

Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture
ANCIENT WORLDS
ANTH 1910
Fall 2019

Instructor: Professor Dean Saitta Office: Sturm Hall 105
Department of Anthropology Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00-1:00; also by appt.
Email: dsaitta@du.edu Office Phone: 871-2680

Course Objectives

Courses in the “Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture” curriculum introduce you to variation in the products of human culture (including written texts, art, artifacts, and other creative expressions) and ways to interpret these cultural products.

This particular course uses the field of **archaeology** to fulfill this goal. It investigates human belief (cosmology, religion) and creativity in what we’ll call **deep history**: the 100,000 years or so that stretch from the appearance of modern *Homo sapiens* up to and including the rise of the first great civilizations of the Old and New Worlds. These aspects of life are examined through the study of human **material culture**, including portable objects, representational art, architecture, monuments, and culturally-modified landscapes. A key underlying concept of the course is that material culture forms a unique narrative or **text** about the past history of humankind. This text is unique because everyone who has ever lived has helped to write it. You will learn how to interpret this text, recognize its multiple authors, and distill its larger social and cultural meaning. Specifically, you will come to:

- (1) understand that human beings make sense of the world (and their place in it) by giving it **meaning** in many different ways;
- (2) appreciate the **materiality** of human existence; that is, the reciprocal relationship between people and things. People depend on material things to make the world meaningful and things, in turn, shape the way that people think and behave.
- (3) recognize the **duality** of archaeology as a field that (a) produces objective knowledge of the past at the same time that it (b) conducts a cultural and political dialogue with the present.
- (4) learn something about **deep history**, its people, their many ways of making meaning, and the relevance for today.

Case material for this course is drawn from human cultures located widely across time and space. Much of the case material will likely be familiar to you. It includes material about Ice Age artists of Africa and Europe (**Caveworld**), ancient priests and astronomers of the Near East, Britain, and North America (**Tellworld**, **Hengeworld**, **Puebloworld**, **Moundworld**), and the great palace, temple, and tomb builders of Crete, Egypt, and Mexico (**Palaceworld**, **Pyramidworld**).

In the words of Brian Fagan, our textbook author, the case material stretches “from the French Caves of Lascaux to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan”. The aim of the course is to give you a taste of variation in how humans have creatively reflected upon and expressed their place in the world across time, space, and cultural context. In so doing it aims to expand your understanding of what it means to be human.

Required Reading

There is one required book for the course, and it is available in the University Bookstore:

Fagan, Brian 1998 *From Black Land to Fifth Sun*. Perseus Books, Reading Massachusetts.

I reserve the right to add short supplementary readings to the required reading list as the spirit moves.

Course Requirements

There are two major requirements:

1. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion, which includes completion of several short in-class writing assignments I call **Freewrites**. The assignments are not always announced in advance. You should expect them to occur on Fridays (*Friday Freewrites*), so that I have time to grade them over the weekend and I can return them to you in a timely fashion. The Freewrites will evaluate your understanding of the assigned reading and material presented in class. Slide shows will be posted to the Course Portfolio site located at <http://portfolio.du.edu/ancworlds>. **Classroom participation and completion of the Freewrites is 60% of your grade.**
2. A critical review of the Fagan book—the **Book Review Essay**—due at the end of the quarter, that (a) highlights the most important themes and messages that you took away from the reading and (b) details the most important additions that you would make to the next edition of the book if Fagan was to write one, and he asked you for your opinion. **The final Book Review Essay is 40% of your grade.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Reading</u>
1	Sept 10	Introduction and Expectations; Major Themes and Big Ideas.
	Sept 13	The Dual Nature of Archaeology. <u>READING</u> : Embree, “Archaeology: The Most Basic Science of All.”
2	Sept 17	Culture and Cosmology; Objects and Meaning. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 1.

	Sept 20	Background to Human Evolution and Deep History.
3	Sept 24	<i>Caveworld</i> : The Human Cultural Explosion and its Consequences. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 2; Chapter 3.
	Sept 27	<i>Caveworld</i> : Interpreting Ice Age Art.
4	Oct 1	<i>Tellworld</i> : The Dynamics of Settled Village Life.
	Oct 4	<i>Tellworld</i> : Interpreting Catalhoyuk. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 4
5	Oct 8	<i>Hengeworld</i> : Land, Ancestors, and Power. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 5, Chapter 6.
	Oct 11	<i>Hengeworld</i> : Stonehenge Then and Now. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 7.
6	Oct 15	<i>Puebloworld</i> : Monumentality and Meaning in the American Southwest. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 8.
	Oct 18	<i>Puebloworld</i> : The Mystery of Chaco Canyon. VIDEO: "The Mystery of Chaco Canyon"
7	Oct 22	<i>Puebloworld</i> : After Chaco: Archaeology in Zuniland.
	Oct 25	<i>Moundworld</i> : Earth Islands of Eastern North America. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 9.
8	Oct 29	<i>Moundworld</i> : Mississippian Urbanism.
	Nov 1	<i>Palaceworld</i> : Minoans and Sumerians. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 10, Chapter 11.
9	Nov 5	<i>Pyramidworld</i> : Ancient Egyptians and Mayans. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 12, Chapter 13.
	Nov 8	<i>Pyramidworld</i> : Aztecs and the Colonial Encounter. <u>READING</u> : Chapter 14.

10	Nov 12	Parting Shots; Summary of Key Themes. <u>READING</u> : Epilogue.
	Nov 15	Individual Tutorials.
11	Nov 21	BOOK REVIEW ESSAY IS DUE.