

RISE OF CIVILIZATION
AN5010 • Spring 2008
Wednesday 6 - 8:30 pm
Moore Hall, Room 01115

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Office Hours:
Mon 3:15-4:30; Tues. 1-2
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Course Description:

Why is Mesopotamia called the “cradle of civilization”? What is unique about this civilization and how did it emerge amidst developments in Egypt and the rest of the Near East? This course will examine cultural development and the rise of complex society in the ancient Near East as a case study of the rise of ‘civilization’ worldwide. It will primarily focus on Mesopotamia but also include Egypt, since these two civilizations developed quite differently despite being in the same general part of the world and both being on major rivers. The course will have one required text and also include current articles on topics such as cities, households, and political ideology.

Goals:

Since the course will examine the Mesopotamian civilization in-depth, you will learn how some of the major features of this civilization developed, such as its early writing, cities, and socio-political organization. One important goal of the course is to understand current theories about the emergence of social complexity and critically evaluate how these may explain its development in the Near East. We will compare Egypt with Mesopotamia to see how these contemporary societies developed in different ways. The course will also acquaint you with several different varieties of complex societies that are found world-wide.

Required text:

Available in the WMU Bookstore:

Pollock. Susan. 1999. *Ancient Mesopotamia*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
[also placed on reserve at Waldo Library]

Coursepack of readings

All other assigned articles below (designed by “CP”)

The readings listed below should be completed *before* that class date so that they can be discussed in class.

Structure and Requirements:

The first few weeks will laying out the timeline for the periods we'll be discussing in Mesopotamia and review theories of the origin of 'civilization.' After this, each week's class will be organized into half lecture and half discussion of the readings and concepts. It is expected that since class meets only once a week, attendance will be a priority and students will be well prepared to talk in class about the readings.

The final grade will be based on a map quiz (5%), midterm (25%), final exam (20%), and final paper (30%), as well as class participation in discussion (20%). Students will be asked to each summarize one of the Topics readings in a short class presentation as half of their discussion grade. You may wish to expand on your or someone else's presentation topic reading for your final paper. The final paper itself is worth 30%, and of this grade, 2/3 is the paper itself and 1/3 is the title and bibliography on the topic, due earlier in the semester.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 9

Introduction to 'civilizations'

What is a complex society? Outline of research in Mesopotamia

Week 2: January 16

Current theories of complexity

Current debates and theories of development

Reading: Archaic States, Introduction

Yoffee's *Myths of the Archaic State*, chapter 2 (CP)

Week 3: January 23

The ancient Near East

Environment and cultural history of early periods

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, chapter 2

Brewer and Teeter's *Egypt and the Egyptians*, chapter 2 (CP)

Week 4: January 30

Settlement patterns

Adams's survey and site hierarchies

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, chapter 3

Adams and Nissen's *The Uruk Countryside*, pages 9-27 (CP)

Map quiz on sites in Mesopotamia

Week 5: February 6

Economic development

The tributary economy and the Uruk expansion

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, chapter 4

Stein and Özbal in *Settlement and Society* (CP)

Week 6: February 13

Economics at the household level

'Great households' and household production in the third millennium

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, chapter 5

Keith in *Social Construction of Ancient Cities* (CP)

Week 7: February 20

Midterm

Week 8: February 27

Administration and labor

Writing, bureaucracy, and the peoples' councils

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, ch. 6

Postgate in *Early Mesopotamia*, ch. 10 (CP)

* Spring break *

Week 9: March 12

Kingship and power legitimization

Ideology and images of power, using religion and monuments

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, ch. 7

Paper title and bibliography due

Week 10: March 19

Pharaoh's rule in Egypt

Kingship in Egypt vs. Mesopotamia, uses of "high culture"

Reading: Brewer and Teeter's Egypt and the Egyptians, chapter 5 (CP)

Week 11: March 26

Urbanism and early cities

City planning and organization of space

Reading: Stone in Settlement and Society (CP)

Week 12: April 2

Urbanism in Egypt

Egypt's own form of urbanism

Reading: Bard in Emergence and Change in Early Urban Societies (CP)

Week 13: April 9

Empire-building and political cycles

Cyclicity and fragmentation in later Mesopotamian history

Reading: Marcus in Archaic States (CP)

Week 14: April 16

Linking theory and data

Why southern Mesopotamia? Comparisons with Egypt

Reading: Ancient Mesopotamia, ch. 9

Algaze in *Settlement and Society* (CP)

Paper due

Final exam (take-home): Wednesday, April 23

Readings included in Coursepack (alphabetical)

Adams, Robert McC. and Hans Nissen. 1972. *The Uruk Countryside*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. pp. 9-27.

- Algaze, Guillermo. 2007. "The Sumerian Takeoff," in Stone, Elizabeth C., ed. *Settlement and Society: Essays Dedicated to Robert McCormick Adams*. Los Angeles, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology. pp. 343-368.
- Bard, Kathryn. 1997. "Urbanism and the Rise of Complex Society and the Early State in Egypt," in *Emergence and Change in Early Urban Societies*. New York/London, Plenum Press. pp. 59-86
- Brewer, Douglas J. and Emily Teeter. 2007. *Egypt and the Egyptians* [2nd edition]. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.
- Feinman, Gary M. and Joyce Marcus. 1998. "Introduction," in Feinman, Gary M. and Joyce Marcus, eds. *Archaic States*. Sante Fe, NM, School of American Research Press. pp. 3-13.
- Keith, Kathryn. 2003. "The Spatial Patterns of Everyday Life in Old Babylonian Neighborhoods," in Smith, Monica, ed. *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities*. Washington, DC, Smithsonian Books. pp. 56-80.
- Marcus, Joyce. 1998. "The Peaks and Valleys of Ancient States: An Extension of the Dynamic Model," in Feinman and Marcus, eds., *Archaic States*. Sante Fe, NM, School of American Research Press. pp. 59-94.
- Postgate, J. Nicholas. 1992. *Early Mesopotamia*. London/New York, Routledge.
- Stein, Gil J. and Rana Özbal. 2007. "A Tale of Two *Oikumenei*: Variation in the Expansionary Dynamics of 'Ubaid and Uruk Mesopotamia,'" in Stone, Elizabeth C., ed. *Settlement and Society: Essays Dedicated to Robert McCormick Adams*. Los Angeles, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology. pp. 329-342.
- Stone, Elizabeth C. 2007. "The Mesopotamian Urban Experience," in Stone, Elizabeth C., ed. *Settlement and Society: Essays Dedicated to Robert McCormick Adams*. Los Angeles, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology. pp. 213-234.
- Yoffee, Norman. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.

Topics readings for short in-class presentations

- Week 3: a) Early religion in northern Mesopotamia (Hauptmann 1999)
 b) Egalitarian behavior in early states (Blanton 1998: 135-55)
- Week 4: a) How chiefdoms become institutions (Earle 2001)
 b) Early cities in northern Mesopotamia (Oates et al. 2007)
- Week 5: a) The Uruk expansion - evidence from Hacinebi Tepe (Stein)
 b) Contemporary sites in Iran (Wright 1998)
- Week 6: a) Gender and production in the Early Dynastic period (Zagarell 1986)
 b) Animal raising in early cities (Zeder 2003)
- Week 8: a) Development of cylinder seals in the Near East (Collon 1987 pg. 12-31)
 b) Writing and early scribal education (Nemet-Nejat 1998 pp. 47-64)
- Week 9: Laws and the Code of Hammurabi (Postgate 1992 chapter 15)
- Week 10: Egyptian vs. Mesopotamian kingship (Baines and Yoffee 1998)
- Week 11: Ground plans of early states (Flannery 1998)
- Week 12: Two early sites in Egypt: Nagada and Hierakonpolis (Kemp 2005)
- Week 13: a) What is an empire? (Barfield 2001)
 b) Mesopotamia's legacy - connections with the Bible (Heidel 1951)