

Course Outline for: ANTH 1230 Archaeology – Prehistory and Humanity’s Cultural Origins

A. Course Description

1. Number of credits: 4
2. Lecture hours per week: 4
3. Prerequisites: None
4. Corequisites: None
5. MnTC Goals: Goal #5 History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
Goal #10 People and the Environment

This course examines how the physical remains of past cultures are used to reconstruct vanished societies, explain their origins, and understand the factors that contributed to their ultimate collapse. It focuses on the universal cultural, economic and ecological factors that affected ancient peoples and how these staged the modern world.

B. Date last reviewed/updated: February 2022

C. Outline of Major Content Areas

1. The nature, scope, and history of archaeological investigations
2. The application of the scientific method to examining the past
3. The archaeological chronology and methods of determining age of artifacts and ecofacts
4. Archaeological methods including site surveys, excavation, principles of superposition, and the capture and cataloging of artifacts.
5. Biological and cultural evolution
6. Humanity’s African origins and the evolution of behaviorally modern humans.
7. Conquest and settlement of the world by Paleolithic foragers
8. The food production revolution: Agriculture and the domestication of plants and animals
9. The origins and evolution of civilization
10. Ancient technology – ceramics, metals, archaeo-astronomy and structural engineering
11. Legal and ethical aspects of archaeology
12. Lessons from archaeology in to the modern world

D. Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Recognize and articulate concepts, terms, and intellectual frameworks necessary to explain adaptation and cultural evolution in the archaeological record. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 5a, 5c, 10a, 10d)

2. Recognize and articulate the methods of scientific inquiry as they apply to archaeology and prehistory. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c 2d, 5a, 5c)
3. Apply theories and practice the analysis and interpretation of archaeological data. (Goals 2a, 2b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 10a, 10b)
4. Explain the major trends in cultural evolution and ecological adaptation in various areas of the world and explain the cultural and ecological adaptations of the people in these areas. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d)
5. Evaluate explanations and interpretations of selected cultures and their histories. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 5a, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d)
6. Articulate knowledge of the legacy of prehistoric cultures and the cautionary tales and implications for contemporary society and its problems. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 5b, 5c, 5d, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d)
7. Analyze the fundamental framework of material technology determines how a society addresses the basic issues of defense, food supply, shelter, and transportation. (Goals 2a, 2b 2c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 10d, 10f)
8. Discuss the concepts and techniques of producing lithic tools, weapons, ceramics, metals, and construction materials that were critical in emergent societies. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 5a, 5c)
9. Articulate how technology emerges through observation and conscious attempts to improve and optimize capabilities. (Goals 2a, 2b, 2c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 10a, 10d)
10. Explain how both resources and know-how are transferred between societies through diffusion, trade, war, and conquest are critical facets of information (Goals 2a 2b, 2d, 5b, 5c, 10d, 10f)
11. Articulate the critical role technology plays in the rise and fall of cultures. (Goals 2a, 2c, 2d, 5a, 5c, 5d, 10b, 10d, 10f)

E. Methods for Assessing Student Learning

Assessment methods may include, but are not limited to, the following: objective and/or subjective exams, quizzes, journals, research papers, oral presentations, written assignments, reflection essays, group work, and/or any other assessment measures based on the discretion of the instructor.

F. Special Information

None