

RECONSTRUCTING LOST CIVILIZATIONS

FALL 2008

Wednesday 3:00 pm – 5:45 pm

Clark Hall 204

**Instructor:** Dr. Mark D. McCoy**Office:** Clark Hall 469A (inside Anthropology Office Suite)**Email:** [Mark.McCoy@sjsu.edu](mailto:Mark.McCoy@sjsu.edu) (Please read "Email Policy.")**Phone:** 408-924-5542**Office Hours:** Friday 12:00pm-5:00pm**Prerequisites**

This course fulfills the Upper Division GE, Area "R," Earth and Environment. In order to enroll you must have completed the Core GE requirements (including English 1B), be of upper division standing, and passed the Writing Skills Test.

**GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How do we come to know about past peoples and their societies? In this course we explore how archaeology answers this question by employing an explicitly scientific approach. This is accomplished by comparing the development of our history over the past +3 million years as presented by modern archaeologists with alternative pseudoscientific interpretations of the past that employ racial and gender stereotypes, as well as outright frauds. By contrasting these two ways to reconstruct past civilizations the course focuses on how evidence, interpretations, and explanations are evaluated in social science. In addition, we examine contemporary issues in practicing archaeology including finding ways to move the field forward while respecting people's human rights, especially native peoples who in the past have had little say in how scientists have studied of their ancestors.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Student's papers, exercises, and examinations will be geared toward understanding the following topics:

**•Evolution of technology and society**

Modern archaeology not only centers on creating a history of technical innovations (i.e., famous "firsts" and "oldest") but also how societies have developed into the complex systems we are familiar with today.

**•Interaction of humans and their environment**

This course specifically focuses on how the environment influenced, and been influenced by, past peoples. By reviewing case studies of past civilizations – including those that highlight our capacity for creativity as well as destruction – students are challenged to consider the dynamic relationship between people their physical world over long periods of time.

**•Methodologies of scientific inquiry**

As a science centered on people, archaeology brings to the fore a variety of issues in how we weight evidence, reason, and explain patterns in history.

**•Understanding what makes approaches "scientific" and the limitations scientific inquiry**

Students will learn to distinguish between scientific, non-scientific, and pseudo-scientific approaches as well as how scientific interpretations of the archaeological record can serve to re-enforce a racist or sexist political agenda.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Over the semester students will be graded out of a total of 500 points. All grades are individual; there will be no group work.

Midterm	100 points	97% and above	A+	76% - 74%	C
Final	100 points	94% - 96%	A	73% - 70%	C-
Papers	200 points	93% - 90%	A-	69% - 67%	D+
Exercises	<u>100 points</u>	89% - 87%	B+	66% - 64%	D
TOTAL:	500 points	86% - 84%	B	63% - 60%	D-
		83% - 80%	B-	below 60%	F
		79% - 77%	C+		

### Tests

A midterm exam will be given in class. The final exam will be cumulative but the majority of questions will be on topics covered in the second half of the course. Students may not refer to notes or books during exams.

### Papers

Students will be writing three assignments: (1) a 4-5 page review paper (50 pts); (2) a one-page description of their research paper topic in the format of a written proposal (50 pts); and (3) an 8-10 page research paper (100 pts). All assignments will follow a specified format in terms of style (i.e., text will be 12 pt font, double spaced) and content (i.e., papers will include in-text citations and bibliographies) described in handouts.

### Exercises

Over the course of the semester students will be assigned six exercises for 15-20 points each. The goal of these exercises is to promote discussion on important topics and to evaluate each student's comprehension of the assigned readings. As such, some will have both in-class and take home elements.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Chazan, Michael. (2008) *World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways through time*. Pearson. New York.

Feder, Kenneth L. (2006) *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and pseudoscience in archaeology*. Fifth Edition. McGraw Hill. New York.

Students may choose to use previous editions of these texts since they are similar in content and may be found used. However, this practice is done at student's own risk; use of an earlier text will not be accepted as an excuse for missed points on exams or exercises.

## BLACKBOARD CLASS MANAGEMENT

In an effort to provide better access to course materials, instructor help, and grades the university has adopted class management software called "Blackboard" (formerly "WebCT"). Students will be given website address and login instructions as they become available. However, be sure set up your Blackboard email to forward to your personal address so you will receive course messages.

If you run in to difficulties using the system, San José State University employs IT support personal that can be contacted at 408.924.2377, [helpdesk@sjsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@sjsu.edu), or 408.924.2670, [ecampus@online.sjsu.edu](mailto:ecampus@online.sjsu.edu).

## EMAIL POLICY

To help me organize and answer your emails as quickly as possible, please send messages via the mail option of Blackboard. Blackboard automatically "tags" your message with your class/section. Also, coursework will not be distributed or accepted via email transmission and student's emails will be answered during regular business hours M-F 9am-5pm.

## READINGS LIST WITH ASSIGNMENT AND EXAM REMINDERS

\*All readings (▶) must be completed before class. Assignments (☐) are listed on the date they are due and tests on the day they will be administered.

1	Weds.	Aug. 27	Introduction to Course		
2	Weds.	Sept. 3	The Scientific Method and Famous Frauds and Outlandish Theories	▶ Chazan: Ch. 1 ▶ Feder: Ch. 1, 2,	
3	Weds.	Sept. 10	Explaining the Past and Archaeological Fieldwork	▶ Chazan: Ch. 2 ▶ Feder: 3, 4, 8, 10	☐ Exercise #1 – Scientific Method Due
4	Weds.	Sept. 17	Laboratory Methods and Paleolithic Archaeology: Human Evolution	▶ Chazan: Ch. 3, 4	☐ Exercise #2 – Explaining the Past Due
5	Weds.	Sept. 24	Paleolithic Archaeology: Out of Africa II and Peopling of the New World	▶ Chazan: Ch. 5, 6 ▶ Feder: Ch. 5, 7	☐ Exercise #3 – Hi-Tech Archaeology Due
6	Weds.	Oct. 1	Environment, Technology, and Society; and Case Study: Moundbuilders of North America; Midterm Review	▶ Feder: Ch. 6	☐ Review Papers Due (4-5 pages) ☐ Research Proposal Due (1 page)
7	Weds.	Oct. 8	<b>In-Class Midterm Exam</b>		☐ Exercise #4 – Moundbuilders Due
8	Weds.	Oct. 15	Case Study: Easter Island and Origins of Farming and Herding	▶ Chazan: Ch. 7, 8	
9	Weds.	Oct. 22	Neolithic Revolution and Ancient Cannibalism	▶ Chazan: Ch. 9	
10	Weds.	Oct. 29	Political and Social Organization and Case Study: The Maya Collapse	▶ Feder: Ch. 12	
11	Weds.	Nov. 5	Ancient Economies and Ritual and Religion	▶ Chazan: Ch. 12 ▶ Feder: Ch. 11	☐ Exercise #5 – Social Organization Due
12	Weds.	Nov. 12	Chiefdom Societies and Early State Societies	▶ Chazan: Ch. 10, 11, 12	
13	Weds.	Nov. 19	Case Study: Southwest Asia and Ancient Egypt and Empires	▶ Chazan: Ch. 13 ▶ Feder: Ch. 9	
14	Weds.	Nov. 26	No Class		
15	Weds.	Dec. 3	Culture Contact and Modern Issues	▶ Chazan: Epilogue	☐ Research Papers Due (8-10 pages)
16	Weds.	Dec. 10	Case Study: Native American Archaeology and Final Review		☐ Exercise #6 – Culture Contact Due
17	Tues.	Dec. 16	<b>Final Exam - December 16 at 12:15pm -2:30pm in Clark Hall 204</b>		

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED EXAMINATIONS

All assignments are due at the start of class and **10% will be deducted for every day late**. No make-up exams will be given. To be fair to all students, **this policy is strictly enforced with concessions for documented medical emergencies only**. Late material should be “time stamped” and left in my mailbox at the Anthropology Department office in Clark Hall.

### “I” (INCOMPLETE) AND “WU” (WITHDRAWAL UNAUTHORIZED)

Students will only be given a grade of incomplete if they meet the following criteria: (1) have completed +66% of coursework and (2) have written instructor approval for incomplete prior to the final exam. Students with less than 66% of coursework completed will be given a WU which indicates that an enrolled student did not officially withdraw from or drop the course and failed to complete course requirements. Students who have missed coursework or the final exam due to a documented medical reason should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me at office hours. It is San José State University’s policy that students register with the Disability Resource Center to establish a record of their disability (<http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/>). Nonetheless, students need not be registered with the DRC to meet with me and discuss their needs for special arrangements.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please take a moment and read about San José State University's policy on "academic integrity."

"Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. **Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action that could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University.**

### Cheating:

At SJSU, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

Copying in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument; Submitting work previously graded in another course unless this has been approved by the course instructor or by departmental policy. Submitting work simultaneously presented in two courses, unless this has been approved by both course instructors or by departmental policy. Altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions; Sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate; any other act committed by a student in the course of his or her academic work which defrauds or misrepresents, including aiding or abetting in any of the actions defined above.

### Plagiarism:

At SJSU plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes but is not limited to:

The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substances of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work; and representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, painting, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one's own."