

CURRENT DEBATES IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN PREHISTORY

Term 1, 2022-2023

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Lecture/Seminar: Tuesday 7 – 10 pm,
PGCLL M22

Office Hours: email to arrange a Zoom
meeting

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Course Description

This course reviews developments in Eastern Mediterranean prehistory from the early humans (Palaeolithic) to state level societies (Bronze Age), using this regional backdrop to engage with major debates in anthropological archaeology, not least those relating to gender, power, and social transformations. We discuss the archaeology of Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, plus aspects of Egypt and Iraq, exploring such sites as Göbekli Tepe, Knossos, Jericho, Çatalhöyük, Mycenae, Hattusa, Ebla, Keros and others, drawing on the professor's work in these regions, and connections to many of these excavations (links you can benefit from).

Course Objectives

In this course we use Eastern Mediterranean prehistory as a venue to engage with some larger debates in anthropological archaeology, including:

- the politics of archaeology & knowledge production
- behavioural modernity & the global origins of seafaring
- 'revolutions' in prehistory – understanding social transformation
- gender relations in small-scale societies
- technical innovation and the bases of political power
- the authority of distant knowledge
- sensorial archaeologies
- value regimes

At the end of this course, you should thus have developed:

1. An understanding of what constitute some major debates in anthropological archaeology (generally) and Eastern Mediterranean prehistory (specifically), and an idea as to *how* archaeologists attempt to resolve these questions using the 'archaeological record', and theory/logic.
2. A range of transferable skills: the short response pieces, and seminar work are designed to train you in data gathering, critical thinking, concise writing, and the ability to present your ideas (using PowerPoint) to an audience.

Required Materials and Texts

NO TEXTBOOK! – I will not be using a textbook for reasons I will detail in class.

Class Format

Lecture / seminar: Thursdays 7.00 – 10.00 pm – typically the class starts with about an hour of background lecture to situate you geographically, chronologically, and thematically. The remainder of the time is spent in seminar mode, which typically will involve a couple of presentations from the class, followed by general discussion. There are ten seminars within the course. The images/notes associated with the background lecture will be provided ahead of time via your A2L (Avenue to Learn) portal. The class will not be recorded/podcasted.

Course Evaluation – Overview

The course is evaluated based on seminar presentation, general class participation, weekly responses, and a final paper; the value of these components is as follows.

Seminar attendance / responses	-	50%
Seminar presentation	-	20%
Long paper proposal	-	5%
Long paper	-	25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Seminar participation / responses – grade based on the student's attendance and participation in general discussion, one leading of discussion / presentation and submission of all required response-papers.

Long-paper proposal – a long-paper proposal is to be submitted by email by **Friday 14th November**. It should include a title, a 250-word statement about the proposed topic, and at least 5 appropriate sources.

Long-paper – A final paper (8-10 pages) is due in class on **Friday 9th December**; format details to be provided.

Seminar attendance / participation is **mandatory** for you to gain a grade.

NOTE THAT ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED: We do not re-distribute/re-weigh grades in the event of an MSAF. An MSAF simply gives you an extension on work missed.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Thurs. 8th Sept.)

Part I: Introduction to the course: aims, scope, requirements

Notes: **No seminar**

Week 2 (Thurs. 15th Sept.)

Part I: Defining the 'Eastern Mediterranean': ecology and geo-politics

Part II: The production of Eastern Mediterranean prehistory: colonial practices

Notes: **No seminar**

Week 3 (Thurs. 22nd Sept.)

Part I: The earlier prehistoric background

Seminar 1: *The politics of the past*

Week 4 (Thurs. 29th Sept.)

Part I: Islands: Their significance and processes of colonisation

Seminar 2: *Did Neanderthals make boats, and why do we care?*

Week 5 (Thurs. 6th Oct.)

Part I: From hunter to farmer: Current models and data

Seminar 3: *The 'Neolithic revolution': an economic shift or 'birth of the gods'?*

Week 6 (Thurs. 13th Oct.)

MID-TERM RECESS (no classes)

Week 7 (Thurs. 20th Oct.)

Part I: Çatalhöyük: A case study in early farming communities

Seminar 4: *Gender and power in small-scale societies*

Week 8 (Thurs. 27th Oct.)

Part I: The origins of metallurgy and its impact on society

Seminar 5: *Situating innovation change in prehistory*

Week 9 (Thurs. 3rd Nov.)

Part I: Boats, burials & bodies: The Early Bronze Age Cyclades

Seminar 6: Voyaging and the 'authority of distant knowledge'

Week 10 (Thurs. 10th Nov.)

Part I: From kings to factions: What were the 'Minoan palaces'?

Seminar 7: Consuming power: Sensorial archaeologies

Week 11 (Thurs. 17th Nov.)

Part I: Early World Systems: The Old Assyrian trade colonies

Seminar 8: Colonial encounters: The archaeology of identity

DEADLINE: Submit long paper proposal – by 4pm Friday 19th Nov. (by email)

Week 12 (Thurs. 27th Nov.)

Part I: Akrotiri and Crete: The impact of the Theran eruption

Seminar 9: Cultural responses to natural disasters

Week 13 (Thurs. 1st Dec.)

Part I: Elite practices in the Late Bronze Age East Mediterranean

Seminar 10: Naturalising power: Strategies of legitimacy at Knossos & beyond

Week 14 (Thurs. 8th Dec.)

Part I: Collapse: The 'end of the Bronze Age'

DEADLINE: Submit final paper – by 4pm Friday 9th Dec. (by email)

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignments must be submitted to the professor via email by the assigned date.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late work is penalized **5%** of the mark per day including weekends and holidays with a maximum of **3 days late** after which a 0 grade will be awarded. Extensions can only be gained if the student provides an appropriate note/letter from SAS, or other university certification system (e.g., MSAF – see below). Assignments are to be submitted to your professor via email (details provided in your first lecture/seminar).

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

An arrangement can be made for a missed presentation to be taken at a later date if the student provides an appropriate note/letter from Faculty office, or SAS (see below).

No grade / reweighting policy - grades will *not* be reweighted, i.e., if a weekly response, or final paper is not submitted, the grade is not just added to the next requirement.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) policy

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e., no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:

The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.

The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.

The 'one MSAF per term' limit is retained.

As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.

Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here:

http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Online Elements

This course includes on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work>

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their

instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

- Direct return of materials to students in class;
- Return of materials to students during office hours;
- Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
- Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

