

Core Course II

Social Formations and Cultural Patterns of the Ancient World-I

Course Objectives:

The Course aims to introduce students to significant developments in world history that have shaped the complexity of human existence. To begin with, it offers a historical survey of human evolution. It details the transition from the hunting-gathering subsistence pattern to a more advanced adaptations to a sedentary farming economy. The course content is based on the premise that the pace and nature of change differed in different parts of the world. Further, changes in social formations that facilitated the emergence of socially stratified and state-ordered societies are explained through a study of some of the early Bronze Age Civilizations. The impact of specific ecological conditions on different trajectories of growth, higher population density and social complexity, the emergence of the city and newer crafts and trade and the unfolding of cultural patterns in the early civilizations are concerns that are central to this course. This therefore, provides a sound foundation in the historical discipline, and helps in engaging in a variety of subject matters of history – social relations, economics, political formations, religion, and culture from a global perspective. Understanding the dissimilar but interlinked history of humanity is therefore the prime objective of this Course.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course the student shall be able to:

- Trace long term changes in the relationship of humans to their landscapes, to resources and to social groups.
- Discuss that human history is the consequence of choices made in ecological and biological contexts, and that these choices are not only forced by external forces like environmental change but are also enabled by changes in technology and systems of cultural cognition.
- Delineate the significance of early food production and the beginning of social complexity.
- Analyse the process of state formation and urbanism in the early Bronze Age Civilizations.
- Correlate the ancient past and its connected histories, the ways in which it is reconstructed, and begin to understand the fundamentals of historical methods and approaches.

Course Content:

Unit-I: Evolution of humankind and Palaeolithic cultures

- a. Comprehending prehistory and history: issues and interpretative frameworks
- b. Environmental context of human evolution
- c. Biological evolution of hominins
- d. Social and cultural adaptations: mobility and migration; development of lithic and other technologies; changes in the hunting gathering economy; social organization; art and graves.

Unit-II: Understanding the Mesolithic

- a. Mesolithic as a transitional stage in prehistory
- b. Ecological change and changes in subsistence strategies based on case studies from West Asia, Europe and Meso-America: seasonal and broad-spectrum exploitation of resources, food storage, tools, semi-sedentism and features of social complexity

Unit-III: The Neolithic

- a. Debating the origins of food production – climate change; population pressure; ecological choices; cognitive reorientations
- b. Features of the Neolithic based on sites from West Asia, Europe and China: nature and size of settlements; tool-kits, artefacts and pottery; family and household
- c. Features of social complexity in late Neolithic communities; ceremonial sites and structures

Unit-IV: The Bronze Age

Note: Rubrics b, c and d are to be based on any one case study:

Ancient Mesopotamia (Sumerian and Akkadian period)/Egypt (Old Kingdom)/China (Shang dynasty).

- a. Concepts: 'Bronze Age', 'Civilization' 'Urban Revolution' and 'State'
- b. Ecological context of early civilizations
- c. Aspects of social complexity: class, gender and economic specialization
- d. Forms of kingship, religion and state

Unit V: Nomadic Pastoralism: Concept of Pastoralism; Emergence in West Asia and interaction with urban-state societies between the third and second millennium

Unit-VI: The Advent of Iron: Spread of iron technology and complex technological and economic changes

ESSENTIAL READINGS AND UNIT WISE TEACHING OUTCOMES:

Unit-I:This Unit introduces students to the basic aspects of world prehistory particularly with reference to the debate on the biological and cultural evolution of Hominines.(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)

- Bogucki, P. (1999).*The Origins of Human Society*. Wiley-Blackwell 1999, Chapter 2, pp. 29-77.
- Carr, E.H. (1961/1991). “The Historian and his facts”, in E.H. Carr, *What is History?* Penguin Modern Classics (2ndEdn.), pp.7-30.
- Childe, V.G. (1942/1971). “Archaeology and History”, Chapter 1, in V.G. Childe, *What Happened in History?* Great Britain: Pelican, 1942, reprint 1971, pp. 13-32.
- Fagan, B.M. and N. Durrani. eds. (2019). *The People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Pre-history*. (15thedn.). New York: Routledge, Chapters 2-5, pp. 22-134.
- Website: www.humanorigins.si.edu (website of the Smithsonian Museum)
- कार, E.H.(1976).‘इतिहासकर और उसके तथ्य’, E.H. कार, इतिहास क्या है? में अध्याय 1, मेकमिलन पब्लिकेशन (हिन्दी अनुवाद, 1976).
- चाइल्ड, V.गॉर्डन, इतिहास का इतिहास, राजकमल प्रकाशन, अध्याय 1.
- चाइल्ड, V.गॉर्डन. (2019) औजारों का इतिहास (अनुवाद सुशील कुमार), दिल्ली: गार्गी प्रकाशन.
- फ़ारूकी, A. (2015). प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन सामाजिक संरचनाएँ और संस्कृतियाँ, दिल्ली: मानक प्रकाशन.
- मजूमदार, D.N तथा गोपाल शरण, प्रागितिहास, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय, हिन्दी माध्यम कार्यान्वयन निर्देशलय.

Unit II. This Unit will familiarise students with a significant stage in prehistory called the Mesolithic when advanced Hunter-Gatherer communities responded to environmental changes with greater sedentism and newer ways of exploiting plants and animals.(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)

- Bogucki, P. (1999). *The Origins of Human Society*. Massachusetts: Blackwell, pp. 127-159.
- Price, T.D. (1991). “The Mesolithic of Northern Europe”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 20, pp.211-233.
- Shea, J. J. and D.E. Lieberman. (2009). eds. *Transitions in Prehistory. Essays in Honour of Ofer Bar-Yosef*. Oxbow Books, pp. 185-222

- Zvelebil, M. (1989). “Economic Intensification and Postglacial Hunter-Gatherers in North Temperate Europe.” in C. Bonsall, (Ed). *The Mesolithic in Europe*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press 1989, pp. 80-88.
- फ़ारूकी, A. (2015). प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन सामाजिक संरचनाएँ और संस्कृतियाँ, दिल्ली: मानक प्रकाशन.

Unit III. This Unit deals with the debate on the beginning of agriculture and related changes in the subsistence pattern and ways of life. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Cohen M. (2009). ‘Introduction. Rethinking the Origins of Agriculture’. October 2009, *Current Anthropology*. 50 (5), pp.591-595.
- Fagan, B.M. and N. Durrani. (2019). *The People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Pre-history*. New York: Routledge (15th Ed.), Chapters 8, 9, 10, 12, pp. 178-218, 228-245.
- Hodder, I. (2007). “Catalhoyuk in the context of Middle Eastern Neolithic”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 36, 2007, pp. 105-120.
- Price, T.D. and O. Bar-Yosef.(2011). “The Origins of Agriculture: New Data, New Ideas”, An Introduction to Supplement 4. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 52, No. S4, October 2011, pp. S163-S174.
- Wenke, R.J. and D. Olzewski. (2007). *Patterns in Prehistory: Humankind’s First Three Million Years*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 228-268.
- फ़ारूकी, A. (2015). प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन सामाजिक संरचनाएँ और संस्कृतियाँ, दिल्ली: मानक प्रकाशन.

Unit IV. This Unit will enable students to contextualize the beginning of urban settlements, appearance of complex society and state with reference to some of the early civilisations of the world. **(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

- Childe, G. (1950). “The Urban Revolution, “*The Town Planning Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1950, pp. 3-17.
- Redman, C.L. (1978). *The Rise of Civilisations. From Early Farmers to Urban Society in the Ancient Near East*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, Chapter 2, 6, 7, pp. 16-49; 188-213; 214-243.
- Scarre, Christopher and Brian M. Fagan. (2008). *Ancient Civilizations* (3rdedn.), New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, pp. 3-12, and pp. 26-47.
- Whitehouse, R. (1977). *The First Civilizations*. Oxford: Phaidon, Chapters 1 and 9, pp 7-15 and 177-199.
- फ़ारूकी, A. (2015). प्राचीन और मध्यकालीन सामाजिक संरचनाएँ और संस्कृतियाँ, दिल्ली: मानक प्रकाशन.

Mesopotamia

- Nissen, H.J. (2003). *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell.
- Redman, C.L. (1978). *The Rise of Civilisations. From Early Farmers to Urban Society in the Ancient near East.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, Chapters 8, pp. 244-322.
- Roux, Georges (1992). *Ancient Iraq*, UK: Penguin, Chapters 1, 5, 6, 8, 9; pp. 1-16; pp. 66-103; 122-160.
- Whitehouse, R. (1977). *The First Civilizations*, Oxford: Phaidon, Chapters 3, 4, 5, pp 33-115.

OR

China

- Chang, K.C. (1987). *Shang Civilization.* New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, pp. 263-288.
- Feng, Li. (2013). *Early China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-111.
- Keightly, D.N. (1999). "The Shang. China's First Historical Dynasty" in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessey. (Ed.). *The Cambridge History of Ancient China. From the origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Thorp, R. L. (2006). *China in the Early Bronze Age. Shang Civilization.* Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

OR

Egypt

- Hawkes, J. (1973). "Egypt: the beginnings and the Old Kingdom" in *The First Great Civilisations: Life in Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley and Egypt*, New York: Knopf/Random House, pp. 285-299.
- Trigger, B.G., B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd. (1983). *Ancient Egypt A Social History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-43.
- Wilkinson, T. (2010). *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt: The History of a Civilisation from 30,000 BC to Cleopatra.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing, pp. 13-114.
- Silverman, D. P. (Ed.). (2003). *Ancient Egypt.* New York: Oxford University Press (Ed.) pp. 10 - 27.

Unit V. This unit will discuss pastoralism as a conceptual social category and enlarge on its evolution in Western Asia. The unit will also discuss the relationship of pastoralism with sedentary regimes and urban-state societies in the third and second Millennium BCE. **(Teaching Time: 1 week Approx.)**

- Sherratt, A. “Sedentary Agriculture and nomadic pastoral populations.” in *History of Humanity: from the third millennium to the seventh century BCE, vol. II*, (Ed.) S.J. de Laet. London: Routledge, pp. 37-43.
- Lees, S. And D.G. Bates. (April 1974), “The Emergence of Specialised Nomadic Pastoralism: A Systemic model,” *American Antiquity*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 187-193.

Unit VI: This Unit highlights the discussion on the introduction of iron technology and the impact that it had on parts of West Asia and Europe. **(Teaching Time: 1 week Approx.)**

- Villard, P. (1996). “The beginning of the Iron Age and its Consequences”, in *History of Humanity (Scientific and Cultural Developments) Vol. II. From the Third Millennium to the Seventh Century B.C.* Paris, London: Routledge: UNESCO.
- Maddin, R., J.D. Muhly, T.S. Wheeler (1977). “How the Iron Age Began”, *Scientific American*, Vol. 237, No, 4, Oct. 1977, pp. 122-131.
- Cotterell, A. (1985). “The Coming of Iron”, in A.Cotterell, *Origins of European Civilization*, London: Michael Joseph/ Rainbird, pp. 118-140.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Bar-Yosef, O, and F. Valla. (1990). “The Natufian culture and the origins of the Neolithic in the Levant”, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Aug-Oct, pp. 433-436
- Binford, L.R. (1968). ‘Post-Pleistocene adaptations’ in L. R. Binford and S. R. Binford, eds. *New perspectives in Archaeology*. Chicago: Aldine, pp. 313-342.
- Chang, K.C. (1986). *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, pp. 234-294.
- Clark, G. (1977). *World Prehistory in New Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (3rd edn.) pp. 1- 61.
- Darwin, C. (1859, 2003). *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, Joseph Carroll Ed. Canada: Broadview Press (2003 edn.) Chapters 1-5/
- Flannery, K.V. (1973). “Origins of Food Production”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 2 (1973), pp.271- 310.
- Fried, M. (1978). “The State, the Chicken, and the Egg; or, What Came First” in R. Cohen and E. Service Ed. *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution* (Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978), pp. 3-47.

- James, T.G.H. (1979, 2005). *The British Museum's Concise Introduction to Ancient Egypt* British Museum Publications, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Johnson, A. W. and Timothy Earle (2000). *The Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kemp, B. (1989). *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilisation*. London: Routledge.
- Kumar, R. (2018). *Ancient and Medieval World: From Evolution of Humans to the Crisis of Feudalism*, New Delhi: Sage.
- Lamberg-Karlovsky, C.C. and J.A. Sabloff. (1979). *Ancient Civilizations, The Near East and Mesoamerica*. California: Benjamin-Cummings Publishing Company.
- Leakey, R. (1981). *The Making of Mankind*. London: Michael Joseph Limited, 1981, pp. 9 – 183.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press, pp. 54-76.
- Lewin, R. (2005). *Evolution: An Illustrated Introduction*. (5th edn.) USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-29, 39-55, 60-66, 95-127, 131-156, 159-175, 179-235.
- Lewis-Williams. D. (2002). *The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Maisels, C. K. (1987). "Models of Social Evolution: Trajectories from the Neolithic to the State", *Man*, New Series, Col. 22, No. 2, June, pp. 331-359.
- McAdams, Robert. (1966). *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico*. New Brunswick (USA) and London: Aldine Transaction (Second Reprint 2007).
- Postgate, J.N. (1992). *Early Mesopotamia. Society and Economy at the dawn of history*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1- 154.
- Service, E. (1973). *Origins of the State and Civilization. The Process of Cultural Evolutions*: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Sherratt, A. (1996) "Sedentary Agricultural and nomadic pastoral populations' in *History of Humanity: From the third millennium to the seventh century B.C.* vol. II, edited by S. J. de Laet, 37-43, Paris, London: Routledge, UNESCO, pp. 37– 43.
- Starr, H. (2005). "Subsistence Models and metaphors for the Transition to Agriculture in North western Europe", MDIA, Issue Title: Subsistence and Sustenance, Vol.15, no. 1, 2005Ann Arbor, Publishing, University of Michigan Library
[url:http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0522508.0015.103](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.0522508.0015.103).
- Website: www.bradshawfoundation.com
- Wright, G. A. (1992). "Origins of Food Production in Southwestern Asia: A Survey of Ideas", *Current Anthropology, Supplement: Inquiry and Debate in Human Sciences: Contributions from Current Anthropology, 1960-1990*, Vol.33, No. 1, Feb., 1992, pp. 109-139.

- Yoffee, Norman. (2004). *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States and Civilisation*, New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 3, pp. 44-90.
- कोरोवकिन, фयोदोर. (2019). प्राचीन विश्व इतिहास का परिचय, Delhi: Medha Publishing House.
- राय, U.N. (2017). विश्व सभ्यता का इतिहास, दिल्ली: राजकमल प्रकाशन

Teaching Learning Process:

Classroom teaching, classroom discussions and student presentations in class and/or in tutorials. Presentations shall focus either on important themes covered in the class lectures, or on specific readings. As this is a paper tracing the history of regions outside the Indian subcontinent, supporting audio-visual aids like documentaries, maps and power point presentations shall be used widely. Students shall also be encouraged to participate in talks/seminar presentations by specialists in the field. Since this is a history of a region/s relatively unfamiliar to students, adequate attention shall be given to background introductory lectures and discussions. Overall, the Teaching Learning Process shall emphasise the interconnectedness of themes within the different rubrics to build a holistic view of the time period/region under study.

Assessment Methods:

Students will be regularly assessed for their grasp on debates and discussions covered in class. Two written submissions and at least one presentation will be used for final grading of the students. Students will be assessed on their ability to engage with a sizeable corpus of readings assigned to the theme for written submissions, i.e. being able to explain important historical trends and tracing historiography reflected in the assigned readings.

Internal Assessment: 25 Marks

Written Exam: 75 Marks

Total: 100 Marks

Keywords:

Human Evolution, Pleistocene, Hominines, Hunter-gatherers, bands, Palaeolithic, Prehistoric art, Holocene, Mesolithic, Domestication, Neolithic Revolution, Complex Society, Food-production, Lithic technologies, Urban Revolution, 'State', Kingship, Bronze Age.