



## **World Archaeology (HIST 4370)**

**Fall Semester 2025  
Tuesday 5:30–7:45 p.m.  
Classroom: STEM 231**

**Instructor: Dr. Michael J. O'Brien  
Office: CAB 313 G**

**E-Mail: [mike.obrien@tamusa.edu](mailto:mike.obrien@tamusa.edu)**

**Office Hours: TR 2:00–5:00 p.m. (or by appointment if that's easier)**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

World archaeology is the global study of human societies and cultures through the systematic examination of material remains from the past. By studying everything from stone tools and pottery to monumental architecture and burial practices, world archaeology provides crucial insights into the diversity of human experience, the development of technology and social complexity, and the ways different cultures have responded to environmental and social challenges over millennia.

## COURSE OBJECTIVE

**Applying critical thinking in order to assess archaeological evidence and competing interpretations.** Students will learn to evaluate the quality and limitations of archaeological data, construct evidence-based arguments about the past, and understand how archaeological knowledge is provisional and subject to revision with new discoveries and analytical techniques.

## REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

*World Prehistory and the Anthropocene*. In addition, I will post readings on Blackboard. Please do not skip **any** readings.

## EXAMS

There will be two tests: a midterm and a final exam. The exams are given in essay format so you can demonstrate your understanding of various topics and to provide your own interpretations of events and themes. It is more important that you be able to demonstrate critical-thinking skills by positing and defending an historical argument rather than simply memorize a list of names and dates. Prior to the exam, you and I will select 8–10 questions, from which I will select several for the exam. The questions will be based on lecture, class discussions, and supplementary readings.

## CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

You **must** engage in classroom discussion over the readings and lectures. Classroom participation and attendance comprise a significant portion of your final grade.

## GRADING SCALE

Midterm Exam: 250 points  
Final Exam: 250 points  
Attendance: 200 points  
Participation: 200 points  
TBD: 100 points

## TOTAL POINTS: 1000

**A = 1000–900; B = 899–800; C = 799–700; D = 699–600; F = 599 and below.**

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Attendance:** Class attendance is **mandatory**. Please be on time; if you know that you will be late or must leave early, please inform me ahead of time.

**Extra Credit:** No such thing.

**Blackboard:** This course has a Blackboard site, which is where your grades will be posted. I will also use Blackboard for course announcements and readings throughout the semester. I will also post my PowerPoint slides online, but please be aware that these provide only outlines for each class and that you are responsible for taking your own notes.

**Make-Up Exams:** Make-up exams are allowed only for emergencies such as debilitating illness, a death in the family, and religious or school functions. In any case, you must provide documentation of your absence **in advance** in order to take a make-up exam.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please be respectful in the classroom. Do not get up and leave early, turn your cell phone to silent mode, and do not hold personal conversations during lecture or discussion. Laptops may be used only to take notes.

**Communication:** Please e-mail me regarding questions or concerns that you might have. I do my best to respond within one day. You may also schedule an appointment to speak with me in my office.

## Support Services & Disclosures

**Disability Support Services (DSS):** Texas A&M University–San Antonio (TAMUSA) is committed to providing equitable access to students with disabilities through reasonable accommodation in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. DSS is currently offering phone and virtual appointments as well as in-person meetings as necessary, by appointment only. For the safety of the entire campus community, they are not open for walk-in inquiries. To schedule a phone, virtual or in-person appointment, call DSS at 210-784-1335 or email them at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu).

**The Academic Learning Center** provides tutoring and supplemental instruction assistance to undergraduate students in all three colleges at TAMUSA. The Center is located on the second floor of CAB. They can be reached by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu) or calling (210) 784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire by clicking on the EAB–Student Success Collaborative link.

**The Student Academic Success Center** takes a developmental approach to help students complete their academic goals from orientation through graduation. The Center offers academic

and skills workshops, one-on-one appointments, and online resources to help retention efforts. The goal of the Center is to help students discover, self-reflect, and become independent learners. To contact the Center, please call **210-784-1307** or email at [Student.Success@tamusa.edu](mailto:Student.Success@tamusa.edu).

**The Jaguar Writing Center** provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. The Writing Center is currently holding all appointments digitally. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. Students wanting to work in real time with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services they offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on their website at [www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center](http://www.tamusa.edu/Writing-Center). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing [writingcenter@tamusa.edu](mailto:writingcenter@tamusa.edu).

**The Six-Drop Rule:** Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops, i.e., courses a student chooses to drop, during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

**Financial Aid & Verification of Attendance:** According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria, which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have his/her aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of his/her federal aid.

**Student Misconduct:** Appropriate conduct is essential to the effective functioning of the University. University policy defines unacceptable conduct, both academic and non-academic misconduct, and penalties for such behavior in The Student Handbook and The Student Code of Conduct.

**Academic Misconduct Policy:** Students at TAMUSA are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes **cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, and ethical misconduct**. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found in The Student Handbook.



University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of “F” on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, where the sanctions can vary up to possible expulsion from the university. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students’ best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation. All student term papers and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software.

**Counseling Resources:** As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health, please contact the Office of Student Counseling & Wellness Services (SC&WS) at [210-784-1331](tel:210-784-1331) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m. All mental-health services provided by SC&WS are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student’s academic or university record. SC&WS provides brief individual, couples, and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit [www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling). If you are interested in scheduling an appointment, please call (210) 784-1331 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m. After hours, please contact the University Police Department at 911 or text “HOME” to 741-741 24/7/365 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24/7/365 hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence:** There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student’s work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should ask me for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without my permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates TAMUSA’s standards of academic integrity.

**The complete academic calendar is available online:**  
<https://www.tamusa.edu/provost/academic-calendar.html>

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### Week 1: August 25

Go over the course and expectations; add topics of interest to the syllabus

### Week 2: September 2

Time, Space, and Process: Archaeological Essentials

(Chapter 1)

**Week 3: September 9**

The origins of humans and their hominin ancestors and spread their out of Africa  
(Chapter 2)

**Week 4: September 16**

Technology  
(Chapter 3)

**Week 5: September 23**

Domestication and Agriculture  
(Chapter 8)

**Week 6: September 30**

Guest Speaker (Dr. Clint McKenzie, UTSA)

**Week 7: October 7**

Climate change and the American Southwest  
(Chapter 5)

**Week 8: October 14**

First Essay Exam (in class)

**Week 9: October 21**

Monuments, buildings, and other public works I  
(Chapter 11)

**Week 10: October 28**

Monuments, buildings, and other public works II

**Week 11: November 4**

Feasts, burials, and human sacrifice  
(Chapter 12)

**Week 12: November 11**

Texas archaeology

**Week 13: November 18**

Second Essay Exam (take-home)

**Week 14: November 25**

Thanksgiving Break

**Week 15: December 2**

Wrap up & **PIZZA**