**ARCHAEOLOGIES OF THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST**  
**JOUKOWSKY INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ANCIENT WORLD**  
Winter 2010

**COURSE:** ARCH 0440  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Morag M. Kersel  
**CLASS LOCATION:** Rhode Island Hall 108  
**EMAIL:** Morag_Kersel@brown.edu

**TERM:** MWF 10:00-10:50  
**PHONE:** 401-863-2306  
**OFFICE:** JIAAW 210  
**OFFICE HRS:** MW 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

**Course wiki:** [http://proteus.brown.edu/ancientmiddleeast10/Home](http://proteus.brown.edu/ancientmiddleeast10/Home)  
Reading page password: middleeastprivate  
OCRA password: prehistory

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers a survey of the prehistoric periods in the Middle East. Students will explore prehistoric and earliest proto-historic archaeology chronologically and examine topics such as evidence for the first hominids and humans in the region, the transition from small-scale bands of hunter-gatherers to more complex hunter-gatherers, increasing sedentism and the Neolithic Revolution, and the rise in social inequality. Reference to other contiguous areas of the Eastern Mediterranean will be included. Our objective will be to survey human society through the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages. The latter section will only highlight particular topics for the major methodological and theoretical concerns for Middle Eastern archaeology.

Archaeological excavations have unearthed a wealth of data, information, and interpretations about the human past in the Middle East. The region is excavated each year by scores of major and minor archaeological excavations. After a century of stratigraphic archaeology, a profusion of artifacts, architecture, and human and animal remains have come from the ground. Many have attempted to synthesize the past of the region, and many different individuals and groups compete to narrate the history of the region.

As an archaeology class, we will consider such general questions as:

1) Why do societies change or resist change through time? How might we account for similarities and differences between this place and others around the globe?

2) Why did people abandon hunting-gathering subsistence? Why did sedentary communities form?

3) Where does inequality come from? Is the drive to dominate part of human nature? What gives rise to political complexity and social inequality?

4) What can we learn from the study of the past? Why is history contested, and why is archaeology so important in the Middle East? How is knowledge about past societies disseminated?

In this course, we will examine critically the major archaeological sites and the major questions for different eras. The orientation is anthropological, combining both historical and archaeological sources on the past. We will be concerned both with the histories of the peoples and broad problems of socio-cultural evolution.
COURSE OBJECTIVES
• To understand how archaeologists examine and learn more about the past in this region.
• To make the connections between questions about human societies and appropriate types of archaeological evidence.
• To appreciate the richly textured prehistory and proto-history of the region.
• To explore structural elements in societies, such as social differentiation and complexity, gender, urbanism, exchange networks, warfare, and multiculturalism, from anthropological perspectives.
• To think critically about knowledge production and the ethics of archaeological practice in this region.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Grades will be based upon two examinations and class participation.
• Exam #1 20% WED. MARCH 10
• Map quiz: 10% WED. MARCH 23
• Book/Film Review 20% MON. APRIL 19
• Exam #2 20% FRI. APRIL 30
• In class quiz/reading reactions 10% SURPRIZE!!!
• Class participation: 20% ONGOING

ATTENDANCE
Attendance is expected and required. There will be in-class assignments and quizzes during the semester, which you will not be allowed to make-up if you miss class (unless you have a doctor’s note or I receive a message from the Dean). Due dates are strictly enforced. Students remain responsible for all material covered whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

REQUIRED READINGS
You are not required to buy any of these books. We will read portions of most of them, and all are recommended readings. A copy of each of these books is placed on Reserve at the Rock.

TEXTS

OTHER READINGS AS ASSIGNED

Recommended Reading

Course Format
The focus of the class will be on lectures, but discussions will be encouraged and expected. I will introduce key concepts, terms and data; students will be asked to discuss certain sites, time periods and key issues. In this way, everyone presents information and ideas; the instructor provides direction and facilitates discussion. Together we will strive to address the above questions while exploring the development of different societies and cultures through the prehistoric archaeology of the Middle East.
**WEEK 1**
**INTRODUCTION**

**Wed. Jan. 27:** Introduction to the class
General remarks and framework for the course.

**Fri. Jan. 29:** What is archaeology?
Key terms, concepts

**Readings**
Renfrew and Bahn, 5th edition, 2008 – Chapters 1-3 – ON RESERVE AT THE ROCK

**WEEK 2**
**ORIGINS OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PRACTICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Mon. Feb. 1:** Emergence of Archaeology, Developing Methods and Theory

**Readings**
Renfrew and Bahn, 5th edition, 2008, Chapters 1-3 – ON RESERVE AT THE ROCK

**Wed. Feb. 3:** Archaeology as Science, Alternative Interpretations

**Readings**
Renfrew and Bahn, 5th edition, 2008, Chapters 1-3 – ON RESERVE AT THE ROCK

**Fri. Feb. 5:** FREAKY FRIDAY – BRUCE TRIGGER

**Readings**

*****GRADUATE READING*****

**WEEK 3**
**GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPE AND EARLY ARRIVALS**

**Mon. Feb. 8:** Geography and Environment of the Region

**Readings**
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 1-7. Introduction

**Wed. Feb. 10:** Early Hominids; Models of Hominid Dispersal and the First Humans

**Readings**
Ardi

**Fri. Feb. 12**
FREAKY FRIDAY – At the library with Norine Duncan

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲WEEK 4 ORIGINS OF EARLY HUMANS AND NEANDERTALS
Mon. Feb. 15 Where did Levantine populations come from?
Readings

Wed. Feb. 17 Upper Paleolithic Hunter-Foragers
Readings
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 14-43, Hunter-gatherers at the end of the Ice Age.

Fri. Feb. 19 FREAKY FRIDAY – OBSIDIAN WITH JOHN CHERRY

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲WEEK 5 HUNTER-GATHERERS ON THE LANDSCAPE
Mon. Feb. 22 Presidents’ Day – CLASS CANCELLED

Wed. Feb. 24 Complex Hunter-gatherers and the Epipaleolithic and the Natufian
Readings

Fri. Feb. 26 Expansion of Settlement along the Levantine Corridor; The Natufian
Readings

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲WEEK 6 EARLY FARMING & THE NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION
Mon. Mar. 1 Plant and animal domestication, origins of food production
Readings

Archaeologies of the Ancient Middle East 4
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 42-83, A changing perspective: Neolithic Beginnings
Zeder, M. 2006. Central questions in the domestication of plants and animals. Evolutionary Anthropology 15:105-117

*****GRADUATE READING*****
Childe, V. Gordon. Man Makes Himself.
Current Anthropology readings

Wed. Mar. 3:  Movie and Book Madness
Fri. Mar. 5:  Movie and Book Madness

▲ WEEK 7
Mon. Mar. 8:  The Adoption of Agriculture: Models and Evidence
Readings
Plant and Animal Domestication

Wed. Mar. 10:  *****EXAM #1*****
Fri. Mar. 12  FREAKY FRIDAY  ALEX or TOM

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 8  AGRICULTURE, FOOD STORAGE & POPULATION GROWTH
Mon. Mar. 15:  Early Villages, Food Storage, and Population Growth
Readings
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 83-98, The Explorations of New Horizons

Readings

Guest Lecture – Dr. Yorke Rowan of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
Readings

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 9
Mon. Mar. 22: Early Villages and Ritual Practices
Readings
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 99-153, the Exploration of New Horizons

Wed. Mar. 24: Continuity and Change
Readings
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 154-180, Continuity and change in the late sixth and fifth millennia BC.

******MAP QUIZ******

Fri. Mar. 26: FREAKY FRIDAY ALEX or TOM

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 10 SPRING BREAK (MARCH 28 – APRIL 4)

▲ WEEK 11 PROTO-HISTORY & THE RISE OF URBANISM
Mon. Apr. 5: The Early Bronze Age, Urban Societies and the Mediterranean Economy
Readings

Wed. Apr. 7: FREAKY FRIDAY ON A WEDNESDAY
AIA LECTURE, Rhode Island Hall
Early Sea-Farers in the Mediterranean: Cretan Evidence for Pre-Homo sapiens Mariners
Thomas Strasser and Curtis Runnels

Fri. Apr. 9: Egypt: Unification and the Nature of Influence on the Levant
Readings

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 12 PROTO-HISTORY & THE RISE OF URBANISM
Mon. Apr. 12: The Early Bronze Age, Mortuary Practices and Community
Readings


Wed. Apr. 14 Movie and Book Madness
Fri. Apr. 16 Movie and Book Madness

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 13 EARLY STATE FORMATION
Mon. Apr. 19 FREAKY MONDAY – My own freaky work
Looting, Ethics and the Archaeological Landscape. Follow the Pots: The Effects of Looting on the Early Bronze Age Mortuary Landscape on the Dead Sea Plain
Readings

Wed. Apr. 21: Models for the Origins of the State
Readings
Akkermans and Schwartz, pp. 181-210, The Fourth Millennium BC and Uruk Expansion

Fri. Apr. 23: FREAKY FRIDAY – The First Script - The origins of writing
Guest Lecture: Professor Matthew Rutz, Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies

*****GRADUATE READING*****

▲ WEEK 14 WRAP UP, EXAM #2
Mon. Apr. 26 Class summary
Wed. Apr. 28 Exam review
Fri. Apr. 30 FREAKY FRIDAY*****EXAM #2*****