

ANCIENT PEOPLES AND PLACES (ANTH 2151)

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Boyd

E-mail: mboyd1@lakeheadu.ca

Office: BB-2001-F

Office hours: By appointment (in person or Zoom)



Course description:

An overview of Old and New World archaeology, with particular emphasis on the development of humans and culture from hunting/gathering to agricultural and ancient urban societies in Mesoamerica, Europe, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and China.

Learning outcomes:

- Obtain an understanding of the 'milestones' in human history including: the origins of human culture; the origins of food production; and the rise of complex societies.
- Develop a basic understanding of world prehistory across Eurasia, Australia, the Americas and elsewhere.
- Develop research, writing, and independent thinking skills.

Required text:

Chazan, Michael, World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways Through Time. Amazon price: \$164 (Dec 2025). You may use the previous edition.

Grading:

- **Midterm test: 35%**
 - 75 min time limit, in class.
 - Multiple choice + short answer (TBD)
 - Based primarily on lectures; textbook as a supplement
- **Written assignment (5-6 pages double-spaced, excluding references and title page) + "process portfolio": 30%**
 - A written research report describing, and discussing, any topic of interest directly related to the course (world prehistory). Research should be based only on peer-reviewed resources (journal articles and/or academic books). A minimum of 10-12 peer reviewed sources is recommended for a good grade. Follow the APA style guide for formatting your paper. A rubric will be posted online.
 - The subject of your term paper is open but examples include: discussion of a fossil hominin species (e.g., *Homo naledi*, *H. floresiensis*, the Neanderthal); summary of findings from a recent archaeological discovery (e.g., the shipwrecks of the Franklin expedition; Norse sites in North America); description of an ancient writing system and the history of its decipherment; discussion of an archaeological monument (e.g., Egyptian pyramids, the function and construction of Stonehenge, Gobekli Tepe); summary of an archaeological culture or period (e.g., the Classic Maya, Ancient Sumerians, Mississippian tradition); discussion of a major ancient human "event" (e.g., the first peopling of the Australia; the origins of agriculture in a region). I'm happy to discuss your term paper topic to provide suggestions about how to make it as successful as possible.
 - In addition to the completed assignment, students must submit a **process portfolio** as a separate document(s). This package should include: (1) Evidence of idea development (e.g., handwritten notes, screenshots of reading annotations, margin notes, question lists, bullet point outlines, a partial/rough draft showing development, etc), (2) sources consulted but not cited; (3) a 300-500-word reflection about how your understanding of the topic changed over time, what parts you struggled with the most, any surprises about what you learned, etc; and (4) a short statement regarding your use of AI tools (genAI disclosure).

- You will be graded on both the term paper and the process portfolio using a rubric.
- **Final test: 35%**
 - Covers all modules
 - Multiple choice + short answer (TBD)
 - 2h in duration
 - **Date/time:** scheduled by the Registrar's Office (April exam period).

Important information

You are responsible for properly registering or withdrawing from this course. Make sure to check the LU website for the withdrawal deadline.

See the LU Calendar for information on academic integrity, examinations, grade appeals, and other important regulations of which you should be aware.

Late term papers and other assignments will be deducted **10% per day** from the final grade for that assignment. 'Makeup' tests/exams are only allowed to the extent permitted under Lakehead University regulations, and supporting documentation may be required.

A breach of Academic Integrity is a serious offence. The principle of Academic Integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should view the Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity – for a full description of academic offences, procedures when Academic Integrity breaches are suspected and sanctions for breaches of Academic Integrity.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy: I see generative AI tools as both useful and problematic in the context of academic work. In this course, the written assignment is evaluated not only on the final product, but on the authenticity and depth of your learning process. You will submit a final paper together with a brief portfolio that includes notes, draft material, reflections, and (if applicable) an explanation of how you used digital tools. GenAI tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Grammarly, etc.) may be used in limited and responsible ways, provided that:

- Your intellectual work remains central. This means that analysis, interpretation, and critiques must be your own. You are also not allowed to use AI tools to generate text that you include in your final paper. Your writing must be your own although it is acceptable to use genAI tools to improve grammar and/or spelling for the final product.
- Any use of AI tools is openly documented in your reflection or process notes (e.g., what you used it for, what you changed, how you evaluated it).
- You assess and revise any AI-generated material, rather than accepting it uncritically. I've found that genAI 'research' for a given archaeological topic is often superficial, based on a small number of non-academic sources, and may have inaccuracies.

I do not evaluate written assignments using AI detection tools, and I won't penalize students simply for using AI. Instead, marks are awarded for: evidence of genuine engagement with ideas and academic source material, visible development of critical thinking and writing skills, reflection on choices and revisions, and ultimately intellectual ownership of the work. Undisclosed or unreflective use of AI work against the goals of the written assignment and course and will weaken your submission. If you are unsure whether a particular use of AI is appropriate, please feel free to ask me for guidance.

Mental health resources. As a university student, you may sometimes experience mental health concerns or stressful events that interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily activities. All of us can benefit from support during times of struggle. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events or feelings of

anxiety or depression, Lakehead has resources available to you. Check in with the [WellU Key](#) to find the mental health resources you are looking for. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do-- for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. Getting support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>.

Module	Topic	Readings
1	Introduction to course Why study ancient civilizations?	Chazan ch. 1 & 2
2	Brief introduction to hominin evolution	Chazan ch. 3-5
3	Hominins (cont.)	
4	Upper Paleolithic: general characteristics, First peopling of Australia and the New World	Chazan ch. 6
Feb 16-20	No classes (study week)	
Feb. 23	Midterm test (75 min)	
5	The origins of agriculture (introduction) Early food production in the Near East	Chazan ch. 7
6	The first European farmers	Chazan ch. 7
7	Early agricultural societies in China The first farmers in Mesoamerica Spread of agriculture into North America	Chazan ch. 8 & 9
8	Development of state-level societies Complex societies in Mesopotamia	Chazan ch. 10 & 11
9	Ancient Egypt	Chazan ch. 11
10	Indus Valley tradition (Harappan civilization)	Chazan ch. 12
11	Early state-level societies in China	Chazan ch. 12
March 18	Written assignment + process portfolio due	
April TBA	Final Test (exam period)	