



Arcadia Center for Hellenic, Mediterranean and Balkan Studies

Arcadia University

GRECIAN 330 The Aegean in Prehistory

Credits: 3

Course Description:

This course extends from earliest prehistory to the end of the Bronze Age with a special focus on the most significant cultures in prehistoric Aegean: Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean. Through lectures, museum and site visits, readings and discussions, students learn about the prehistory of Greece and its surrounding world and explore the role of archaeology in our understanding of the past.

Rationale and Impact of Course:

With its focus on cultural change and difference, archaeology provides a significantly wide perspective on the challenges associated with an education abroad program and encourages discussion on the formation and role of cultural identities in general.

Furthermore, since the rediscovery of the Greek Bronze age late in the 19th century, the stories that have been woven around this uniquely rich body of material have penetrated the popular imagination to a far greater extent than any other archaeologically attested culture and played a significant part in the construction of Greek identity. Find after find – Troy, Mycenae, and the Knossos Labyrinth – seemed to confirm as historical reality the myths of the later Greeks, themselves ancestral to so much of western culture. As such, Greek Prehistory presents an ideal case for a study that wishes to approach archaeology, not as an endless description of typological classifications but as a field where past and present meet and influence each other in multiple ways.

Learning Outcomes and Expected Student Competences:

As the course proceeds, it is hoped to help students:

- Acquire broad knowledge of the basics of art and archaeology in Prehistoric Aegean, from settlement patterns to burial practices and systems of beliefs;
- Place developments in Greek prehistory in their broader geopolitical and cultural context by familiarizing them with the most important developments in the cultures of the Near East;
- Move beyond static, compartmentalized understandings of culture toward ones that recognize variation, change and interconnectedness;
- Explore the relationship between archaeological practice and historical reconstructions and recognize the complexity of both;
- Enhance their ability to deconstruct various presentations of the Greek past and work toward a critical review of archaeological and historical processes;
- Become aware of the social and cultural forces that have shaped archaeology in Greece;
- Examine the complex relationship between ancient and modern Greece, as well as various ways this relationship is conceived;
- Sharpen their skills of social-cultural observation and analysis and learn to communicate their thoughts in a logical and well-ordered manner;

- Build confidence during oral presentations, improve their writing skills through writing assignments and learn to construct their arguments using both analytical and synthetic methods;
- Reflect upon the elusive nature of cross-cultural understanding and what it takes to move beyond our assumptions and preconceptions;
- Experience Greek archaeology in a direct and personal manner by visiting many archaeological sites and Museums and interacting with the socio-cultural environments that surround them.

Course Requirements:

- Participation, Reading response papers (25%)
- Oral/written Reports in the classroom, On-Site Report (30%)
- Mid-term (15%)
- Final paper (2,500 words) (30%)

The required readings of the course on which participation and reports in the classroom will be based, will be drawn from general books on Greek prehistory to be found on reserve in the library, a number of hand outs and more specialized articles which will be provided in digital form on the website of the class. A list of additional bibliography for further reading and use in the final research paper is also provided for each class and it is to be found in the library.

Books on Reserve:

- Barber, R. 1987 *The Cyclades in the Bronze Age*. London: Duckworth. Ch. 5
Dickinson, O. 1994 *The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge:
Hood, S. 1979 *The Arts in prehistoric Greece*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
Pomeroy, *et al.* 1999 *Ancient Greece*. Oxford University Press
Preziosi, D. and L. Hitchcock 1999 *Aegean Art and Architecture*. Oxford University Press.
Perles, C. 2001 *The early Neolithic in Greece*. Cambridge University Press.
Renfrew, C. 2003 *Figuring it out*. Thames & Hudson.
Renfrew, C. & Bahn, P. 1991 *Archaeology: Theories, methods and practice*. London: Thames and Hudson.
Shelmerdine, C. W. (ed.) 2008 *The Cambridge Companion of The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge University Press.
Taylour, W. 1983 [1964] *The Mycenaeans*. Thames and Hudson.

- http://projects.dartmouth.edu/history/bronze_age
<http://www.fhw.gr/chronos/02/crete/en/index.html> (archaeology)
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/> (classical texts)
<http://www.uk.digiserve.com/mentor/minoan/index.htm> (Crete)
www.santorini-eruption.org.uk (santorini)

US Grade Scale

Grade	Description	Percentage
A	excellent	94-100%

A-	excellent	90-93%
B+	above average	87-89%
B	above average	84-86%
B-	above average	80-83%
C+	average	77-79%
C	average	74-76%
C-	average	70-73%
D+	below average	67-79%
D	below average	64-66%
D-	below average	60-63%
F	fail	0-59%

Other policies:

- Participation is not just about talking, giving opinions or exercising critical capacities. It should also involve giving evidence of reading either the material assigned or other sources relevant to the subject matter.
- One unexcused absence is permitted. After that, 2.5 grade points will be deducted for every unexcused absence. If you are ill, you must inform Jan or Joanna before class meeting time for your absence to count as excused.
- Each student is responsible for performing academic tasks in such a way that honesty is not in question. All tests, term papers, oral and written assignments, and other academic efforts are to be the work of the student presenting the material. Any use of wording, ideas, or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers requires the explicit citation of the source; use of the exact wording requires a 'quotation' format.

Course outline (tentative):

Week 1 ⇒ Introduction - Archaeology as a discipline

Readings:

Renfrew, C. & Bahn, P. 1991 *Archaeology: Theories, methods and practice*. London: Thames and Hudson. [Chapters, 12, 4]

⇒ Introduction to Greek prehistory

Readings:

Preziosi, D. and L. Hitchcock 1999 *Aegean Art and Architecture*. Oxford University Press. [Introduction, pp. 1-24]

Kotsakis, K. 1991 The powerful past: theoretical trends in Greek archaeology. In I. Hodder (ed.) *Archaeological theory in Europe*. Routledge. London. (pp. 65-90)

Week 2 *Part I: Cultural history*
⇒ Greece and its cultural setting - 'Neolithic revolution' and the origins of agriculture in the Eastern Mediterranean

Readings:

Childe, V. G. 1981 *Man makes himself*. Moonraker Press: [chapter on Neolithic Revolution]

Runnels, C. 1995 The stone age of Greece from the Palaeolithic to the advent of the Neolithic. *American Journal of Archaeology* 99, 699-728.

⇒ Palaeolithic and Neolithic period in Greece

Readings:

Perles, C. 2001 *The early Neolithic in Greece*. Cambridge University Press (chapter 2: The Mesolithic Background chapter 3: The Introduction of Farming)

Week 3 ⇒ The Bronze Age period in Greece – Introduction

Reading:

Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece* (pp. 8-40)

⇒ Early Cycladic Culture

Reading:

Broodbank, *The Cyclades as islands in Aegean and Near Eastern macro-history* (chapter 2, pp. 43-67).

Barber, R. 1987 *The Cyclades in the Bronze Age*. London Duckworth. Ch. 1-4

Week 4 ⇒ *Visit to the National Archaeological Museum* (Neolithic – early Cycladic collection)

⇒ Minoan culture

Reading:

Preziosi, D. and L. Hitchcock 1999 *Aegean Art and Architecture*, chs. 2-4 (sections on Crete)

Week 5 ⇒ *Visit to the National Archaeological Museum* (Cycladic – Minoan collection)

⇒ Mainland Greece - Mycenaean culture

Reading:

Preziosi, D. and L. Hitchcock 1999 *Aegean Art and Architecture* [chapter 5]

Taylor, W. 1983 *The Mycenaean*. Thames and Hudson. (chapter 5)

Week 6 ⇒ *Visit to the National Archaeological Museum* (Mycenaean collection)

⇒ The end of the Bronze Age

Reading:

Preziosi, D. and L. Hitchcock 1999 *Aegean Art and Architecture* (chapter 6: Disruptions, (Dis)Continuities at the Bronze Age) (pp. 193-218)

Osborne, The Problem of the Beginnings (pp. 19-51), In Osborne, R. 1996 *Greece in the making 1200-479B.C.*

Week 7 ⇒ Mid term exam

⇒ The study of cultural change and continuity - main topics under discussion

Reading:

Kristiansen, K. and Th. Larsson 2005 The rise of Bronze Age Society. Cambridge [chapter 1, A theoretical strategy for studying interaction, pp. 4-31]

Part II: The study of cultural change in Greek prehistory – a cross-cultural review

Week 8 ⇒ Architecture and urban development

Reading:

Hamilakis, Y. Too many chiefs? Functional competition Neopalatial Crete (p. 179-199)

Cherry, J. F. 1984 The emergence of the state in the prehistoric Aegean. Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society 30, 18-48.

Whitelaw, T. From Sites to Communities: Defining the Human Dimensions of Minoan Urbanism (pp. 15-37)

⇒ Social stratification and burial customs

Readings:

Mee, C. B. and Cavanagh, W. G. 1984 Mycenaean Tombs as evidence for Social and Political Organization. Oxford Journal of Archaeology 3: 45-64.

Week 9 ⇒ Religion and cult practices

Reading:

Hoffman, G. Painted Ladies: Early Cycladic II Mourning Figures? AJA 106 (2002)

Peatfield, A. D. 1987 Palace and Peak: The political and religious relationship between palaces and peak sanctuaries. Pp. 89-93, in Hägg, R. & Marinatos, N. (eds 1987 The function of the Minoan Palaces. Stockholm.

⇒ Technology and craft specialization

Reading:

Knappett, C. Technological innovation and social diversity at Middle Knossos (pp. 257-265)

Vitelli, K. 1989 Were Pots First Made for Foods? Doubts from Franchthi. *World Archaeology*, vol. 21(1): 17-29.

Week 10 ⇒ Trade and exchange networks

Reading:

Bass, G. F. 1986 A Bronze Age Shipwreck at Ulu Burun (Kas): 1984 Campaign. *American Journal of Archaeology* 90: 269-296.

Kristiansen, K. and Th. Larsson 2005 the rise of Bronze Age Society. Cambridge [chapter 3, Trade and transmission in the Mediterranean world, pp. 90-105]

Sherratt, A. and S. Sherratt, From Luxuries to commodities: the nature of Mediterranean Bronze Age Trading Systems (pp. 351-376)

⇒ Art and identity

Reading:

Hood, S. The Arts in prehistoric Greece. Harmondsworth Penguin

Renfrew, C. 2006 Figuring it out. Thames and Hudson (chapters: 1-2)

PART III: archaeological narratives and the public

Week 11 ⇒ Prehistoric Aegean and archaeological narratives

Reading:

Hobu, J., C. Fawcett, J.M. Matsunaga 2008 Evaluating Multiple narratives: Beyond nationalist, colonialist, imperialist archaeologies. Springer [intro, discussion]

Joyce, R. 2002 The languages of Archaeology. Blackwell

Publishing [chapters 1, 6]

Renfrew, C. 2006 Figuring it out. Thames and Hudson
(chapters: 3-4)

⇒ Greek prehistory in Museums [paper due]

Reading:

Renfrew, C. 2006 Figuring it out. Thames and Hudson
(chapters: 5-6)

Week 12 ⇒ Homer and the Trojan War: fiction and reality?

Reading:

Homer (chapters from Odyssey and Iliad)

Latacz, J. 2004 Troy and Homer: towards a solution of an
old mystery. Oxford University press [Homer's Iliad and
the Tale of Troy, pp. 154-212]

Morris, I. Homer and the Iron Age (pp. 535-559) In
Morris, I. and B. Powell 1997 A new companion to
Homer.