM - Ancient Maya: the Rise and Fall of a Rainforest Civilization** by A. Demarest, Cambridge University Press

**Recommended Books with Assigned Readings**

**AC** – *Ancient Civilizations* by C. Scarre and B. Fagan  
**UEC** – *Understanding Early Civilizations* by B. G. Trigger  
**EA** - *Early Antiquity* ed. by I.M. Diakonoff  
**ESPE** – *Economy and Society in Prehistoric Europe: Changing Perspectives* by A. Sherratt  
**ATA** - *Archaeological Thought in America*, ed. by C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky  
**CAM** - *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East* by M. Roaf  
**CAAE** – *Cultural Atlas of Ancient Egypt* by J. Baines and J. Malek  
**AESH** - *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* ed. by B.G. Trigger, et. al.  
**ACS** – *The Archaeology of City-States: cross-cultural approaches*, ed. by D.L. Nichols and T.H. Charlton  
**BAE** – *Bronze Age Economics: the beginnings of political economies* by T. Earle  
**ECOW** – *Early Civilizations of the Old World* by C.K. Maisels  
**AS** – *Archaic States*, ed. by G.M. Feinman and J. Marcus  
**BYR** – *Beyond the Yellow River* by A. Lawler (.pdf files)

**COURSE OUTLINE**

I. Evolutionary and Historical Perspectives on Early Civilizations: some basic concepts; strengths and weaknesses of the comparative perspective; the nature of the archaeological and early historical record; the Bronze Age classically conceived  
Readings through Feb. 4th:
required readings:
MBAE – chapter 1
AES – pp. 23-30, chapter 7, pp. 326-360
MAS – chapters 1-3

suggested readings:
AC – Part I Background
UEC – Introduction
EA - "Introduction"
AS – chaps. 1-3
BAE – chaps. 1-5, part III

II. The Beginnings of Food Production through the Neolithic Period in West Asia with a consideration of Copper-Age (Chalcolithic) Developments in Southeast Europe
Readings through Feb. 11th:

required readings:
CAM - part I (skim)
MBAE – chapter 2

suggested readings:
ECOW – chap. 3, pp. 80-156
ESPE – section I and chapters 6-8

III. The Urban Revolution in Mesopotamia: ecological setting, settlement distribution, and the appearance of cities; the emergence of writing; political developments - city-states to empire (the so-called Uruk expansion); the development of craft production and the need to procure foreign resources
Readings through March 4th:

required readings:
AMDC - entire
MAS – chapters 4, 5, and 6
MBAE – chapter 3

suggested readings:
CAM - part II
EA – chapters 2-5
ECOW – chap. 3, 156-185
AS – chap. 6
"The Origins of Tell Leilan and the Conquest of Space in Third Millennium Mesopotamia" by H. Weiss (reprint)
"The Organizational Context of Specialized Craft Production in Early Mesopotamian States" by G. Stein and M. James Blackman (reprint)
"Trade, Women, Class, and Society in Ancient Western Asia" by A. Zagarell in *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986): 415-430
"Iran: A Sumerian El-Dorado?" by P.R.S. Moorey (reprint)
*Heartland of Cities* by R. McC. Adams

**1st Quiz: March 4th**

IV. The Eastern Mediterranean Basin and the Rise of Pharaonic Egyptian Civilization: The Nile Valley and the Development of Egyptian Civilization; Egyptian and Mesopotamian Civilization Compared/Contrasted

Readings through March 18th:

**required readings:**
AES – chapter 1 pp. 1-22; chapter 2; chapters 5-6
EA - chaps. 6-9

**suggested readings:**
EA – chapters 13-15
CAAE – pp. 12-21, 30-47, 134-165, 190-219
ECOW – chap. 2
ACS – chap. 3
AS – chap. 7
AESH - entire

V. The Emergence of Secondary States along the Northern and Eastern Peripheries of the Ancient Near East to 1500 BC: developments on the Iranian plateau and Central Asia; the enigmatic Indus Valley Civilization – empire, classless state or stateless civilization; reconceptualizing long-distance Bronze Age exchange and interconnections; the beginnings of civilization in East Asia; the eastern Mediterranean basin at the end of the Bronze Age

Readings through April 15th:

**required readings:**
AI - entire
MBAE – chapter 5
BYR - .pdf files
EMAR - entire

**suggested readings:**
ECOW – chap. 4
AS – chap. 8
ESPE – chapter 18
ECOW – chap. 5
ATA - article by Fairservis
ACS – chaps. 4 and 5
EA - chapters 10 and 18
"Trade and World Systems in Early Bronze Age Western Asia" by C.M. Edens and P.L. Kohl (in Trade and Exchange in Prehistoric Europe, ed. by C. Scarre and F. Healy (xerox)

2nd Quiz: April 15th

VI. Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica: the indigenous development of food production and the rise of civilization in Mesoamerica; early Mayan history and the Postclassic Mesoamerican World; start of student oral presentations – 2 presentations/class beginning on April 22nd:
Readings through April 26th:

required readings:
AM – entire
MAS – chapter 7

suggested readings:
ACS – chapters 9 and 11
AS – chap. 10
AS – chap. 4
ATA - article by G. Willey
"Expansionary Dynamics of Some Early Pristine States" by G. Algaze in American Anthropologist, June 1993

VII. Early Andean Civilization: the beginnings of food production and the rise of civilization in western South America: the Inca and their Ancestors
Readings through May 3rd:

Required readings:
IA – entire

suggested readings:
ACS – chap. 13
BAE – part two
AS – chap. 9
VIII. The Comparative Evolutionary Perspective: similarities or differences; A Consideration of the Nature of Ancient Agrarian States.

Readings through May 6th: final class readings - or 3rd quiz?

required readings:
MAS – chapters 8 and 9

suggested readings:
UEC – Discussion, pp. 653-688
ECOW – chap. 6
ESPE – section 6
"Economic Theory and Ancient Society" by Max Weber, part I in The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations (reprint)

3rd Quiz: May 6th (or final class?)