ARCL0172: Comparative Archaeologies of the Americas I: First Peoples to emerging complexity
Academic Year 2018-9
15 credits

Turnitin ID: 3885685; Password: IoA1819

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Contributions (Lectures/Seminars) from:
Manuel Arroyo-Kalin (MAK), Elizabeth Baquedano (EB), Dorian Fuller (DF),
Elizabeth Graham (EG), José Oliver (JO), Phil Riris (PR), Bill Sillar (BS)

ESSAY OUTLINE due on December 1st. FULL ESSAY due on 4 January 2019
LECTURES/SEMINARS: Room B13; Fridays, 9-11 am
1. **OVERVIEW**

**1A. Short description**
This module offers an introduction to the archaeology of the Americas, from its initial peopling to the times and regions where social complexity emerged. The module is organized around key archaeological and environmental influences, domestication and agriculture, material culture, social organisation, regional interaction, and human impact on the landscape.

**1B. Week-by-week summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture /Seminar</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer/Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 October</td>
<td>Briefing &amp; discussion</td>
<td>Course Organisation. The Americas</td>
<td>Manuel Arroyo-Kalin (MAK) Elizabeth Graham (EG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture 1</td>
<td>THE PEOPLING OF THE AMERICAS</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 October</td>
<td>Seminar 1</td>
<td>Colonising the landscape of the Americas</td>
<td>José R Oliver JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>AMERICAS: THE FIRST HALF OF THE HOLOCENE</td>
<td>Phillip Riris PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 October</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Multiple adaptations: Fisherfolk – Foragers – Plant managers and cultivators</td>
<td>JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>DOMESTICATION IN THE AMERICAS- PAN-CONTINENTAL (PLANTS+ANIMALS)</td>
<td>Dorian Fuller (DQF) &amp; Bill Sillar (BS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 October</td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Domestication across the Americas</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L4</td>
<td>EARLY MONUMENTALITY IN THE MID HOLOCENE (ARCHAIC SEDENTISM)</td>
<td>JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 November</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>Archaic monumentality in North and Central America</td>
<td>JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>Archaic monumentality in South America</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November</td>
<td>S6</td>
<td>An ethnohistorical panorama of non-state societies in the Americas</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L5</td>
<td>BEFORE the State in South America: Valdivia, Caral to Chavin</td>
<td>JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 November</td>
<td>L6</td>
<td>BEFORE THE STATE IN MESOMERICA: FROM THE LATE ARCHAIC TO THE OLMEC</td>
<td>EG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L7</td>
<td>BEYOND THE STATE: SOCIETIES OF NORTHERN S. AMERICA AND AMAZONIA -</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 November</td>
<td>L8</td>
<td>BEYOND THE STATE: SOCIETIES OF THE CARIBBEAN</td>
<td>JRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L9</td>
<td>Beyond the state: Chiefly Sedentary societies of the North American SW</td>
<td>Karen Wright (KW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December</td>
<td>PANEL</td>
<td>Societies of the Americas: beyond and before the state</td>
<td>MAK + All lecturers and all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L10</td>
<td>LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATIONS: BEFORE AND BEYOND THE STATE -</td>
<td>MAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 December</td>
<td>S7/PANEL</td>
<td>Case studies in anthropic landscape transformation in the Americas: beyond and before the state</td>
<td>EG + All lecturers and all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CLOSING DISCUSSION</td>
<td>SYNTHESIS: ARCHAEOLOGY, ETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHNOHISTORY IN NON-STATE AMERICAS</td>
<td>MAK + All lecturers and all students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1C. Basic texts

Moore J. D. 2014 A Prehistory of South America Ancient Cultural Diversity on the Least Known Continent. University of Colorado Press
Silverman H. and W.H. Isbell (eds.) 2008 Handbook of South American Archaeology New York: Springer

1D. Teaching Methods

The course has been structured as a series of lectures, seminars and discussions (‘panels’). All meetings are compulsory and readings are set out in advance. A simple motto applies: the more you read beforehand, the better you will understand the subject matter. Lectures are introductory and seek to outline significant topics focused in broad regions. They are interspersed with readings-based Seminars in which students will delve into the topics introduced in the lecture in more detail. Readings will be assigned the week before by the seminar chair (if for some reason they are not assigned, feel free to email the session chair). Seminars are a crucial part of the course and students should ensure they pay attention to the specifics of archaeological case studies and/or texts within the broader topics under discussion. Each seminar will be chaired by one or more lecturers and will provide opportunities to discuss broad dimension of the seminar’s topics as well as individual case studies. For each seminar, students will take turns presenting short summary of the key arguments made by the author/s of the articles/chapters, addressing the following: (a) What are the key questions or problems/issues addressed (i.e., aims/objectives)? (2) Does the evidence presented address the questions/problems raised? (3) How effectively? (4) Are the interpretations (inferences/deduction) rigorous, solid? (5) Are the conclusions strong or weak, and why?

Over the course of the term, the lecture and seminar series will support the development of a comparative continental perspective. During two panels, ARCL0172 will discuss specific themes from the vantage point of their own regional expertise.

1E. Methods of assessment and deadlines

Assessment: ESSAY due on 4 January 2018

Work will be assessed by means of a single essay focused on a theme covered during the Term. A topic for the essay must be agreed between each student and the course coordinator, who may enlist some of the other Americas lecturers to provide additional input and support. Essay
topics should be agreed by 1 November. A final 4,000 word essay based on additional research and incorporating comments from the course coordinator will be due on **4 January 2018**. The following are not included in the word-count: title page, contents pages, lists of figure and tables, abstract, bibliography, appendices.

All coursework must be submitted both as hard copy and electronically. For the hard copy should staple the appropriate colour-coded IoA coversheet (available in the IoA library and outside room 411a) to the front of each piece of work and submit it to the red box at the Reception Desk. All coursework should be uploaded to Turnitin by midnight on the day of the deadline. This will date-stamp your work. It is also essential that the first word of your “Submission title” is your examination candidate number (e.g. YGBR8- Debating Tiwanaku Collapse). The Turnitin ID and Password for ARCL0172 are:

Turnitin ID: 3885685; Password: IoA1819

**Coursework Policies:** General policies and procedures concerning courses and coursework, including submission procedures, assessment criteria, and general resources, are available on the IoA Student Administration section of Moodle: [https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=40867](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=40867). It is essential that you read and comply with these. Note that some of the policies and procedures will be different depending on your status (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate taught, affiliate, graduate diploma, intercollegiate, interdepartmental). If in doubt, please consult your course co-ordinator.

**Extensions:** Strict UCL-wide regulations exist for the granting of extensions for coursework. Course Coordinators are not permitted to grant extensions. All requests for extensions must be submitted on an appropriate UCL form, together with supporting documentation, to Judy Medrington, who will then refer it for consideration. Please be aware that the grounds that are acceptable are limited. Those with long-term difficulties should contact UCL Student Disability Services to make special arrangements at the start of term. Please see the IoA Student Administration section of Moodle for further information. Additional information is given here [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/)

**1F. Workload**
There will be 10 hours of lectures, 7 hours of seminars and 2 hours of panels. Students can be expected to undertake around 81 hours of reading for lectures, seminars and panels, as well as additional 42 hours producing assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of 150 hours for the course.

**1G. Prerequisites**
This course does not have a prerequisite.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

**2A. Course Aims and Objectives**
• To provide an overview of some of the key archaeological topics and datasets that define our understanding of the human past of the Americas before and beyond state-like formation.
• To introduce evidence from a range of additional disciplines (linguistics, epigraphy, geography, palaeoecology, ethnography) that bear on the reconstruction of the culture, history and interactions of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.
• To encourage the development of new archaeological research in the Americas by raising awareness of the specific research questions, scientific strengths, and research weaknesses of archaeological research traditions in different regions and periods of analysis.
• To train and exercise students’ ability to evaluate interpretations of archaeological data critically.
• To expose students to the most important current topics in the archaeology and evolution of indigenous societies of the Americas, providing knowledge that permit informed choices in the careers they wish to pursue, including specific areas of interest at PhD level.

2B. Learning Outcomes

• Students will learn about important topics in the Archaeology of the Americas to acquire a broad understanding of the continent’s history before European colonization, with specific attention to initial peopling, monumentality, the adoption of plant cultivation and animal domesticates, and developing social complexity.
• Students will develop a continent-wide perspective on different archaeological trajectories as well as a nuanced understanding of the landscape of the Americas and its relation to archaeological evidence.
• Through a consideration of different research traditions in the Archaeology of the Americas, students will identify some of the key research questions that can be targeted by future archaeological research.
3. SCHEDULE and SYLLABUS

Week 1.

Session 1. 5 Oct, 9-10 am. Introduction to Course (MAK) and discussing the Americas (EG)

Session description: This session presents the general aims and objectives of the course and discusses its plan and assessments. Discussion then problematizes the notion of the Americas: its origins, its problems, and its meaning (or lack of meaning): Why is there no 'Afrope' or 'Eurica'?

Source Readings:


Session 2. 5 Oct, 10-11 am. Lecture 1: The Peopling of the Americas (MAK)

Session description: Aside from Antarctica, the Americas was the last extensive landmass to be colonised by humans. Current research suggests that humans expanded into the it during the late Pleistocene. In the archaeological literature, this process has historically been discussed as the Clovis/Pre-Clovis controversy, including here as models of big game hunters and megafauna extinctions. Evidence from South America, however, posits crucial questions to the Clovis-First model, which is beginning to be doubted even in North America. This lecture provide an overview of pointers and polemics that define the continent’s initial human colonisation.

Source Readings:


Bueno, L, Prates, L, Politis, G and Steele, J. 2013. A Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene Archaeological 14c Database for South America and the Isthmus of Panama: Palaeoenvironmental Contexts and Demographic Interpretations. Quaternary International, 301, 1-2

Week 2.

Session 3. 12 Oct, 9-10 am. Seminar 1: Colonising the landscape of the Americas (JRO)

Session description: students will examine archaeological case studies pertaining to the colonisation of the Americas by foragers over the terminal Pleistocene and earliest moments of the Holocene.

Seminar Readings:

Ancient DNA

**Earliest evidence in North America**


**Middle and Central America**


Gonzalez, Silvia, David Huddart, Isabel Israde-Alcántara, Gabriela Domínguez-Vázquez, James Bischoff and Nicholas Felstead (2015). Paleoindian sites from the Basin of Mexico: Evidence from stratigraphy, teprochronology and dating. *Quaternary International* 363: 4-19. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2014.03.015](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2014.03.015)


The earliest settlers of Mesoamerica date back to the late Pleistocene. *PLoS ONE* Vol.12(8). [https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0183345](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0183345)


**Tropical lowlands of South America**


Meltzer, David J. James M. Adovasio, Tom D. Dillehay (1994) On a Pleistocene human occupation at Pedra Furada, Brazil. *Antiquity*, 68 (261):695-714. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00047414](http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00047414)


Nami, H G and Stanford, D J. 2016. Dating the Peopling of Northwestern South America: An AMS Date from El Inga Site, Highland Ecuador. *PaleoAmerica* 2, 60-63. DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20555563.2016.1139793](http://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20555563.2016.1139793)

Rademaker, Kurt ; Gregory Hodgins; Katherine Moore; Sonia Zarrillo; Christopher Miller; Gordon R M Bromley; Peter Leach; David A Reid; Willy Yépez Álvarez and Daniel H Sandweiss (2014) Paleoindian settlement of the high-altitude Peruvian Andes. *Science*, Vol.346(6208): 466-469.

**Pacific Arid Coast**


http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/5/e1602778 and supplement http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/suppl/2017/05/22/3.5.e1602778.DC1

Jackson, D, Ménendez, C, Seguel, R, Maldonado, A and Vargas, G. 2007. Initial Occupation of the Pacific Coast of Chile During Late Pleistocene Times. Current Anthropology, 48, 725-731. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/520965


Southern Cone


Politis, G G, Gutiérrez, M A, Rafuse, D J and Blasi, A. 2016. The Arrival of Homo Sapiens into the Southern Cone at 14,000 Years Ago. PLOS ONE, 11, e0162870. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0162870


**Lithic technology**


Miotti, L, Salemme, M and Flegenheimer, N (eds.) 2002 Ancient Evidence for Paleo South Americans: From Where the South Winds Blow, College Station, TX: Center for the Study of First Americans and Texas A&M University Press.


https://doi.org/10.1080/15564894.2011.586087

**Session 4. 12 Oct, 10-11 am.: Lecture 2: The Americas: the first half of the Holocene (PR)**

The diverse Paleoindian societies diverges further into regional archaeological cultures during the early Holocene. Archaeologists have historically sought to categorise these highly variable, non-agricultural, and increasingly sedentary peoples, against the backdrop of post-Ice Age climate change. This lecture examines cultural and behavioural adaptations in different parts of the Americas after 11,700 cal BP through a series of focused case studies, discussing the structure of the early Holocene archaeological record itself and the theoretical underpinnings of the so-called “Archaic” or “Preceramic” periods.

**Readings**

*Required reading*


**North America**

*Recommended reading*


- Plains, W. Raymond Wood
- Eastern Woodlands, T.R. Pauketat
- Great Basin, W.R. Hildebrandt and K.R. McGuire


- 2.15 - Paleoindian and Archaic periods in North America, D.G. Anderson
- 2.33 - The Great Plains and Mississippi Valley, L. Sundström & T. Pauketat

**Mesoamerica**

*Recommended reading*


- The Origins of Food Production in Mesoamerica, D.R. Piperno and B. Smith

- Lower Central America, A. Ranere
- Early Cultures of Middle America, R.N. Zeitlin


**South America**

**Recommended reading**


- 2.16 - Paleoindian and Archaic periods of Central and South America, H. Yacobaccio

- 10 - Early Fishing Societies in Western South America, D.H. Sandweiss
- 14 - The Pampas and Campos of South America, G. Politis
- 18 - Sambaqui (Shell Mound) Societies of Coastal Brazil, M.D. Gaspar et al.

**Week 3.**
Supplementing Lecture 2, in this seminar students will employ assigned readings to compare and contrast some of the diverse lifeways observed in the Americas during the early and middle Holocene.

**Readings:**


**Session 6. 19 Oct, 10-11 am. Lecture 3: Domestication: Plants (DQF) and Animals (BS)**

Processes of plant and animal domestication took place independently from the Old World in the Americas. In this lecture two short briefings discuss the range of domesticates species as well the broad chronology of domestication in multiple regions of the Americas.

**Overviews:**


Overviews of New World Plant domestication (make sure you look at one of these at least):


Overviews of key Animal domestication pathways (make sure you look at one of these at least):


Van Asch, Barbara, Ai-bing Zhang, Mattias C.R. Oskarsson, Comelya F.C. Klüssch, António Amorim and Peter Savolainen. 2017 Pre-Columbian origins of Native American dog
breeds, with only limited replacement by European dogs, confirmed by mtDNA analysis.  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2013.1142

**Week 4.**

**Session 7.  26 Oct, 9-10 am. Seminar 3: Domestication across the Americas (MAK)**

In this seminar students will examine specific archaeological case studies that provide insights into the history of plant and animal domestication in different regions of the Americas.

**General Readings:**


Oliver José R. 2008 The Archaeology of Agriculture in Ancient Amazonia In: Silverman H. and W.H. Isbell (eds.) Handbook of South American Archaeology New York: Springer 185-216

Pearsall Deborah M. 2008 Plant Domestication and shift to Agriculture in the Andes in: Silverman H. and W.H. Isbell (eds.) Handbook of South American Archaeology New York: Springer 105-120

Smith, Bruce D. 2001. Documenting plant domestication: The consilience of biological and archaeological approaches, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA 98(4): 1324-1326 [Teaching Collection; this article can be downloaded through the UCL network from http://www.pnas.org/all.shtml]


Stahl Peter. W. 2008 Animal domestication in South America In: Silverman H. and W.H. Isbell (eds.) Handbook of South American Archaeology New York: Springer 121-130

**Seminar Readings:**

**North America**


in the Americas. PNAS 102(51): 18315-18320.

**Mesoamerica**

**Animals**


**Plants**

South America

Animals

Plant cultivation


From the mid-Holocene onwards, a process of increased sedentism was initiated, albeit not all societies followed the same pathways towards settled life-ways. In some areas of the Americas increased sedentism, and population growth (stimulated by more efficient food and resource procurement strategies and technologies) was accompanied by significant, anthropogenic modifications of the landscape at scales not previously known. Among these are human-built structures that archaeologists subsumed under the sobriquet of ‘monumentality’. Both, sedentism and monumentality raise crucial research questions for archaeology: Why build large-scale monuments? What is, if any, the relationship between settling-down and monumental constructions? How do these inform us about social complexity during the Archaic? Why did only some social groups invest efforts and energy in monumentality?

Readings


Week 5.

Session 9. 2 Nov, 9-10 am. Seminar 4: Archaic monumentality in North and Central America (JRO)

In this seminar we will examine a series of case studies that explore monumentality, sedentism, and social complexity in Archaic North and Central America.

Reading list


**Reading List Recommended (optional)**

Willey, Gordon R. and Charles R. McGimsey (1954). *The Monagrillo Culture of Panama*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, v. 49, no. 2. [This item is on STORES. J. R. Oliver has a copy that can be consulted]


**Session 10. 2 Nov, 10-11 am. Seminar 5: Archaic monumentality in South America (MAK)**

In this seminar we will examine a series of case studies that explore monumentality, sedentism, and social complexity in Archaic South America.

**Readings**


Dillehay, Tom D., Duccio Bonavia, Steven Goodbred, Mario Pino, Victor Vasquez, Teresa RosalesTham, William Conklin, Jeff Splistotser, Dolores Piperno, José Iriarte, Alexander Grobman, Gerson Levi-Lazzaris, Daniel Moreira, Marilauro Lopéz, Tiffany Tung, Anne Titelbaum, John Verano, James


Week 6.
Session 11. 16 Nov, 9-10 am. Seminar 6: An ethnohistorical panorama of non-state societies in the Americas (MAK)

In the Americas a broad distinction can be drawn between societies that came to be influenced by emerging state-like formations and those that did remained detached from the trappings of empires and states. Many of the latter were formations encountered by Europeans at the time of colonising the continent. In this session we review key selected examples of these societies in order to provide a comparison our knowledge about them with archaeological knowledge that defines their historical trajectories prior to European colonisation. In this lecture we use a selection of archaeological case to examine the variable nature of these societies, some of which epitomize prevailing cultural and social patterns present at the time of European colonisation.

Readings


Session 12. 16 Nov, 10-11 am. Lecture 5: BEFORE THE STATE IN SOUTH AMERICA: VALDIVIA, CARAL TO CHAVIN (JRO)

This lecture will discuss the earliest material and architectural signatures of three settled lifeways found along the Pacific coast and Andean areas by focusing on four key pre-state settlements spanning between 3400 BC and ca. 500 BC: Valdivia, Caral and Chavín de Huantar. Each case study presents its distinctive features of material culture (portable artifacts), architecture (public/ceremonial space), and economic/subsistence organization that point to macro-regional diversity and yet comparable degrees of social complexity.

Readings:


Week 7.

Session 13.  23 Nov, 9-10 am. Lecture 6: BEFORE THE STATE IN MESOMERICA: FROM THE LATE ARCHAIC TO THE OLMEC (EG)

This lecture will review what is known about the developments that led to Mesoamerican civilization, the attributes that characterise it, and the differences between Mesoamerican and Old World trajectories.

Readings:


Flannery, Kent V., ed. 2009. The Early Mesoamerican Village. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.


Session 14.  23 Nov, 10-11 am. Lecture 7: BEYOND THE STATE: SOCIETIES OF NORTHERN S. AMERICA AND AMAZONIA (MAK)

Societies of Northern South America and Amazonia constitute a classic example of emerging social complexity beyond the reach of state-like social formations and which did not develop into complex polities. In this lecture we review what is known about these developments that led to
Mesoamerican civilization, the attributes that characterise it, and the differences between Mesoamerican and Old World trajectories.

Readings


Week 8.

Session 15.  30 Nov. 9-10 am. Lecture 8: BEYOND THE STATE: SOCIETIES OF THE CARIBBEAN (JRO)

Following earliest (Archaic) colonization of the Antillean islands (from 6000 BP onward) a new population movement stemming from NE South America reached the islands between 400-200 BC, with a distinctive white-on-red ceramic tradition (known as Saladoi). This demic expansion elegantly correlates with the spread (diaspora) of Arawak languages. The spread of the Saladoi series (a sloping horizon) reached as far as eastern Hispaniola, and it survived as late as AD 400 in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. The sustained interaction between resident (authochtonous) Archaic and the Saladoi arrivistes in Puerto Rico and NE Caribbean (400 BC to after AD 400) resulted in the emergence of new ceramic series/traditions (Ostionoid, Meillacoid) each with several regional styles, around AD 600/700. It is during this time that ceremonial architecture (structured plazas and ballcourts) emerged, and generally, evidence point to social stratification (elites vs ‘commoners’) centered in Hispaniola and Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands. Some argue for the emergence of pristine chiefdoms during this period. Between AD 900-1200 cultural tradition (Chicoid series of styles) arose in the Greater Antilles, along with further elaboration of ceremonial lapidary art and sculptural work, and plaza and ball courts. continued into the first decades of Spanish conquest. Ethnohistorically, these populations (Bahamas and Greater Antilles) were identified as “Indios of these West Indies”, and currently known as the Taino encountered by Columbus. Following this background, this lecture focuses primarily this late pre-colonial to early colonial ‘Taino’ (Chicoid) period, bringing together archaeological and ethno-historical evidence to discuss the related topics of political-religious ideology, social complexity and the nature of power among the first New World aborigines encountered by Europeans.
Readings


https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190605247.003.0005


Recommended (optional) readings


Session 16. 30 Nov. 10-11 am. Lecture 9: BEYOND THE STATE: CHIEFLY SEDENTARY SOCIETIES OF NORTH AMERICA (KW)

In this lecture students will examine archaeological evidence for increasing social complexity in North America. In the American southwest, three complex societies emerged beginning about 900 AD. These were the Ancestral Pueblo culture (=Anasazi); the Mogollon culture; and the
Hohokam culture. A major debate has emerged concerning social organization in the Ancestral Pueblos, specifically whether they were urbanized, state-level societies. Some have suggested that pueblo cultures do not need to be labelled as “urban, state-level civilizations” to be considered important and that such labels force these cultures into categories derived from elsewhere. Elsewhere, in the Mississippi valley, in turn, the Mississippian (c. AD 900-1500) describes a tradition of complex societies which swept across the American southeast and Midwest, associated with agriculture, the building of platform mounds and a range of important ceremonial centres. Cahokia – the greatest of these, at 890ha - is North America's largest prehistoric settlement site. Cahokia has been at the centre of debate concerning its status: state?, urban centre? complex chiefdom? We will critically consider both trajectories in comparative perspective.

Readings

North America: Overviews

Regional overviews

Cordell, L. and McBrinn, M. 2012. *Archaeology of the Southwest.* 3rd edition. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press. Chapters 4, 5, 6

Case studies

Cordell, L. and McBrinn, M. 2012. *Archaeology of the Southwest.* 3rd edition. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press. Chapter 7, 8, 9, 10
Keystone Dam

Cerro Juanaquena and other cerros de trincheros sites

Pithouse villages: general

Shabik’eschee Village (Ancestral Pueblo) and the SU site (Mogollon)

Pithouses and pueblos

Duckfoot and McPhee sites


Early Ancestral Pueblos (Anasazi): general


**Chaco Canyon (read one work by Lekson and one by another author)**


**The Hohokam**


**Mimbres and Mogollon**


(1) Abandonments and migrations (ca. 1150-1275 AD/CE)

(2) Aggregation and Growth (ca. 1275-1490 AD/CE)

Ancestral Pueblos: Mesa Verde, Salmon Ruin, the Rio Grande

Casas Grandes

Mississippian


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**Week 9.**

**Session 17.** 7 Dec. 9-10 am. PANEL: Societies of the Americas: beyond and before the state (all lecturers)

During this panel, all ARCL1072 lecturers will discuss archaeological evidence from their respective research regions to analyse the nature of social formations in the Americas beyond and before the state.

There are no readings for this session

**Session 18.** 7 Dec. 10-11 am. Lecture 10: Landscape transformations before and beyond the State (MAK)

Evidence for persistent settlement and population growth in Amazonia becomes much more ubiquitous during the final millennia of the Holocene. It goes in hand with a remarkable array of modifications of the landscape itself, for instance the building of mounds, the digging of ditches, the formation of anthropogenic soils, and the development of networks of paths and roads. When examined in broad comparative perspective and at different geographic scales, important variability is evident

**Readings:**


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**Week 10.**

**Session 19.** 14 Dec, 9-10 am. **Seminar 7: Case studies in anthropic landscape transformation in the Americas (before or beyond the state) (EG)**

In this seminar students will examine different archaeological case studies documenting human impact on the landscape.

**Readings**


Session 20. 14 Dec. 10-11 am. PANEL: Synthesis: Archaeology, ethnography and ethnohistoric in non-state Americas (all lecturers)
During this panel, all ARCL1072 lecturers will discuss how the relationship between archaeological evidence and ethnographic and ethnohistorical information shape the field of the archaeology of the Americas.

All readings for Seminar 6 (Week 6) as well as: