

THE ANCIENT CITY
Anthropology 3510
Fall 2019

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Course Objectives

The archaeological study of ancient cities around the world is a booming area of research. This course investigates what we know about the nature of the earliest cities in the great original cradles of civilization: Mesopotamia, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Our focus is on how these ancient cities were planned, built, and “lived in” by citizens. We’ll look at the documentary and archaeological evidence that has been used by scholars to reconstruct ancient urban lifeways in particular places. We’ll explore similarities and differences in urban planning and urban life across this collection of early civilizations. Finally, we’ll consider what these ancient expressions of urbanism can tell us about how we might plan and design cities today, and for the future. Thus, the course is an exercise in Urban Anthropology that connects past, present, and future.

The first eight weeks of the course will be a collective exploration of the archaeological literature that exists for ancient cities, and the various issues facing the contemporary city to which archaeological knowledge might be applied. During these eight weeks students will independently research either a particular city of their choice or some other topic that cross-cuts multiple cities. In either case, the research should be relevant to one or more of the contemporary urban issues identified in class. Week nine will be devoted to individual reports of research findings, and class discussion. The final research paper will summarize these findings and offer explicit comparisons with the relevant findings made by other students.

Course Requirements

This course is a weekly seminar. You will be graded on:

- (1) Class attendance and participation, especially discussion of multiple assigned readings over the course of the term (40%). There may be several unannounced in-class writing assignments.
- (2) Final Research Paper (40%).
- (3) In class presentation of your research topic and preliminary findings (20%).

NOTE: This is a seminar and independent research intensive class. The lifeblood of the course is class discussion. Assigned reading has been kept to a minimum. Thus, everyone is required to have all reading finished for the days assigned. **You should come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss this material, with pre-drafted questions and comments about the readings in tow.** I reserve the right to add or subtract reading material as the course unfolds.

Required Reading

All required readings are posted on the course portfolio site at <https://portfolio.du.edu/ancientcity>. No log-in is required to access the course portfolio. **The course materials are not on Canvas.** Readings are listed according to the dates and topics to which they relate.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: September 11. INTRODUCTION: WHY ANCIENT CITIES MATTER.

READING:

- Sabloff, J. 2008 "Why Cities?" In *Archaeology Matters*, by J. Sabloff.
- Goebel, M. 2019 "A Metropolitan World". *Aeon* online magazine.

Week 2: September 18. PARADIGMS & CONCEPTS IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CITIES; THE VARIABLE WORLD OF ANCIENT CITIES.

READING

- Fishman, R. 2011 "The Open and the Enclosed: Shifting Paradigms in Modern Urban Design." In *Companion to Urban Design*, edited by T. Banerjee and A. Loukaitou-Sideris.
- Smith, M. 2002 "The Earliest Cities." In *Urban Life*, edited by G. Gmelch and W. Zenner.
- Sennett, R. 2018 "The Open City." In *In the Post-Urban World*, edited by T. Haas and H. Westlund.

Week 3: September 25. MESOPOTAMIAN URBANISM.

READING:

- Soja, E. 2003 "Putting Cities First: Remapping the Origins of Urbanism." In *A Companion to the City*, edited by G. Bridge and S. Watson.
- Lawler, A. 2013 "The Everlasting City." *Archaeology*, September/October.
- Van de Mieroop, M. 2003 "Reading Babylon." *American Journal of Archaeology* 107:257-75.
- McMahon, A. 2013 "Space, Sound, and Light: Toward a Sensory Experience of Ancient Monumental Architecture." *American Journal of Archaeology* 117:163-179.

Week 4: October 2. ASIAN URBANISM.

READING:

- Jansen, M. 1985 "Mohenjo-Daro, City of the Indus Valley." *Endeavor* 9:161-169.
- Kenoyer, J. 2003 "Uncovering the Keys to the Lost Indus Cities." *Scientific American*, July.
- Lawler, A. 2008 "Boring No More: A Trade Savvy Indus Emerges". *Science* 320. June 6.
- Nelson, C. 1988 "Urban Planning in Pre-Industrial China." *US-China Review* 12:17-21.
- Evans, D. et al. 2013 "Uncovering Archaeological Landscapes at Angkor Using LIDAR." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110 (31):12595-12600.

Week 5: October 9. AFRICAN URBANISM.

READING:

- Bard, K. 2008 “Royal Cities and Cult Centers, Administrative Towns, and Workmen’s Settlements in Ancient Egypt.” In *The Ancient City*, edited by J. Marcus and J. Sabloff.
- Kusimba, C. 2008 “Early African Cities: Their Role in the Shaping of Urban and Rural Interaction Spheres.” In *The Ancient City*, edited by J. Marcus and J. Sabloff.
- McIntosh, R. and S. McIntosh 2003 “Early Urban Configurations on the Middle Niger.” In *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities*, edited by M. Smith.
- Patel, S. 2014 “Stone Towns of the Swahili Coast”. *Archaeology*, Jan-Feb.
- Fleisher, J. and S. Wynne-Jones. 2012 “Finding Meaning in Ancient Swahili Spatial Practices.” *African Archaeological Review* 29:171-207.

Week 6: October 16. MESOAMERICAN URBANISM.

READING:

- Clayton, S. 2015 “Teotihuacan: An Early Urban Center in its Regional Context.” In *Early Cities in Comparative Perspective*, edited by N. Yoffee.
- Wade, L. 2017 “Unearthing Democracy’s Roots”. *Science* 355. March 17.
- Chase, A. and D. Chase 2007 “Ancient Maya Urban Development: Insights from the Archaeology of Caracol, Belize.” *Belizean Studies* 29:60-72.
- Hutson, S. 2016 “The Allure of Maya Cities.” Excerpt from *The Ancient Urban Maya*, by S. Hutson.
- Gutierrez, G. 2015 “Mexico-Tenochtitlan: Origin and Transformations of the Last Mesoamerican Imperial City.” In *Early Cities in Comparative Perspective*, edited by N. Yoffee.

Week 7: October 23. ANDEAN URBANISM.

READING:

- Solis, R., J. Haas, and W. Creamer 2001 “Dating Caral, A Preceramic Site in the Supe Valley on the Central Coast of Peru.” *Science* 292 (5517): 723-726.
- Atwood, R. 2005 “A Monumental Feud”. *Archaeology*, July-August.
- Isbell, W. and A. Vranich 2004 “Experiencing the Cities of Wari and Tiwanaku.” In *Andean Archaeology*, edited by H. Silverman.

Week 8: October 30. NORTH AMERICAN URBANISM: CAHOKIA & CHACO CANYON.

READING:

- Pauketat, T., S. Alt and J. Kruchten 2015 “City of Earth and Wood: New Cahokia and its Material-Historical Implications.” In *Early Cities in Comparative Perspective*, edited by N. Yoffee.
- Lekson, S. 2006 “Lords of the Great House: Pueblo Bonito as a Palace.” In *Palaces and Power in the Americas*, edited by J. Christie and P. Sarro.

- Pauketat, T. 2019 “Fragile Cahokian and Chacoan Orders and Infrastructures.” In *The Evolution of Fragility: Setting the Terms*, edited by N. Yoffee.

Week 9: November 6. STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS.

Week 10: November 13. LESSONS OF A COMPARATIVE URBANISM.

READING

- Thomas, A. 2010 “Rethinking the City.” In *The Evolution of the Ancient City*, by A. Thomas.
- Smith, M. 2012 “The Role of Ancient Cities in Research on Contemporary Urbanization”. *UGEC Viewpoints* 8. November.

WEEK 11: November 21. FINAL RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE BY 4PM.